

Constitution and By-Laws of the Twin Cities Local of Democratic Socialists of America

CONSTITUTION

Article I. NAME, LEGAL STATUS, TERRITORY

Section 1. Name The name of this organization is the Twin Cities Local of Democratic Socialists of America, hereinafter referred to as TCDSA or the Local.

Section 2. Legal Status This organization is recognized as a legal subsidiary of Democratic Socialists of America, a non-profit corporation registered in the state of New York, hereinafter referred to as DSA or the National. TCDSA shall be and remain registered as required by the State of Minnesota and these documents are to be filed with the Secretary of State, if so required.

Section 3. Territory The territory covered by the Local is the sixteen county metropolitan area defined by the US Office of Management and Budget. This metropolitan area includes 14 Minnesota counties and 2 Wisconsin counties. See Addendum 1.

Article II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to organize, direct, and facilitate political education and advocacy of issues for members of DSA who reside within the territory defined in Art. I, Sec. 3, and DSA members-at-large throughout Minnesota who choose to join the Local. It is further the purpose of this local to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the local chapter, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

We are Socialists because we reject an economic order based on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, sex or any other factor, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo. We are Democratic Socialists because we believe that both the economy and society should be run democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Definitions A Member of TCDSA shall be defined as a) any member of DSA (determined by paying dues) who resides within the 16 county Twin Cities metropolitan area and b) any at-large member of DSA who resides anywhere else in Minnesota and asks to be a member of TCDSA.

Section 2. Rights and Privileges

Any Member of TCDSA, who is in good standing with DSA, has the right to vote in a legally held membership meeting on all motions and in all elections. These include election of delegates to DSA conventions, election of officers, motions to amend this constitution, or any other duly moved issue that affects the actions or structure of TCDSA.

Section 3. Determination of Status

At TCDSA Membership meetings, the Social Secretary shall sign in participants as voting Members by checking their name on the official list. Non-members shall sign in on a separate list, giving contact details which will be kept by the Social Secretary.

Section 4. Upgrade to Member at Membership Meeting

It shall be the policy of TCDSA to permit a non-member to apply for membership and pay dues to the DSA via the Social Secretary at any Membership meeting, and be immediately granted the status, with rights and privileges, of a Member at that meeting.

Section 5. Termination of Status

3a. If a Member ceases to pay dues to DSA and in time is no longer in good standing with DSA, the Social Secretary shall, after reminding and encouraging them to pay dues and regain membership, move their details to the contact list of non-members.

3b. If a Member is removed from membership in DSA due to actions under Article I, Section 3 of the National DSA bylaws, the Social Secretary shall strike their name from the record and they will not be allowed to attend meetings of TCDSA.

Article IV AMENDMENT OR DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Amendment The Constitution of DSA may be amended in the same manner as Bylaws are amended. This is set out in Item VI of the Bylaws.

Section 2. Dissolution TCDSA may be dissolved as an entity either by the National or by a two-thirds vote of the Members of TCDSA at a legally called membership meeting. If there is not enough participation to gain a quorum at three successive membership meetings, the Steering Committee may, at their discretion, dissolve the organization by a majority vote at a legally called Steering Committee meeting. At dissolution, any assets of the organization will revert to the DSA, and the Secretary of State's office of the State of Minnesota will be duly notified of the dissolution.

BYLAWS

Item I MEETINGS OF TCDSA

Section 1 Annual Member Convention

TCDSA shall hold a Convention/Meeting for all Members annually in the month of September. This meeting shall elect officers, adopt an annual budget, and set program priorities through motions and resolutions for the coming Fiscal Year. Amendments to these Bylaws may be considered at the Annual Convention.

Section 2 Notice requirement for Annual Member Convention

Notice of the meeting and a draft agenda shall be delivered either by mail or electronically or both to all members no more than seventeen (17) and no fewer than ten (10) days before the meeting. All members for whom a mailing address is available shall receive the mailed notice, and members who "opt in" for email will receive email notice. The Social Secretary is responsible for this notice, and also for posting notice on Social Media as described in Item V below.

Section 3 Regular Membership Meetings

TCDSA shall hold at least three additional membership meetings, the time and place of which shall be determined by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall set the agenda for the membership meeting, based on input from the members if any. Amendments to these bylaws may be considered at a Membership Meeting.

Section 4 Notice requirement for Regular Membership Meetings

Notice of each meeting and a draft agenda shall be delivered, either by mail or electronically or both, to all members no more than seventeen (17) and no fewer than ten (10) days before the meeting. All members will receive such notice by electronic mail by default, unless the Social Secretary receives either an in-writing (either via paper, mail, or electronically) request for such notices by United States Postal Service mail OR the Social Secretary does not have any electronic mail address on file for the member. The Social Secretary is responsible for this notice, and also for posting the notice on the Official TCDSA Website (twincitiesdsa.org) and on Social Media as described in Item V below.

Section 5 Emergency Meetings

The Steering Committee may call emergency meetings of the membership with five days' notice in cases of extreme urgency. Except for the shorter notice, these meetings will be called and conducted in the same way as regular meetings.

Section 6 Quorum

For any membership meeting, including the annual convention, a quorum is constituted by 10% of the number of members on the membership list maintained by the Social Secretary. DSA at-large members in Minnesota shall not be counted for purposes of

determining a quorum or if a quorum exists unless they have asked to be put on the TCDSA member list. The Social Secretary shall compute the number that constitutes a quorum before the meeting. The calculation will be rounded UP to the next whole number. If any non-member chooses to join DSA at the meeting, the Social Secretary will calculate if the new member affects the quorum number. Before the first vote of any meeting can be taken, the Social Secretary must declare whether or not a quorum exists.

Section 7 Program Meetings

TCDSA will hold at least four (4) program meetings annually. These will be in addition to membership meetings, and business will not be conducted at these meetings. Program meetings can be simple social gatherings, public forums, strategy meetings for the purposes of advocacy actions, teach-ins, book clubs, or movie viewings for the purpose of political education, or any other type of program the members want. Program meetings can be hosted by Branches or Sections, by allied external groups, by Members, or by the Political Education Coordinator. In the absence of anyone else wishing to host a viable program meeting, it shall be the responsibility of the Political Education Coordinator to plan, schedule and host them. Notice requirement is not as stringent for program meetings, but hosts and planners should coordinate with the Social Secretary to maximize participation.

Item II OFFICERS OF TCDSA

Section 1 Definition

The officers of the TCDSA shall consist of two (2) Co-chairs, designated Chair 1 and Chair 2, a Recording Secretary, a Social Secretary, a Treasurer, a Political Education Coordinator, and a Political Activism Coordinator. The Co-chair positions have specific gender requirements. For the officers' slate as a whole, the members of TCDSA are encouraged to strive for balance in race, class, sexual orientation and other factors relating to relative power in the community at large. Members nominated for officer positions shall self- identify as they see fit.

Section 2 Co-chairs

- a. The Co-chairs shall be the chief executives of the TCDSA and shall serve as spokespersons when one is required.
- b. In 2016, two Co-chairs will be elected at the first Annual Convention. After the election, the two Co-chairs will use lots to determine which one is Chair 1 and which is Chair 2. Chair 1 will henceforth be elected in the odd years, so the first Chair 1 will serve one year only. Chair 2 and all future Chair 1s will serve two-year staggered terms. Chair 2 will be elected in the even years.
- c. No more than one co-chair may be a cisgender male at any given time.

Section 3 Recording Secretary

a. The Recording Secretary is responsible for the agendas and minutes of all membership (business) meetings and all Steering Committee meetings. The recording secretary will build the proposed agenda based on business from the previous meeting and consultation with the other officers. They will take notes at all meetings of the membership or the Steering committee and present minutes at the next meeting for approval.

The recording secretary will also keep an archive, either on paper or preferably electronically, of all previous meeting agendas and minutes, for at least three (3) years. Minutes of all membership and Steering Committee meetings will be shared electronically with the Steering Committee as soon as possible after the meeting. Members and s may have access to the archive of minutes upon request. If a division or a paper ballot is needed at any meeting, the recording secretary will carry this out, delegating the count to volunteer tellers if desired.

b. The Recording Secretary will be re-elected in odd years.

Section 4 Social Secretary

a. The Social Secretary is responsible for the membership lists, lists, MN DSA member at-large lists, contact lists, and all social media and email accounts owned by TCDSA. (NB: Except for matters of public record, these lists are confidential.) The social secretary, with volunteer help if desired, sends required notice for membership meetings, calculates the quorum number, registers attendees, and determines if there is a quorum. The social secretary will always have membership materials, including means of payment, available at membership meetings so that non-members may join. If a division or paper ballot is needed, the social secretary will assist the recording secretary by determining eligibility of all who vote.

b. The Social Secretary will be re-elected in even years.

Section 5 Treasurer

a. The Treasurer is responsible for the income, expenses, and budget of the TCDSA. The Treasurer will receive any money donated to the TCDSA (but not member dues owed to the National, which will be received by the Social Secretary if paid at a meeting) and will account for all received money. TCDSA will maintain a checking account at a credit union and the signatories will be the Treasurer and at least one Co-chair. If TCDSA engages in any business causing taxes, rents, or fees to be due, the treasurer will be responsible for paying these. If TCDSA engages in any electoral activity, the treasurer will be responsible for any campaign reporting that becomes needed.

b. The Treasurer will be re-elected in odd years.

Section 6 Political Education Coordinator

- a. The Political Education Coordinator shall be responsible for prioritizing, planning, and follow-through on all chosen programs of political education for TCDSA. The Political Education Coordinator will be responsible for insuring that four (4) or more program meetings as called for in Item I Section 7 are held each year.

b. The Political Education Coordinator will be re-elected in odd years.

Section 7 Political Activism Coordinator

- a. The Political Activism Coordinator shall be responsible for prioritizing, planning, and follow-through on all chosen programs of political advocacy for TCDSA. The Political Activism Coordinator will be, along with the Co-chairs, the liaison with any external groups that TCDSA shall choose to affiliate with, assist or collaborate with.

b. The Political Activism Coordinator will be re-elected in even years.

Section 8 Nominations and Voting

In the month before the Annual Meeting, the Steering Committee shall specify a nominations form to be distributed electronically prior to the call for the Annual Meeting, along with instructions for making nominations for openings coming up, and a deadline for using the nomination-by- form process. Any member of Twin Cities DSA in good standing may nominate other members or themselves using the form. Names of duly nominated members will be included in the registration packet for the Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting, there will be a call for further nominations from the floor. Any unopposed candidate for an office may be elected by acclamation. The rest will be voted on using a paper ballot and it will require a vote of 50% +1 vote to be elected. If for an office, no candidate gets the required majority, a runoff between the top two will determine the election for that office. Alternatively, if there are many candidates, the Steering Committee may adopt a Ranked Choice voting scheme to be used.

Section 9 Terms of Office

The terms of office for officers will be two (2) years, and will run from October 1 to September 30 of each year. The exception is that the Chair 1, the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Political Education Coordinator who are elected in September 2016 will serve only one (1) year. Officers may be serve up to three (3) consecutive terms in the same position, but then must stand down, although they may run for a different position.

Item III STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1 Composition

The Steering Committee shall consist of the seven (7) officers defined in Item II above, plus the elected representatives of any Branches or Sections formed as part of TCDSA.

Section 2 Functions, Powers, Duties

The Steering Committee may create subcommittees and appoint members to them. The Steering Committee, in addition to the individual responsibilities of the officers, oversees the functioning of TCDSA in line with its stated purpose, including implementing decisions made at membership meetings, proposing policies and actions to the membership for consideration, receiving reports from committees, branches and sections, advising committees, branches and sections on policy, and calling emergency membership meetings when deemed necessary. All actions of the Steering Committee must be disclosed to the members at the next membership meeting, and are subject to ratification or amendment by members, if any members should make a motion to do so.

Section 3 Meetings of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall meet at least monthly. Each fiscal year, the co-chairs and the social secretary shall publish, both by mailed document and electronically, a calendar of the year's Steering Committee meetings. All members of the Steering Committee must be given written or electronic or verbal notice of any meeting date or time or venue change, and of any additional meetings not on the calendar, at least seven (7) days before the meeting. Meetings of the Steering Committee will be open to members who are not officers, but they can speak only at the discretion of the chair, and are not entitled to notice of the meetings.

Section 4 Quorum

Attendance of 50% of the Steering Committee members comprises a quorum and is needed to do business. If the Steering Committee holds an odd number of members, the number will be rounded UP for calculating a quorum.

Section 5 Vacancies

- a. If a member of the Steering Committee misses three (3) consecutive meetings, the Steering Committee will cause notice to be sent to that member, either by mail or electronically, that the Steering Committee intends to declare their position vacant and replace them. The notice must include the date, time and place of the Steering Committee meeting at which the committee will vote on declaring the position vacant. If the member attends that meeting and expresses a desire to remain in the position, no vote will be taken and no vacancy will exist. But if the person does not attend that meeting, a vote will be taken and if the vote passes, a vacancy exists.
- b. Vacancies may be created if an officer or branch or section representative loses status as a Member, or resigns from the office, or is removed by the rule in Sec. 5a. c. If the vacancy created is of an officer, the co-chairs may at their discretion appoint an acting successor, and then a special election will be held at the next usual membership meeting, or a special membership meeting may be called to elect someone to fill the vacancy. If the vacancy is a branch or section representative, it will be up to the branch or section to replace them as soon as they can, by whatever democratic means they choose.

Item IV DELEGATES TO DSA NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Section 1 Nomination and election of delegates

TCDSA shall hold an election for delegates to each National Convention called by DSA. If a Youth Section exists within the territory of TCDSA, the Youth Section will also elect delegates to any YDS Conventions. Nominations will be made in the same manner as nominations for officers. Voting will take place at a Regular Membership meeting. Elections for the National Convention delegation shall be held on the schedule announced by the national organization.

Item V BRANCHES, SECTIONS AND COMMITTEES, AND CAUCUSES

Section 1 Definitions; how formed

- a. A branch or section may be created by any group of at least five (5) Members who have something in common and wish to form a branch, section or working group. Branches can be based on a geographic area (including a political unit), and either branches or caucuses may be based on a common identity, a common interest, or a common institution (such as a labor union or advocacy group.)
- b. In order to form a branch, a Member group or individual will call an initial meeting to discuss the forming of the branch. The group will be referred to as an "Interest Group" until they have i) had at least five members at a meeting at which ii) attendance rolls and minutes are taken and iii) a representative to the Steering Committee is democratically elected. Once this occurs, the elected representative will present the minutes and attendance at the next Steering Committee meeting and ask one SC Member to move to grant the branch official recognition. If this vote is successful, the representative will immediately be a voting member of the Steering Committee and the branch will be official and subject to the Rules stated in Item V, Section 2 of these ByLaws.
- c. A committee or a working group may be formed by the Steering Committee or it may be formed by any group of at least three (3) Members in order to work on a project or action together. If a group of members' common goal is a task-oriented or action-oriented one, as opposed to interest, location or identity, the group they form should be a working group rather than a branch. Official recognition of working groups or committees formed by rank-and- file members shall be in a similar way to that of branches,, except there is no need to elect a representative and any member can present the minutes and list and ask for a motion to recognize. If the committee or working group is formed by the SC, this step is not needed.

Section 2 Branches and Sections; structures; rules; dissolution

Branches and sections shall be primarily autonomous, as long as they act in conformance with the DSA Constitution and Bylaws and these Bylaws. Branches and sections may not have separate treasuries or funds, but instead must have an

accounting line in the TCDSA treasury and budget. All officers and leaders of the branches and sections must be elected democratically, including the representative on the Steering Committee. If a branch or section ceases to meet or act for a period of six (6) months, or if it has been acting in a way to bring disrepute or harm to TCDSA or the National DSA, the Steering Committee may vote in a Steering Committee meeting to dissolve said branch or section. The representatives of the branch or section must be notified at least seven (7) days before this meeting in the usual manner, and they may attend the meeting to defend against dissolution. Once a branch or section is dissolved, it may appeal the dissolution at the next membership meeting. After final dissolution of a branch or section, any property and records must be turned over to the TCDSA Steering Committee.

Section 3 Committees Committees exist for the purpose of accomplishing work on a project or action. The length of time the committee exists may be determined by its need; it is possible for a committee to be ongoing, or purely ad hoc. At their discretion, the Steering Committee may appoint a committee representative to the Steering Committee. Committees shall report on their activities to the Steering Committee on a time basis to be determined by the Steering Committee, which will in turn report committee actions to the membership at membership meetings or by other means.

Section 4 Caucuses

a. Definition- All members shall have the right to form a caucus. Caucuses are independent formations of members within the Chapter established on the basis of shared interests, affinities, and/or political goals. The objectives of a caucus may include - but are not limited to - advocating for the election of its members to leading bodies, for specific campaigns or initiatives for the general membership to take up, or for a redress of grievances. Caucuses shall have the right to determine their own membership.”

b. Formal Recognition - A caucus may choose whether or not they would like formal recognition. To gain formal status, a caucus shall submit a mission statement that includes the name and purpose of the caucus, as well as any restrictions on eligibility for membership in the Caucus, signed by no less than five members in good standing. The Social Secretary will be responsible for confirming the membership status of all signators, and notifying the Steering Committee of recognition.

c. Access to Communications for Recognized Caucuses - Formal recognition guarantees that the caucus shall be listed on the Twin Cities DSA website, along with their name, vision statement, and a point of contact. Recognized caucuses shall have the right to publish statements and proposals in public forums for the Local, subject to the moderation of the moderation team of that forum.

d. Structure and Relationships with Other Caucuses - The right for a caucus of the Local to establish formal or informal relationships with other caucuses composed of DSA

Local or National members shall not be infringed or regulated by the Steering Committee. Caucuses shall have the right to determine their own internal structure, except where it is in violation of any bylaws or policies regarding member conduct. All members of Caucuses must be members of the Democratic Socialists of America and subject to the Constitution and Bylaws of the national and local chapter including Bylaws Article I pertaining to membership.

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Item VI SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE ASSETS

Section 1 Definitions and purpose

Social media is defined as all current platforms on the internet that allow for exchange of information between registered “accounts.” Online assets refers to organizational email accounts, websites, and opt-in mass email platforms, and other similar tools for using the internet, whether paid-for or free, that the TCDSA may “own.” Social media accounts and online assets such as websites and opt-in email newsletters allow TCDSA and other organizations to communicate with their members in new and often better ways than the traditional methods of postcards, flyers, and phone trees. TCDSA embraces the use of new media to further its organizing and advocacy.

Section 2 Ownership and control

Social media accounts and online assets set up in the name of TCDSA are the virtual property of TCDSA and as such, the content of these assets will be under the control of the TCDSA Steering Committee or its delegates. The co-chairs, the recording secretary, the social secretary and at least one other officer will hold the keys and passwords to all social media and online assets as a security measure. Membership or association with TCDSA does not confer on any individual member the right to control or dictate or censor online content. Officers of TCDSA will self-educate about libel laws, best practices, security and privacy considerations in order to responsibly control on-line content.

Section 3 Adjunctive to legal notice requirements

Use of social media accounts and on-line assets are not a replacement for legal notice requirements as set out in these bylaws. The Social Secretary, on behalf of the Steering Committee, shall use social media accounts and on- line assets to publicize membership meetings and program meetings and actions and events of TCDSA.

Item VII AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Section 1 Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by the membership at any legally held membership meeting, including the annual convention. The amendment may be brought to the meeting in one of two ways. a. The Steering Committee may propose the amendment, to be voted up or down at the next membership meeting. The text of the amendment and the intent to vote on it will form part of the notice requirement for the meeting.

b. A Member may move to amend the constitution or bylaws at a membership meeting, in which case it will be voted on in the next membership meeting. It may be discussed and debated in the meeting where proposed, at the discretion of the chair. Again, the text of the amendment and intent to vote on it will be included in the notice for the next meeting.

Section 2 Super-majority rule for passing amendments

A two-thirds super-majority vote of the members is required for the amendment to pass. The membership will be notified of the amendment and a new copy of the Constitution and Bylaws posted whenever an amendment is made.

Item VIII MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1 Rules; Construction of language In any business meeting conducted by TCDSA, where neither these bylaws nor the DSA National bylaws dictate parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order (most current edition) will be the prevailing rules of procedure. Members are expected to familiarize themselves with these rules. If there is any conflict between these bylaws and Minnesota state law governing nonprofit organizations, the state law will prevail.

Section 2 Fiscal Year; Accounting The fiscal year for TCDSA will run from October 1 to September 30. In producing financial reports and budgets, TCDSA will use accounting principles generally accepted for small nonprofit organizations.

Section 3 External relationships; Electoral work TCDSA will work in community with organizations that share, at least in part, our vision and principles. This can include socialist or communist organizations under the discipline of democratic centralism, or liberal advocacy organizations that we may disagree with on other issues. Such associations must be understood to be free and mutual on both sides and not to create any obligations or restrictions. In electoral work, it is important to stress to associated groups that TCDSA, like its parent organization, is not a political party. If TCDSA gives an "endorsement" to a cause or candidate, it must be understood to be informal and informational only.

Section 4 Prohibited Activity TCDSA shall not engage in activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines established for 501(c)4 organizations or similar rules established by the state of Minnesota. Nor shall TCDSA engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

Section 5 Accessibility and Class Consciousness TCDSA shall strive to make all of its meetings, forums, and actions accessible and safe spaces for all. This consideration will extend to such things as the accessibility and safety of the venue, the type of food offered, accommodations for differences in sight, hearing, mobility and stamina, child care offerings, the avoidance of high cost venues that will essentially exclude some members, and religious and other identity considerations. Socialism is historically built on class consciousness, specifically on lifting up the working class. TCDSA will take care not to subtly exclude or censor working class viewpoints or viewpoints of any traditionally dis-empowered group.

Section 6 Conflicts of Interest If any action taken by the Steering Committee or TCDSA under the governance of the Steering Committee may potentially benefit materially a member of the Steering Committee, that member is said to have a conflict of interest, and will recuse themselves from voting on that action.

Section 7 Arbitration or Mediation If a conflict should arise within TCDSA between any member or entity and another member or entity that threatens to harm TCDSA or prevent it from accomplishing its aims, the Steering Committee is empowered to first attempt mediation between the parties. If the Steering Committee itself is one of the entities involved, or if it fails to mediate the conflict, it shall seek the services of an independent mediator to resolve the conflict.

Section 8 Ratification of this Constitution and these bylaws This Constitution and these Bylaws shall be submitted to the membership for ratification at the first Annual Membership Convention of TCDSA to be held in September, 2016.

ADDENDUM 1

List of counties in the Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Area, as defined by the US Office of

Management and Budget

Minnesota counties (descending order of population)

1. Hennepin
2. Ramsey
3. Dakota
4. Anoka
5. Washington
6. Scott
7. Wright
8. Carver
9. Sherburne
10. Chisago
11. Isanti
12. LeSueur
13. Mille Lacs
14. Sibley

Wisconsin counties (descending order of population)

1. St. Croix
2. Pierce

AMENDMENTS SUMMARY

2017-6-4 – Item 1, Section 4 revised, former language included below.

Notice of each meeting and a draft agenda shall be delivered, either by mail or electronically or both, to all members no more than seventeen (17) and no fewer than ten (10) days before the meeting. All members for whom a mailing address is available shall receive the mailed notice, and members who “opt in” for email will receive email notice. The Social Secretary is responsible for this notice, and also for posting notice on Social Media as described in Item V below.

APPROVED – Summer General Membership Meeting 2017

2017-6-5 – Bylaws change formally updated in digital version on-line.

2018-1-9: Updated to reflect amendments passed in Sept 2017 meeting; Item II sec 2 (gender requirements of Co-Chairs,) Item II sec 8 (removing Steering Committee forming nominations committee and proposing slate), Item V sec 1 (clarifying how branches are formed and their purpose).

2018 3-20: Updated to add sections defining Caucuses and striking “only endorse in partisan races” language.