

Twin Cities DSA - November Meeting Agenda

November 17, 2019, 1:30 pm (check-in opens 1:00pm)

George Latimer Central Library, 4th Floor

90 W 4th St, St Paul, MN 55102

1:00 pm	Check in begins.
1:30 pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Call to order and welcome, donation reminder2. Introductory business<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Land acknowledgementb. Community Agreements (<i>see page 2</i>)c. Adopt the agendad. Volunteers: timekeeper, tellers (2 - 6), stack keepere. Quorum checkf. Accept minutes of last Meeting (<i>see pages 3-4</i>)3. Officer reports: Operations Committee, Recording Secretary, Treasurer (<i>see page 7</i>), Political Action Coordinator, Political Education Coordinator, Tech Coordinator
2:00 pm	Political Education: Sex Worker Solidarity (<i>see pages 4-10</i>)
2:30 pm	Voting: Bylaws Amendments (<i>see pages 11-19</i>)
3:15 pm	Break
3:25 pm	Reconvene + Reminders
3:30 pm	Voting: Grievance Committee Members (<i>see page 20</i>)
3:50 pm	Members Branch Updates (<i>see page 22</i>)
4:20 pm	Solidarity Forever (<i>see last page</i>)
4:30 pm	Motion to Adjourn

Community Agreements

1. **We ground ourselves in the fact that anti-capitalism demands anti-racism.** We seek to eliminate and remedy racist oppression created and maintained by white settlers that undermines working class and community solidarity. In this space, we prioritize and believe the voices of people of color and indigenous people, while also acknowledging our own complicities in white supremacy and U.S. imperialism.
2. **We keep progressive stack.** An assigned individual will keep list of names from people who wish to speak, and prioritize folks who are people of color, women, or who have not spoken at the meeting.
3. **(WAIT) Why am I talking?** When in discussion, consider what you want to say, and if it has already been said. Is there a better time or place to speak? Are there other methods
4. for you to show how you feel about the conversation, such as nodding your head?
5. **Make space, Take Space.** When finished making your point, let others speak. Respect others by recognizing how much, often, and loud you're speaking and if you might be dominating conversation. We also encourage quieter individuals to contribute to the conversation.
6. **Speak from personal experience.** Use "I statements." Speak from your perspective and experience, rather than assuming those of other people.
7. **One diva, one mic.** One person should be speaking at any given time. Please refrain from commenting until after they have finished.
8. **Listen (don't wait to talk).** Genuinely pay attention to what others say. Active listening is important in any discussion.
9. **Assume full humanity.** Recognize we were all raised in the same society with the same biases and prejudices, and approach each other with this in mind.
10. **Oops, ouch.** Acknowledge when you've made a mistake. Nobody is perfect and mistakes will be made.
11. **Jargon Giraffe.** Raise your hand (press your thumb against your middle & ring fingers for the shape of a giraffe head!) if you do not understand a term or phrase, and someone will explain the definition to you.

Land acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered here on the traditional ancestral land of the Santee Dakhóta people, and pay our respects to the elders, past and present. We recognize and honor the Dakhóta as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Monday, July 22

Brookdale Library

1. Call to order and welcome, donation reminder
 - Meeting called to order at 6:32pm
2. Introductory business
 - i. Land acknowledgement
 - ii. Community Agreements (*see page 2*)
 - iii. Adopt the agenda
 1. Motion to adopt the agenda. Seconded. All in favor. Motion passes.
 - iv. Volunteers: timekeeper, tellers (2 - 6), stack keeper
 - v. Quorum check
 1. We do have quorum!
 - vi. Accept minutes of last Meeting (*see pages 3-???*)
 1. Motion to accept minutes. Seconded. None opposed. Motion passes.

3. Officer reports: Ops, Political Education Coordinator, Political Action Coordinator, Treasurer, Tech Coordinator, Recording Secretary

-Ops Coordinator position is currently open, Ops is re-vamping what that position will look like; Ops meetings are on the calendar

-Political Education-had 2 rounds of Socialism 101 workshops 2 weeks ago; having another meeting on core level of political education very soon;

-Political Action-Isuru is absent but...TCDSA members have been helping out with MN Nurses pickets

-Treasurer-our chapter has raised almost \$9000 in the last quarter; great job!

-Tech Coordinator-has been working with Ops on a lot of different things; everything is working as expected

-Rec Secretary-have any questions about

4. Chair Election

-As of right after the last general meeting, we have a co-chair position open; only 1 person has filled out the self-nomination form; Rita has been appointed by SC as interim co-chair; this elected co-chair would serve through September 2020; are there any nominations from the floor? No nominations from the floor. Vote by acclamation. None opposed. Vote passes and Rita is the new co-chair of TCDSA.

5. Political Education: World Cafe

6. Break

Meeting called back to order at 8pm

7. Fundraising Pitch

Ian makes a fundraising pitch for HONEY event

8. Immigrant Justice Action pitch

Elizabeth gives pitch about Immigrant Justice Action pitch

- Local action led by Never Again on Tuesday, July 30 4:30pm at Fort Snelling
- Escalating series of actions in the Twin Cities; meeting to plan on Thursday night
- Resolutions 5, 6, 73 at National Convention

9. Branch updates

-Housing: Thursday, 6-8pm at MPLS Central Library Housing Justice Meeting
-Racial Justice- Prison Abolition in the Park July 28 2pm at Powderhorn Park
-Eco-Socialism: learning about PolyMet mines and bad labor practices; fighting against Line 3; Wednesday 6pm MPLS Central Library Line 3 Action Camp Info session; Branch meeting August 18 from 2-4pm location TBD

-Labor: Monday July 29 7pm at Labor Branch meeting at Unite Here offices
-Budget & Fundraising: Thursday September 5 at 7:30pm at MPLS Central
-Mutual Aid: Brake Lights Clinic cancelled due to weather; Tuesday, August 6 at Rondo Library meeting; Solidarity Fund- it's awesome!

-Bernie 2020 WG-July 23, 7-9pm MPLS Central

-LSC-July 23, 7-9pm Quixotic Coffee

-LSD-Thursday, July 25 7-8pm Barnes and Noble in Roseville

-Ramsey County; 2nd Monday of each month Socialize!

-Electoral

-Health Justice; another meeting and canvass coming soon

-Socialist Feminist-July 31st Book Reading; SocFems next meeting to be rescheduled

10. Upcoming Events, Song

11. Motion to Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:26pm

Trafficking in Lies

Juno Mac, Molly Smith, November 5, 2018

Sex work doesn't cause human trafficking—borders do

"People are not, en masse, being snatched off the street."

The Baffler | <https://thebaffler.com/latest/trafficking-in-lies-mac-smith>

Carceral feminists hold that if we could abolish prostitution through criminalizing clients and managers, the trafficking of women would end, as there would be no sex trade to traffic them into. As the deputy prime minister of Sweden writes, "It is very obvious to us that there is a very clear link between prostitution and trafficking . . . Without prostitution there would be no trafficking of women." This perspective views prostitution as intrinsically more horrifying than other kinds of work (including work that is "low-status," exploitative, or low-paid), and as such, views attempting to abolish prostitution through criminal law as a worthwhile end in itself. For those who hold these views, defending sex workers' rights is akin to defending trafficking.

In these conversations, trafficking becomes a battle between good and evil, monstrosity and innocence, replete with heavy-handed imagery of chains, ropes, and cuffs to signify enslavement and descriptors such as nefarious, wicked, villainous, and iniquitous. This "evil" is driven by the aberrance of commercial sex and by anomalous (and distinctly racialized) "bad actors": the individual villain, the pimp, the trafficker. A police officer summarizes this approach as: "we'll put all these pimps, all these traffickers in prison . . . and that'll solve the problem." Numerous images associated with modern anti-trafficking campaigns feature a white girl held captive by a black man: he is a dark hand over her mouth or a looming, shadowy figure behind her.

Fancy-dress "pimp costumes" offer a cartoonishly racist vision of 1970s Black masculinity, while American law-enforcement unashamedly use terms such as "gorilla pimp" and link trafficking to rap music. There is a horror-movie entertainment quality to this at times: tourists can go on "sex-trafficking bus tours" to shudder over locations where they're told sexual violence has recently occurred ("perhaps you are wondering where these crimes take place") or buy an "awareness-raising" sandwich featuring a naked woman with her body marked up as if for a butcher. Conventionally sexy nude women are depicted wrapped in tape or packed under plastic, with labels indicating "meat."

Conversely, the victim is often presented with her "girlishness" emphasized. Young women are styled to look pre-pubescent, in pigtails or hair ribbons, holding teddy bears. This imagery suggests another key preoccupation shared by modern and nineteenth-century anti-trafficking campaigners: innocence. A glance at the names chosen for police operations and NGOs highlights this: Lost Innocence, Saving Innocence, Freedom4Innocence, the Protected Innocence Challenge, Innocents at Risk, Restore Innocence, Rescue Innocence, Innocence for Sale.

Tourists can go on "sex-trafficking bus tours" to shudder over locations where they're told sexual violence has recently occurred.

For feminists, this preoccupation with feminine “innocence” should be a red flag, not least because it speaks to a prurient interest in young women. Conversely, LGBTQ people, black people, and deliberate prostitutes are often left out of the category of innocence, and as a result harm against people in these groups becomes less legible as harm. For example, a young Black man may face arrest rather than support; indeed, resources for runaway and homeless youth (whose realities are rather more complex than chains and ropes) were not included in the U.S. Congress’s 2015 reauthorization of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Anti-trafficking statutes often exclude deliberate prostitutes from the category of people able to seek redress, as to be a “legitimate” trafficking victim requires innocence, and a deliberate prostitute, however harmed, cannot fulfill that requirement.

There is a huge emphasis on kidnapping and, correspondingly, heroic rescues. In the wildly popular action film *Taken* (2008), the daughter of the hero (played by Liam Neeson) is snatched by Albanian sex traffickers while on holiday in Paris. *Taken* typifies many real anti-trafficking campaigns, presenting trafficking as a context-free evil, a kidnap at random that could happen to anyone, anywhere. As if to emphasize the links between Hollywood and policy, the “hero” is literally written into U.S. law—the HERO Act (which stands for the Human Exploitation Rescue Operations Act) takes funding from ICE to train U.S. military veterans to fight trafficking. (In *Taken*, Neeson has daughter-rescuing skills due to his time as a CIA agent.) Visitors to the website of the Freedom Challenge, an anti-trafficking NGO, are told:

You crawl into bed and wrap yourself in your favorite blanket . . . You’re alone, sleeping soundly and dreaming sweetly. Suddenly, a rustling in the next room jolts you awake. You . . . tiptoe across the cold floor and crack open the door. A bag is thrown over your head. You’re carried away.

A spokeswoman for another organization told reporters that being “stolen off the street” at random by human traffickers constituted “a very big possibility” and warned people to stay in groups to avoid being kidnapped. An anxious mother’s claim that she thought her children were going to be abducted by traffickers in IKEA was shared more than 100,000 times on social media. (All this resonates with nineteenth-century white-slavery fears; in 1899, a missionary with the Women’s Christian Temperance Union reported “there is a slave trade in this country, and it is not black folks at this time, but little white girls—thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, and seventeen years of age—and they are snatched out of our arms, and from our Sabbath schools and from our Communion tables.”) Slick, shareable videos depict young girls grabbed by strangers on the street, vanishing into vans. The plot of *Taken* repeatedly highlights the traffickers’ nationality. After the film’s success, Neeson had to issue a statement reassuring U.S. parents that their children could go on school trips to Paris without being snatched by Albanian trafficking gangs. “The foreigner,” writes historian Maria Luddy, has always been “an international figure symbolic of the white slaver.”

People are not, en masse, being snatched off the street. A report from the UK’s anti-slavery commission notes that cases of kidnap are very unusual, essentially because it would make little sense to “give” someone the services of taking them across a border for free, when people are willing to pay up to thirty thousand pounds to be taken across that same border. The vast, vast majority of people who end up in exploitative situations were seeking to migrate and have become entrapped in a horrifically exploitative system because when people

migrate without papers they have few to no rights. Acknowledging that people who end up in exploitative situations wanted to migrate is not to blame them. It is to say that the solution to their exploitative situation is to enable them to migrate legally and with rights. Everything else is at best a distraction (sexy chains! evil villains!) and at worst, actively worsens the problem by pushing for laws which make it harder, not easier, to migrate legally and with rights.

You might be thinking that we seem to be talking about people smuggling rather than people trafficking, and that those two things are different. People smuggling is when someone pays a smuggler to get them over a border: in UK law, human trafficking is when someone is transported for the purposes of forced labor or exploitation using force, fraud, or coercion. It's tempting to think of these as separate things, but there is no bright line between them: they are two iterations of the same system.

Let's break it down. It is common for people to take on huge debts to smugglers to cross a border. So far, so good: clearly smuggling. But once the journey begins, the person seeking to migrate finds that the debt has grown, or that the work they are expected to undertake upon arrival in order to pay off the debt is different from what was agreed. Suddenly, the situation has spiraled out of control and they find themselves trying to work off the debt, with little hope of ever earning enough to leave. Smuggling becomes trafficking. The discourse of trafficking largely fails to help people in this situation, because it paints them as kidnapped and enchained rather than as trying to migrate. It therefore seeks to "rescue" them by blocking irregular migration routes and sending undocumented people home—often the very last thing trafficked people want. Although they might hate their exploitative workplace, their ideal option would be to stay in their destination country in a different job or with better workplace conditions; an acceptable option would be to stay in the country under the current, shit working conditions, but the very worst option would be to be sent home with their debt still unpaid.

By viewing trafficking as conceptually akin to kidnap, anti-trafficking activists, NGOs, and governments can sidestep broader questions of safe migration. If the trafficked person is brought across borders unwillingly, there is no need to think about the people who will attempt this migration regardless of its illegality or conclude that the way to make people safer is to offer them legal migration routes. People smuggling tends to happen to less vulnerable migrants: those who have the cash to pay a smuggler upfront or have a family or community already settled in the destination country. People trafficking tends to happen to more vulnerable migrants: those who must take on a debt to the smuggler to travel and who have no community connections in their destination country. Both want to travel, however, and this is what anti-trafficking conversations largely obscure with their talk about kidnap and chains.

The mass migrations of the twenty-first century are driven by human-made catastrophes—climate change, poverty, war—and reproduce the glaring inequalities from which they emerge. Countries in the global north bear hugely disproportionate responsibility for climate change, yet disproportionately close their doors to people fleeing the effects of climate chaos, leaving desperate families to sleep under canvas amid snow at the edges of Fortress Europe. As migrant-rights organizer Harsha Walia writes, "While history is marked by the hybridity of human societies and the desire for movement, the reality of most of migration today reveals the unequal relations between rich and poor, between North and South, between whiteness and its others."

By viewing trafficking as conceptually akin to kidnap, anti-trafficking activists, NGOs, and governments can sidestep broader questions of safe migration.

A system where everybody could migrate, live, and work legally and in safety would not be a huge, radical departure; it would simply take seriously the reality that people are already migrating and working, and that as a society we should prioritize their safety and rights. However, instead of starting from the premise of valuing human life, the countries of the global north enact harsh immigration laws that make it hard for people from global south countries to migrate. You don't stop people wanting or needing to migrate by making it illegal for them to do so, you just make it more dangerous and difficult, and leave them more vulnerable to exploitation. Punitive laws may dissuade some from making the journey, but they guarantee that everyone who does travel is doing so in the worst possible conditions. Spending billions of dollars on policing borders actively makes this worse, without addressing the reasons people might want to migrate—notably, gross inequality between nations, which in large part is a legacy of colonial—and contemporary—plunder and imperialist violence.

The clash between people's need to migrate and intensifying border fortifications has predictable outcomes. Migration scholars Nassim Majidi and Saagarika Dadu-Brown write that intensifying border restrictions creates "new migrant-smuggler relationships," adding that "smugglers will take advantage of a border closure or restriction to increase prices." Since the early 1990s, the Border Patrol has recovered the bodies of six thousand people on the US side of the border, with as many as double that number thought to be lying undiscovered in the desert. Isabel Garcia, co-chair of a local US migrants' rights organization, says "we never thought that we'd be in the business of helping to identify remains like in a war zone, and here we are." The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports that, as the border hardened, the costs to migrants who hire smugglers significantly increased—yet the proportion of migrants using the services of smugglers also increased, from 45 per cent to around 95 per cent. Even as the inability to cross borders legally directly pushes would-be migrants into the arms of people smugglers, it increases the fees these smugglers can charge. As ethnologist Samuel Martinez writes, "We have known for more than a decade that higher and longer walls, increased Border Patrol surveillance, and heightened bureaucratic impediments to immigration have deflected immigrants into the grip of smugglers." This pattern repeats at borders around the world. In Nepal, the International Labour Organization found that banning women under the age of thirty from emigrating (which aimed to tackle their exploitation) had instead "strengthened unlicensed migration agents," increasing the ability of these agents to entrap women in exploitative situations.

This interplay is familiar to us in other contexts. When abortion is criminalized, women seeking abortions turn to back-street abortionists—some of whom will be altruistic, many of whom will be unscrupulous. Although the pro-choice movement obviously decries people who charge exploitative fees to perform criminalized abortions in unsafe or neglectful ways, we also recognize that these bad actors are not aberrant villains who have come out of nowhere. Instead, the criminalization of abortion has directly created the market for unscrupulous abortion providers. Rather than simply "cracking down," the policy solution that has put them out of business where it has been implemented is, of course, access to safe, legal, free abortion services. People living in places like England and Canada who can access free abortion

services do not tend to pay people to perform dangerous back-alley procedures. Why would they? In the same way, people who can cross borders legally do not pay someone to smuggle them across. Like the people who perform illegal abortions, smugglers are not inexplicable villains; instead, the criminalization of undocumented migration has directly created the market for people smuggling.

However, much mainstream trafficking discourse characterizes the abuse of migrants and people selling sex as the work of individual bad actors, external to and independent of state actions and political choices. Sometimes this discourse works not only to obscure the role of the state but to absolve it. One feminist commentator, for example, writes of the sex trade that “criminalization doesn’t rape and beat women. Men do.” From this, we might conclude that changing the law is pointless because what makes women vulnerable is simply men. This may feel true for women who do not have to contend with immigration law, police, or the constant fear of deportation, but we can see from the results of tied visas that the legal context—including migration law—is heavily implicated in producing vulnerability and harm.

The criminalization of undocumented migration has directly created the market for people smuggling.

For undocumented migrant workers looking to challenge bad workplace conditions, penalties do not stop at deportation; instead, these workers face criminalization if they are discovered. In the UK, someone convicted of “illegal working” can face up to fifty-one weeks in prison, an unlimited fine, and the prospect of their earnings being confiscated as the “proceeds of crime.” This increases undocumented people’s justified fear of state authorities and makes them even less able to report labor abuses. Such laws therefore heighten their vulnerability and directly push them into exploitative working environments, thereby creating a supply of highly vulnerable, ripe-for-abuse workers.

Increasingly, border enforcement is infiltrating new areas of civic life. Landlords are now expected to check tenants’ immigration status before renting to them; proposals have been floated to freeze or close the bank accounts of undocumented people, and a documentation check was introduced in England when accessing both healthcare and education, as part of an explicit “hostile environment” policy (although both have been challenged by migrants’ rights organizers, including in court). The UK devotes far more resources to policing migration than it does to preventing the exploitation of workers. Researcher Bridget Anderson notes that “the [National Minimum Wage] had ninety-three compliance officers in 2009 and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority [which works to protect vulnerable and exploited workers] had twenty-five inspectors . . . The proposed number of UK Border Agency Staff for Local Immigration teams . . . is 7,500.”

This is the context in which commercial sex frequently occurs. Undocumented or insecurely documented people are enmeshed within a punitive, state-enforced infrastructure of deportability, disposability, and precarity. Any work they do—whether it is at a restaurant, construction site, cannabis farm, nail bar, or brothel—carries a risk of being detained, jailed, or deported. Even renting a home or accessing healthcare can be difficult. All this makes undocumented people more dependent on those who can help them—such as the people they paid to help them cross the border, or an unscrupulous employer. It should therefore be no

surprise that some undocumented migrants are pushed into sex work by those they rely on, or that some enter into it even if the working conditions are exploitative or abusive.

To locate the problem in the existence of prostitution renders invisible the material things that made them vulnerable to harm. Europe's border regime meant they had to pay exploitative people huge sums of money in order to be smuggled in, and that once in, they had zero access to labor rights as their discovery by the state risked them being prosecuted. These two factors combined to produce a situation wherein they could be horribly exploited by their employers. None of this is to downplay what happened to them—instead, it is to highlight the inadequacy of a carceral “anti-trafficking” response to their situation. Such an approach actively obscures the role of the border in producing the harms they suffered, and compounds these harms by rendering it prosaic that they face deportation and potential prosecution.

From **Revolting Prostitutes** (Verso 2018) by Juno Mac and Molly Smith.

Juno Mac is a sex worker and activist with the Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement (SWARM), a sex worker-led collective with branches in London, Leeds and Glasgow.

Molly Smith is a sex worker and activist with the Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement (SWARM). She is also involved with SCOT-PEP, a sex worker-led charity based in Edinburgh which is working to decriminalize sex work in Scotland. She has written articles on sex work policy for the Guardian and The New Republic.

Proposed Amendment to define standing committees that have SC officers assigned

Background and rationale for amendments

The Bylaws of Twin Cities DSA have been subject to numerous amendments in the three years since they were first adopted. When the Bylaws were first adopted, the only specified standing committee in TCDSA was the Steering Committee (SC.) Within the first quarter operating under that law, two working committees sprang up - the Communications Committee and the Outreach Committee (although the Outreach committee called itself a branch, and only met once within that time.) In a training led by an organizer from the National Office, some structural changes were suggested - to combine these two committees, and call it Operations (Ops), and to add At-large members to the SC via amendment. It was not suggested that the new Ops committee would require an amendment, nor that it had to be chaired by an officer. But structurally, it fell out that 1) the Social Secretary, later changed to Operations Coordinator, actually would become the de facto chair, 2) that rather quickly duties drifted from the SC to Ops in function, and 3) that the membership defeated the original At-Large SC members amendment. All of this contributed to burnout within Ops, especially for the Ops Coordinator, and to tensions between Ops and SC around meeting planning, but that is being addressed by a separate amendment. In the past year, there has been a movement to make permanent and institutional the currently ad-hoc Political Education (PE) Committee, including adding two elected (but not on the SC) officers to share chairing duties with the Political Education Coordinator. That too is in a separate amendment. Also within the past year, a new committee called Inreach has arisen that has duties that make it institutional, whereas the Bylaws refer to Outreach as a committee chaired by the Political Action Coordinator (PAC) which is possibly the same thing.

Another recent change is that a new committee called Communications - ironically the original name of the committee that became Ops - has been formed and assigned to the Recording Secretary as a responsibility. This was another move to take pressure off of Ops, as now Ops can concentrate more on maintaining member rolls and organizing meetings and assets, while the Communications Committee (CC) works on the newsletter and social media and the calendar. This also means that every elected officer on the TCDSA SC has a standing committee to chair. Here again, this is not mentioned in the Bylaws currently.

However, all of this change has left Item III, Section 6 of the Bylaws, which should define standing committees, unfit for purpose in that it does not define committees such as Ops, Inreach, PE, and Fundraising, even though in Item II it refers to these committees as being the responsibility of certain officers, or they are in fact the responsibility of certain officers but this is not mentioned in the Bylaws. Another even more critical standing committee has been created by a combination of directive from the National Office and a resolution adopted by the TCDSA members - the Grievance Committee. Here again, this committee is critical to democratic

functioning, and its members are elected and recallable and accountable, but they are not on the SC, and the committee itself is still external to the Bylaws. The purpose of this set of Bylaw amendments is to harmonize all of these existing or about to be voted on functions and to clarify relationships and duties with respect to committees.

These Bylaw amendments will not try to duplicate what is in the adopted Grievance Process document, but will have a minimal amount of definition and refer to that document. The Ops and Budget committees will be defined briefly in these amendments. Another set of amendments, for constituting the new triumvirate of PE chairs, will amend Item III, Section 2, further for that purpose, and therefore needs to be voted on after this set of amendments. The Inreach/Outreach dilemma will be simply a matter of changing language to match the practice, without changing any structure.

Proposed Amendments

The new language in proposed amendments below is **in bold**. Deleted language is shown by an underlined ellipsis. ...

Proposed amendment to Item III, Section 6 Committees and Subcommittees

Current wording:

- a. Committees – Elected officers may chair standing committees to aid in the execution of their duties.
- b. Subcommittees – The Steering Committee may delegate authority to subcommittees for the purpose of accomplishing work on a project or action.

Amended wording:

- a. Committees - The Steering Committee may set up committees to accomplish ongoing work necessary to the chapter. Committees may be ad hoc, meaning they exist for a specified time to accomplish a specified task, or standing, meaning they exist until dissolved by bylaw if no longer needed.**
- b. Standing committees - the following standing committees shall be created from volunteers from the membership and each shall be the responsibility of the Steering Committee officer named, to recruit and form the committee and to serve as liaison between the standing committee and the Steering Committee**
 - 1. Operations committee - Operations Coordinator**
 - 2. Technology committee - Technology Coordinator**
 - 3. Budget & Fundraising committee - Treasurer**
 - 4. Communications committee - Recording Secretary**
 - 5. Political Education committee - Political Education Coordinator**
 - 6. Outreach / Inreach committee - Political Action Coordinator**

c. Subcommittees - The Steering Committee or any of the standing committees may create subcommittees (either standing or ad hoc) and delegate tasks to them.

d. Structures within committees and subcommittees shall be determined democratically by the volunteers on the committees or subcommittees, including but not limited to chairing of meetings, setting of agendae, and allocation of tasks.

Proposed Amendment to create a standing Political Ed committee with three co-chairs

Background and Rationale for Amendments

In an effort to expand TCDSA's capacity for political education it seems that the structure of the Political Education (PE) Committee should be amended. Instead of having one person shoulder the responsibility for this, it should be expanded. The PE Committee under the proposed bylaw would have a core of three organizers to act as the main facilitators of the committee, who will be elected officers of TCDSA. From these elected facilitators the Political Education Coordinator will be selected to represent the committee on the Steering Committee.

The amendment proposes to use OpaVote to allow for instant runoff voting, as well as using ranked choice voting if there are more than three candidates. The top candidate in IRV will be the PEC, who serves on the Steering Committee as per the bylaws in Item II. All three facilitators will share the duties of recruiting volunteer committee members, planning and conducting regular PE committee meetings, ensuring fair and open input in decision making on the committee as chairs in turn of the meetings, and ensuring that committee plans are carried to fruition.

This group of amendments is to be presented with two other groups of amendments and they must pass in order to preserve a coherent structure in the Bylaws, since each one builds on to the previous one.

Proposed Amendments

The new language in proposed amendments below is **in bold**. Deleted language is shown by an underlined ellipsis. ...

Proposed amendment to Item II, Section 7:

Current wording:

- a. The Political Education Coordinator shall plan and follow-through on all chosen programs of political education for TCDSA.
- b. The Political Education Coordinator will be the chair of the Political Education Committee, and will schedule meetings of that committee as required.
- c. The Political Education Coordinator will be elected in odd years.

Amended wording:

a. The Political Education Coordinator shall be a co-chair of the Political Education committee, which shall plan and follow-through on all chosen programs of political education for TCDSA.

b. The three co-chairs of the Political Education Committee will be elected in odd years, and the Political Education Coordinator will be elected as the highest ranked candidate in that election, as described in Item III, Section 7.

Proposed new Bylaw as Item III, Section 7:

Amended wording:

Section 7. Political Education Committee

- a. The Political Education Committee shall have three (3) co-facilitators, with no more than one identifying as cis-gendered white male.**
- b. The Political Education Committee Facilitators will be elected in odd years for a term of two (2) years, using IRV (Scottish Single Transferable Vote.)**
- c. The Political Education Coordinator shall be elected in odd years, to a two year term from amongst the newly elected Political Education Committee Co-Facilitators. They shall be elected by Instant Runoff Voting, using the same ballot as that used for the election of the Political Education Committee.**
- d. The Political Education Committee shall plan and follow-through on all chosen programs of political education for TCDSA. The Political Education Committee may also implement other political education programs as it sees fit.**
- e. For 2020, the existing elected Political Education Coordinator shall continue in that position, and a special election of the other two co-facilitators will be held as soon as possible in a general membership in 2020. All these co-facilitators will serve until the 2021 annual meeting of TCDSA, at which point elections as in Section 7b and 7c (above) will begin.**

Proposed Amendments to Bylaws to improve representation and function of Steering Committee

Background and rationale for amendments

Different chapters of DSA have different compositions for their executive committees, as well as different names; this committee is called the Steering Committee (SC) in Twin Cities DSA and its existence dates from September 2016, when our original constitution and bylaws were adopted. In general, our SC has worked fairly well, and we have avoided some of the dramas that can occur with a burgeoning political organization, in a high-stakes mission, in unstable times. However, a number of officers on the SC have had to resign due to burnout or inability to do the job as they wanted. A committee called the Operations Committee (OC), all-volunteer but chaired by a SC officer, (this has changed a couple of times over the interim period) has taken up a lot of the slack that was just too much work for the SC alone, with the result that the chair position of that committee is now vacant and its future composition is also being reassessed. The SC and the OC held a joint meeting to discuss their co-functioning around some pressure points, notably the newsletter, the general membership meetings, and the notice requirements for those meetings.

At that joint meeting, the point was made that it is the SC's responsibility (in fact the co-chairs', but that can be interpreted to be the SC) to plan and organize meetings, and yet it has come to be the OC's responsibility by default. The further point was made that every member of the SC has another constitutional duty which is "full time" - keeping the books, keeping membership rolls, or representing a branch, for instance - and that this may be why it's so hard for them to carve out time to organize meetings, which is a huge task. In other words, although it is the SC's job, it's no one's *main* job, and no one "bottom-lines" it on the SC, except in theory the co-chairs, who do not really have the capacity.

Several different solutions to these issues are also in consideration, but this set of amendments is one part of that strategy. This amendment proposes to add three new members to the SC who will have "bottom-line" responsibility for a) representing the views and needs of all members, but especially those who are not active in a branch, or are members of an I represented minority, and b) as a natural outflow of that, scheduling, organizing, and doing turnout for the general membership meetings. The exact number and composition of the new members was determined by a straw poll at the September 2019 annual conference of Twin Cities DSA, plus some helpful input from various members. The title held by the new members will be Member Representative (MR.) Each MR will represent the entire membership body "at-large."

Note that the deletion of the words "or Sections" in Item III, Section 1a is simply due to the fact that the terminology of "Sections" is no longer used in DSA.

Proposed Amendments

The new language in proposed amendments below is **in bold**. Deleted language is shown by an underlined ellipsis. ...

Proposed amendment to Item II, Section 2-a:

Current wording:

- a. The Co-chairs shall be the chief executives of the TCDSA and shall serve as spokespersons when one is required. Co-chair responsibilities include:
 - Scheduling Steering Committee and chapter meetings
 - Drafting agendas for Steering Committee and chapter meetings, with input from Steering Committee members
 - Facilitating Steering Committee and chapter meetings
 - Approving contents of the chapter newsletter before each edition is sent

Amended wording:

- a. The Co-chairs shall be the chief executives of the TCDSA and shall serve as spokespersons when one is required. Co-chair responsibilities include:
 - ...
 - Drafting agendas for Steering Committee and chapter meetings, with input from Steering Committee members
 - Facilitating Steering Committee and chapter meetings
 - Approving contents of the chapter newsletter before each edition is sent, **or delegating to other Steering Committee members**

New Section 9 under Item II. Current Section 9 - 11 - Nominations & voting; Recall Elections; and Terms of Office, will become Sections 10 - 12 respectively. *(actually 9, 10, and 10, obviously a mistake)*

Section 9. Member Representatives (three)

- a. The three Member Representatives shall represent the views of all members (at-large) on the Steering Committee. Member Representatives' responsibilities include:
 - Scheduling chapter meetings, with assistance and input from the Operations Committee
 - Working with Operations Committee and the rest of the Steering Committee to plan, give notice of, and set up chapter meetings
 - In the lead time before chapter meetings, facilitating ride-sharing and working to enhance turnout to the meetings

- Participation on (chairing optionally) the Inreach Committee, or convening an Inreach Working Group if the Inreach Committee does not exist
- Sharing joint responsibility with the Operations Coordinator of the lists of current members
- At general membership meetings, as part of the initial business on every agenda, the chairs will introduce the Member Representatives and give out their contact information so that members will know whom to contact if they need representation or want to give feedback. Member Representatives may optionally make a report at the membership meeting but are not required to do so as other officers.

b. All three Member Representatives will serve the same two year term, and will be elected at the annual meeting in the odd years. However, for 2020, three Member Representatives will be elected in the first possible general meeting of the year, and will serve a term of less than 24 months, with the next election occurring at the general meeting of 2021.

c. At least one Member Representative must not be a cisgender male at any given time.

d. There will be a geographical requirement for the elected Member Representatives, and for simplicity of election style, there will be three separate nomination streams and ballot lines for the three positions. The three areas to supply one or more candidates for Member Representative are:

- Minneapolis, including those areas of the city east of the Mississippi River, and close suburbs of Minneapolis - Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Edina, Richfield, St. Anthony, Columbia Heights, Fridley, and Brooklyn Center.
- Saint Paul and close suburbs of Saint Paul - Mendota, Mendota Heights, Lilydale, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Maplewood, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, and Roseville.
- Other suburban cities and unincorporated areas within the 14 county Twin Cities Metro.

Notwithstanding the above, all Member Representatives will serve as representatives of the interests of the entire membership body, with a special duty to represent any minority or marginalized groups within the membership.

Proposed amendment to Item III, Section 1a

Current wording:

Section 1. Composition

a. 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.

Amended wording:

Section 1. Composition

a. The Steering Committee shall consist of **all of the officers and representatives** defined in Item II above, plus the elected representatives of any Branches ... formed as part of TCDSA.

Basics Behind Robert's Rules of Order

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "I move that_____."
- All motions must be seconded or they expire.
- Unless not debatable, motions are debated until ready for a vote (see below)
- A new motion is *not in order* when another motion is "on the floor" ie being considered, *except* a motion to amend the motion *or* moving the previous question.

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "I move the previous question."
- Must be seconded.
- Not debatable. Immediate vote on call of previous question, and if successful, immediate vote on the present motion.

EXTEND DEBATE

Rules say the debate is over, but you need more time.

- After recognition, "I move to suspend the rules to extend debate by _____."
- Must be seconded.
- Not debatable. Immediate vote, and if successful, debate continues on the present motion.
- Not in order if the previous question has been called (above.)

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "I move to adjourn."
- Always in order.
- Must be seconded.
- Not debatable. Immediate vote and if successful, the meeting is over.

The following are Points of Order rather than Motions and are always in order.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chair: "State your point."
- Members: "There is too much noise, I can't hear." (Example)

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

Grievance Committee Update and Nominees

Training for members who want to be on the Grievance Process Committee took place on 10/5 and 10/20. These 8 people have attended the training and are willing to commit to being our first committee members! Chapter membership vote to confirm them to the committee democratically. There are two more spots open on the committee, and recordings of the training sessions will be available soon, along with the regular reading group meetings for anyone still considering joining this committee!

Julia T
MacKenzie B
Caroline C
Meg B
Alex M
Ian M
JD H
Deb KR

\$

TCDSA Branches, Caucuses, Working Groups, Interest Groups, and Committees

Ecosocialism Branch: The ecosocialism branch is organized around this idea: current ecological crises facing the planet can only be addressed through anticapitalist means. Discussion of policies, depressing climate change news, and inspiring local actions through a socialist lens. *ecosocialism [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Electoral Branch: Working on utilizing electoral activities (election campaigns and outreach, pressure campaigns on elected officials) to push forward a socialist agenda. *electionguide [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Housing Justice Branch: We believe housing is a human right, but right now there are over 130,000 low-income renter families in the Twin Cities Metro who struggle to pay for housing. The Housing Justice Branch seeks to better understand the housing crisis and address housing instability through direct action and by influencing local public policy and planning. *housing [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Labor and Economic Justice Branch: Discussion of the labor movement and workers' fights against injustice – no union experience expected. Join us to discuss organizing in your workplace, show solidarity with struggles in our community, and plan events for the broader chapter. *labor [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Racial Justice Branch: The racial justice branch seeks to de-center whiteness and center racial equity, communities of color, womxn, poor & the working class, with the specific understanding that issues and identities are intersectional. We are currently active in the political education of TCDSA and involved externally in fighting ICE with a broader coalition of community organizations. All are welcome to join us. Contact us at *tcdsa.racialjustice [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Ramsey County Branch: Focusing on local issues affecting the densest county in the country. *ramseycounty [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Socialist Feminist Branch: The Socialist Feminist Branch believes in building solidarity and power at the intersections of gender, race, and class. We meet monthly for political education and action planning, hold occasional socials and chapter events, and host a reading group open to everyone. *socfem [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Left Social Democrats Caucus: We believe in the inherent goodness of the American people, and that if given a choice between actually-existing capitalism and a socialism that respects their values, beliefs, and rights, they will choose socialism of their own free will. We are DSAers who are also part of the new national North Star Caucus devoted to socialism and democracy. <http://www.lsdcdsa.org> and <https://www.dsanorthstar.org> *lsd@twincitiesdsa.org*

Libertarian Socialist Caucus: twincitiesdsa.org/contact

Socialists of Color Caucus: A space exclusively for people of color to meet each other and discuss common interests, values and goals as they relate to the current white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist, imperialist state of the world. Contact Nazir Khan, *nazirmkhan@gmail.com*

DSA for Bernie Working Group: Bernie Sanders' campaign is a historic opportunity to bring democratic socialist politics to millions of people. When Bernie says "not me, us," he's talking about an urgent political project: building a mass movement of working people that can change society. We're organizing to help get Sanders elected while also building our local capacity and skills for future projects. We'll start with

Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, powerful trade unions, tuition-free college, and an end to mass incarceration – but we won't stop there.

Grievance Process Working Group: A volunteer task force to create a proposed grievance and harassment process to implement transformative justice within the chapter. *Chairs [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Health Justice (Medicare-for-all) Working Group Through education and action, the Single-Payer/Healthcare Issues branch will work to promote a Medicare-for-All system both in Minnesota and across the nation. Only by totally and completely removing the private insurance industry from the picture can we bring fairness and justice to the provision of health care. *singlepayer [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Mutual Aid and Solidarity Economy Working Group: Mutual Aid involves comrades coming together to work as equals for the common good by assessing what people need and what people can provide. This working group coordinates projects such as brake light replacement clinics and the chapter solidarity fund. *mutualaid [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

No Cages MN Coalition: No Cages MN is a coalition of socialist organizations - comprised of members from TCDSA, General Defense Committee (GDC) and International Socialist Organization (ISO) - dedicated to preventing ICE expansion into Minnesota. The group plans actions that resist the Trump administration's current acts of violence against immigrants (particularly families at the border), as well as the United States's long anti-immigrant, white supremacist, colonialist, imperialist history. For more information or to get plugged in, follow us on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NoCagesMN/>

Religious Socialism Interest Group: Not just Christian, will be part of a national DSA Religious Socialists section. For members interested in integrating faith group social justice work into the struggle against capitalism. Contact Debra Ramage at *deborama [at] gmail.com*

Fundraising & Budget Committee: Come help set TCDSA's budget! We plan fixed and variable expenses, manage chapter assets and income, and set fundraising priorities. All members welcomed and encouraged to participate in this vital democratic process. *treasurer [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Inreach Committee: Inreach seeks to build connections between new members and experienced comrades, while also deepening the capacity for leadership with members who are just starting to get more involved. *Chairs [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Operations Committee: Works on keeping the chapter running smoothly. Helps to organize member meetings, logistics, communications, and other chapter business. *operations [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

Political Education Committee: Brainstorm and organize political education events, the Chapter Library, and more.

Steering Committee: Consists of elected chapter officers and elected representatives from branches. Meetings are open to all members. *chairs [at] twincitiesdsa.org*

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one
For the Union makes us strong

Chorus

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the Union makes us strong

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the union makes us strong

It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the cities where they trade
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid
Now we stand outcast and starving 'mid the wonders we have made
But the union makes us strong

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone
We have laid the wide foundations, built it skyward stone by stone
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own
While the union makes us strong

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn
But without our brain and muscle, not a single wheel can turn
We can break their haughty power gain our freedom when we learn
That the Union makes us strong

In our hands is placed a power **higher** than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousandfold
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old
For the Union makes us strong

All printing labor donated.
Join DSA at dsausa.org/join
Get involved and donate locally at
twincitiesdsa.org
A better world is possible.