

Standing Rules for Remote Participation

Adopted May 19th, 2020

Preamble

The 43rd District Democrats strive to make our events open, inclusive, and accessible to all members. We recognize that despite such efforts members may find that physical attendance at an event is impractical, impossible, or inadvisable. We further recognize that such circumstances may be unpredictable and may be either infrequent or chronic. We further recognize that physical attendance is not in itself a reliable indicator of a member's commitment or interest in the organization and its work. We further recognize that through remote participation technology, we can extend our meeting space virtually, enabling these members to actively engage with and participate in the work of the organization despite not being physically present at the event. These rules are written in the spirit of inclusivity, with the goal of enabling more of our community to participate fully in the work of the 43rd District Democrats.

Article 1 – General

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This document specifies Standing Rules for Remote Participation (“Rules”), in accordance with §4.3 of the Bylaws of the 43rd District Democrats (“Bylaws”). This document does not specify which software or tools the organization shall use as our Remote Participation System. Rather, it sets out the minimum requirements for a Remote Participation System, and defines policies and procedures for remote participation at Meetings via such a system.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 “Credentialed Electronic Ballot” shall refer to any Electronic Ballot that provides a means to ensure to a degree substantially similar to that of in-person voting methods in use by the 43rd District Democrats that:

- a. Only ballots cast by individuals entitled to participate in a vote affect the outcome of the vote;

- b. AND each individual entitled to participate in a vote casts no more than their allotted number of ballots for the vote.
 - 1.2.2** “Electronic Ballot” shall refer to any ballot that is issued, completed, returned, and tabulated electronically, in the process of conducting a vote.
 - 1.2.3** “Electronic Ballot Mechanism” shall refer to any component, mechanism, process, rules, or combination thereof within a Remote Participation System that supports conducting a vote via Electronic Ballot.
 - 1.2.4** “Executive Board” shall have its meaning as defined in the Bylaws.
 - 1.2.5** “Facilitator” shall refer to any individual who has been designated by the Chair to assist with managing the Remote Participation System during the course of the meeting, e.g., by selectively muting and unmuting Remote Participants, or alerting the Chair to motions from Remote Participants.
 - 1.2.6** “Local Participant” shall refer to any person who is physically present at the designated time and location of a Meeting such that they can participate in person.
 - 1.2.7** “Meeting” when not otherwise qualified shall refer to meetings of the 43rd District Democrats as defined by Article 4 of the Bylaws.
 - 1.2.8** “Real-Time Communication” shall refer to communication that occurs with minimal delay between parties, such that participants are able to converse in a manner substantially similar to if they were meeting face to face. Communication that features a noticeable but small delay between some or all participants (e.g., as occurs in some television interviews) is not necessarily excluded from this definition.
 - 1.2.9** “Remote Guest” shall refer to any user of a Remote Participation System who is not a voting Member.
 - 1.2.10** “Remote Participant” shall refer to any individual who:
 - a. is using a Remote Participation System to participate in a Meeting;
 - b. AND is a Member;
 - c. AND is not a Local Participant.
 - 1.2.11** “Remote Participation System” shall refer to any technology and associated rules and policies that:
 - a. is designated by the Executive Board as a mechanism for individuals to participate in Meetings without being physically present in a designated location

where the meeting is taking place (or where the meeting has no physical location);

- b.** AND conforms to the provisions of Article 3 of these Rules.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1** These Rules shall apply to all Meetings of the 43rd District Democrats, as defined in Article 4 of the Bylaws.

1.4 Remote Participation

- 1.4.1** The Executive Board shall make a good faith effort to provide at all Meetings the ability for Members to participate remotely via a Remote Participation System.
- 1.4.2** Remote Participants shall be permitted at all Meetings for which a Remote Participation System is available.
- 1.4.3** To the extent possible, the rights and privileges of a Remote Participant shall be the same as if they were a Local Participant, except where stated otherwise in these Rules.

1.5 Remote-Only Meetings

- 1.5.1** In the event that it is impractical or impossible for the membership to meet face-to-face safely and legally, the Executive Board may vote to hold a Meeting as a remote-only event, with no physical meeting location and no Local Participants allowed.
- 1.5.2** While Remote Participation improves access for many people, it can present barriers and challenges for others. As such, when deciding whether to hold a remote-only Meeting, the Executive Board should evaluate whether postponement is a viable option, and consider remote-only Meetings to be a last resort.
- 1.5.3** The provisions within this section apply only to Meetings as defined in §4 of the Bylaws, and do not apply to other activities (e.g., webinars, Q&A events, candidate panels) open to general membership and/or the public, activities of the Executive Board, or activities of individual committees.

Article 2 – Procedures

2.1 General Rules

- 2.1.1** Remote Participants who are present shall be counted for quorum and shall possess the same rights and privileges as they would if they were a Local Participant, unless otherwise stated in these Rules.
- 2.1.2** Communication channels within the Remote Participation System (e.g., audio, video, text) are extensions of the meeting space. As such, Remote Participants shall refrain from communicating via the Remote Participation System (e.g., mute their microphone, disable their camera, refrain from sending comments in chat) unless:
- a. They currently hold the floor;
 - b. OR they are seeking the floor via one of the processes described in §2.3;
 - c. OR they are making a motion or raising a point of order;
 - d. OR they are responding to a roll call or quorum call;
 - e. OR they are objecting to a call for unanimous consent;
 - f. OR they are asking the speaker a question during a Q&A session.
- 2.1.3** Remote Participants should not share connections to the Remote Participation System, and should connect separately (e.g., via different computers) if possible. Remote Participants that are sharing a connection may be prohibited from using some Electronic Ballot Mechanisms and be required to vote by roll call, as some mechanisms may not support casting multiple votes over one connection.

2.1.4

2.1 Presence

- 2.1.5** Like Local Participants, Remote Participants must be present in order to participate. Remote Participants shall be considered “present” provided that they are able to observe meeting activity and communicate with meeting participants in real time. Any available communication method (e.g., reading closed captions if available, sending messages through a chat feature rather than speaking) may be used, provided that it adequately communicates the information that is relevant to the matter.
- 2.1.6** A Remote Participant’s “present” status may change over time, much as a Local Participant may cease to be considered present upon leaving a meeting room, and once again be considered present upon returning to the room. If a Remote Participant’s ability to observe meeting activity is interrupted (e.g., by losing their connection to the Remote

Participation System or by muting the meeting audio) the Remote Participant shall no longer be considered present for the duration of the interruption.

2.1.7 Disruptions in the Remote Participant's ability to communicate (e.g., a Remote Participant muting their own microphone) shall not prevent a Remote Participant from being considered present provided that:

- a. the Remote Participant can remove the disruption (e.g., by unmuting their microphone) in a timely manner if and when they need to communicate;
- b. OR the disruption is due to an action taken by a Facilitator and can be removed by a Facilitator in a timely manner (e.g., a Facilitator using moderation tools to mute and unmute individuals).

2.2 Voting

2.2.1 Remote Participants may not cast votes by voice, by a show of hands or placards, by raising, or by any other physical means. Regardless of the voting method employed for Local Participants, Remote Participants shall always cast votes via Electronic Ballot or roll call.

2.2.2 The Chair shall ensure that Remote Participants are given a reasonable time to cast Electronic Ballots, and shall inform Remote Participants of the time limit for casting a ballot, if a fixed time limit is defined.

2.2.3 Remote Participants who are unable to vote via the Electronic Ballot Mechanism indicated by the Chair may vote by roll call instead. They must notify the Chair of their need to vote by roll call prior to the closure of the vote in order to be eligible for a roll call vote. This roll call vote shall occur following the closure of the polls for the Electronic Ballot Mechanism, but prior to announcing any results from those ballots.

2.2.4 When reporting results of a vote, subtotals shall be provided for each voting method (e.g., show of hands, Electronic Ballot, roll call).

2.2.5 No voting results shall be announced prior to the conclusion of all methods of voting.

2.2.6 The Chair may elect to forego polling of Remote Participants if the result from Local Participants' votes is such that the Remote Participant vote mathematically cannot alter the final result (i.e., if the number of Remote Participants is less than the margin of the vote).

2.2.7 The Chair may elect to forego polling of Remote Participants that require roll call voting if the result from Local Participants' and other Remote Participants' votes is such that the roll call vote mathematically cannot alter the final result.

2.3 Voting Method Selection

- 2.3.1** A Remote Participation System may define multiple Electronic Ballot Mechanisms, which may make different tradeoffs between speed, complexity, security, or other factors. Unless otherwise specified, the choice of mechanism to use for any given vote is at the Chair's discretion.
- 2.3.2** Prior to a vote, the Chair shall indicate the Electronic Ballot Mechanism to be used by Remote Participants for the vote, or whether roll call will be used instead.
- 2.3.3** When a vote is required to be taken by ballot, Remote Participants shall be required to vote via Credentialled Electronic Ballot or roll call.
- 2.3.4** Prior to taking a vote, any member eligible to participate in the vote may move to prescribe that Remote Participants cast their votes via Credentialled Electronic Ballot, or by roll call. Such a motion must be seconded, may not be debated or amended, and requires the support of 10% of those present and voting. Only those eligible to participate in the original vote may vote on such a motion. All other motions prescribing the method of voting specifically for Remote Participants are out of order.

2.4 Seeking the Floor

- 2.4.1** Remote Participants shall use the Remote Participation System's chat feature to indicate their desire to seek the floor, if they are able. The Chair may recognize Remote Participants seeking the floor directly, or designate to Facilitators the task of announcing by voice when a Remote Participant is seeking the floor, whereupon the Chair shall respond as they would to a Local Participant seeking the floor.
- 2.4.2** Remote Participants who cannot use the chat function shall seek the floor by voice. Seeking the floor by voice may be prohibited during some portions of a Meeting, at the Chair's discretion.

2.5 Making a Motion

- 2.5.1** A Remote Participant who has the floor may make a motion by voice. Otherwise, Remote Participants may make motions by text (essentially seeking the floor and stating their motion simultaneously). Motions made by text shall be announced by voice upon the maker of the motion obtaining the floor, either by the maker of the motion or a Facilitator.

2.6 Meeting Facilitation

- 2.6.1** At the start of each Meeting, the Chair shall appoint with the approval of the body one (1) or more Members to serve as Facilitators for the Meeting. The Chair may with the approval of the body appoint or remove Facilitators over the course of the Meeting.
- 2.6.2** Any Remote Participant or Remote Guest who does not currently hold the floor may be muted by a Facilitator on any communication channel.
- 2.6.3** A Facilitator may mute a Remote Participant or Remote Guest who holds the floor in order to address disruptions to the Meeting (e.g., microphone feedback, excessive background noise or static).

Article 3 – Remote Participation Systems

3.1 General Requirements

- 3.1.1** A Remote Participation System shall:
 - a.** Enable Real-Time Communication between Remote Participants via both audio, video, and text. Occasional delays due to technical issues (e.g., network congestion) may be tolerated;
 - b.** Allow audio, video, and text participation using any major web browser, without the installation of any additional software or hardware;
 - c.** Allow audio participation via telephone;
 - d.** Allow Facilitators to:
 - i.** Monitor who is attending and who is speaking and/or presenting content;
 - ii.** Selectively mute and unmute Remote Participants;
 - iii.** Remove a Remote Participant from the meeting.
 - e.** Allow a Remote Participant to control whether or not they are transmitting audio or video, and not allow a Facilitator to override the Remote Participant's decision not to transmit.
 - f.** Allow for meetings to be recorded by Remote Participants, and published to arbitrary services.

3.1.2 A Remote Participation System shall not:

- a. Require Remote Participants to pay any subscriptions or fees;
- b. Require Remote Participants to establish or maintain an account with a service provider that is not affiliated with the 43rd District Democrats.

3.2 Electronic Ballot Mechanisms

3.2.1 A Remote Participation System shall provide at minimum one (1) Electronic Ballot Mechanism through which Remote Participants may cast ballots on votes. A Remote Participation System may provide multiple such mechanisms. At minimum one (1) mechanism shall support Credentialled Electronic Ballots.

3.2.2 All Electronic Ballot Mechanisms shall provide a durable record of ballots that were cast.

3.2.3 If a Remote Participation System provides multiple Electronic Ballot Mechanisms, the choice of which to use for any given vote is at the discretion of the Chair, unless otherwise specified.

3.2.4 If the Chair selects an Electronic Ballot Mechanism that does not use Credentialled Electronic Ballots, prior to the vote a member may move to require the use of a mechanism that supports Credentialled Electronic Ballots. Or, following the vote, a member may move to retake the vote using a mechanism that supports Credentialled Electronic Ballots.

3.2.5 A motion to require the use of or retake a vote using Credentialled Electronic Ballots

3.2.6 If a vote is conducted via uncredentialled Electronic Ballot Mechanism, a member may move to retake it using a credentialled Electronic Ballot Mechanism instead. This motion requires support from only ten percent (10%) of members present and voting in order to pass.