

**Bylaws of the Heart of Iowa Local Chapter
of the Democratic Socialists of America**
[Adopted 12/10/2017]

ARTICLE I. Name.

The name of the Local Chapter will be the Heart of Iowa Local Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). DSA is a not-for-profit corporation.

ARTICLE II. Purpose.

The Heart of Iowa Local Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means/resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

DSA rejects an economic order based solely on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources, production, and economic planning, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent trade unions, women's groups, political parties, and other formations -- recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state. It is committed to a freedom of religion that acknowledges the rights of those for whom spiritual concerns are central.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic Left. In the long run, we hope to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States. Our strategy acknowledges the class structure of the U.S. society. This class structure means that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.

ARTICLE III. Membership.

Section 1. Membership.

Members of the Heart of Iowa Local Chapter of DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, who reside and/or work in Iowa counties of Boone, Hamilton, Hardin, Marshall, and Story. Individuals may not be members of the Local Chapter without being members of national DSA. It will be the responsibility of members 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

Section 2. Removal of Members.

If a member in good standing is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of national DSA, or if they are found to be consistently engaging in undemocratic, disruptive behavior, or if they are found to be under the discipline of any self-defined democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from the Local Chapter of DSA. In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally present written charges against the member in question to the Local Chapter Executive Committee, which will set the date of a Local Chapter meeting for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges and notice of the meeting a minimum of two (2) weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting, attended by at least six people or 20 percent of membership, whichever is higher. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Voluntary Donations.

As mandated by the national Constitution and Bylaws, the Local Chapter may establish a Local Chapter pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. The payment of a Local Chapter donation may not be a requirement for voting or for holding Local Chapter office.

Section 4. Privacy Concerns.

Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information. Members' email and phone numbers will not be shared without member consent.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.

Section 1. Chapter Convention.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one (1) Chapter Convention annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the Chapter Convention. Notice may be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must be sent a paper copy upon request. The Chapter Convention will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter. The Chapter Convention may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four (4) times annually, the time and place of which will be set in a schedule published and distributed by the chair (or co-chairs), or Local Chapter Executive Committee. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they may include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. The agenda must be sent out at least 24 hours before meetings. Time will be allocated at the end of the meeting for questions and discussion outside of the agenda. Members shall develop a set of standing rules to govern

conduct and discussion during meetings.

In general, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Local Chapter when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of 10 percent of the members (but not fewer than six (6) persons) is required to transact business during the Chapter Convention, Regular Meetings, or Emergency Meetings.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.

Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of the Local Chapter will be the Chairs (or Co-Chairs), Secretary, and Treasurer. All positions will have a one (1) year term. For all positions, term of office will begin on February 1 or until successors are elected. The officers cannot all be of the same gender.

Section 2. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office, the Local Chapter Executive Committee will appoint a replacement until the next regularly scheduled meeting, where there will be a special election.

Section 3. Co-Chairs.

a. The Co-Chairs will be the chief executive officers of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Local Chapter and Executive Committee meetings or will appoint a substitute to assume the powers and duties of the presiding officer as specified in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Co-Chairs will be the official public spokespersons for the Local Chapter and will initiate such actions and policies as the Local Chapter's general welfare may demand as laid out in the bylaws and community agreements.

b. The Co-Chairs will be responsible also for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter's branches and committees.

c. The Co-Chairs will report to Local Chapter Regular Meetings on the business of the Executive Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the minutes of those meetings will be available for inspection.

Section 4. Secretary.

a. The Secretary will be the primary person responsible for answering correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter, and for maintaining an up-to-date membership list of the Local Chapter. They will insure effective communication with national DSA. They will temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair, if neither Co-Chair is able to do so.

b. The Secretary will be responsible also for the taking and distributing of minutes of all Local Chapter and Executive Committee Meetings, and will have custody of these minutes, and the resolutions, reports and other official records of the Local Chapter. They will transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records will include meeting minutes and member lists.

Section 5. Treasurer.

The Treasurer will be responsible for the funds and financial records of the Local Chapter. All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who will deposit them in a local bank or credit union account under the name of the Local Chapter. In cooperation with the Secretary, the Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that membership dues are paid up-to-date. The Treasurer will prepare the annual Local Chapter budget and deliver the Local Chapter financial report to the Chapter Convention of the Local Chapter, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Executive Committee of the Local Chapter.

Section 6. Additional Duties.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may assign additional temporary duties to an officer of the Local Chapter, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws. Members of the Local Chapter Executive Committee will be responsible for the social media of Heart of Iowa DSA. All members of the Local Chapter Executive Committee will have access to all Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter social media accounts. Members of the Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter are encouraged to send potential social media content to Members of the Local Chapter Executive Committee.

Section 7. Removal of Officers

Any officer of the Local Chapter Executive Committee can be removed through the following procedure. First, a member of the chapter must submit a written request for removal of the officer to all members of the Executive Committee—either via email or at a Local Chapter Meeting. Second, the Local Chapter Executive Committee must distribute the request for removal to the general membership within two (2) weeks of receiving the request. Third, the Local Chapter Executive Committee must either schedule a meeting at which the request for removal will be discussed, and at which the officer in question can respond to the request for removal, or add such discussion and response as an agenda item for the next Regular Meeting, subject to the following constraint: the meeting at issue must be scheduled at least two (2) weeks after and no more than one (1) month after the request for removal is distributed to the general membership. Fourth, the Executive Committee must hold a vote to remove the officer at the next Regular Meeting. A vote of two-thirds (⅔) of the attending members at a Regular Meeting attended by at least 6 members, or 20 percent of the chapter membership, whichever is higher, is needed to remove an officer from their position. Should an officer be removed from their position, they may still remain members of the chapter unless submitted to the process for removal of members outlined in Article III - Section 2.

Section 8. Challenging Officers' Decisions

Members of the local chapter can challenge any decision made for the chapter by the Local Chapter Executive Committee or any member of that committee. A simple majority vote at a Regular Meeting shall be sufficient to overturn the decision in question.

ARTICLE VI. Executive Committee.

Section 1. Composition.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will be composed of the four (4) officers of the Local Chapter and the representatives of any Local Chapter branches, who must be dues paying members.

Section 2. Duties.

a. The Executive Committee administers the affairs of the Local Chapter and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings. It will have the power to receive reports of any committee or branch, and advise thereon, to call Emergency Meetings of the Local Chapter, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Executive Committee is the regular executive body of the Local Chapter, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, the General and Regular Meetings.

b. The Local Chapter Executive Committee will be responsible for establishing program activities for the Local Chapter, for proposing guidelines and policies that will subsequently be voted on by members in good standing of DSA, and for acting on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings.

Section 3. Meetings.

The meetings of the Executive Committee will be held at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Executive Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three (3) members of the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee must be given one (1) day oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Executive Committee Meetings, but not for Emergency Meetings.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of three (3) members of the Executive Committee is required for the transaction of Executive Committee business. The transaction of Executive Committee business requires support from a majority of the total Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

Section 1. Definition.

A branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five (5) members in good

standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. Each branch will be entitled to one elected representative who will hold membership and voting rights on the Local Chapter Executive Committee. No member may be the representative for more than one branch.

Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters within the geographic area defined by a DSA Local Chapter may affiliate as a branch of that Local Chapter, in which case the local YDSA chapter may send a representative to the Local Chapter Executive Committee. The representative from YDSA shall have voting rights at any meeting of the Local Chapter Executive Committee that that representative attends.

The Heart of Iowa Chapter will organize an annual meeting between the Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter and any interested local YDSA chapters.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees.

Section 1. Duration.

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of members in good standing at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter. Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups will provide a mission statement to the Local Chapter.

Section 2. Duties.

Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees will keep the Executive Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on the activities of the committee.

ARTICLE IX. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.

Section 1. Convention.

Local Chapter delegates and alternates to the National Convention will be elected by members in good standing of the Local Chapter of DSA. Elections for the National Convention delegation will be held on the schedule announced by the national organization.

ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity

The Heart of Iowa Local Chapter will not engage in activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines established for 501(c)(4) organizations or similar rules established by the state of Iowa. Nor will the Local Chapter engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

ARTICLE XI. Elections, Nominations and Recalls.

Section 1. Elections Committee.

A three (3)-person Elections Committee will be established at least one (1) month prior to every election by vote of a Regular Meeting. It will solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected. It will determine both the voting procedure (subject to the constraint that it chooses some version of a ranked-choice system), and a procedure to ensure that not all members of the Local Branch Executive Committee are of the same gender.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention will be opened at least ten (10) days before the meeting, and will close at the start of the meeting. The call for nominations will be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation. If any member objects to such election by acclamation, members must vote “yes” or “no” for the nominee.

Section 4. Voting Eligibility

Only members of the Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter may vote.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five (5) members of the Local Chapter of DSA, and submitted to the Executive Committee at least two (2) weeks in advance of the Local Convention or a Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with one (1) weeks’ written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two (2) consecutive Regular Local Chapter meetings, or by a majority vote at the Local Convention.

ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter.

Section 1. Rules.

The Rules contained in Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, will govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Consensus decision-making is desirable where feasible, but meetings must submit to Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised upon the request of a member.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

Any action taken by an officer or member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

ARTICLE XIV. Endorsement of Candidates

Section 1. Local, County, and State Elections

For any candidate for public office, the Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter will endorse the candidate for that office if and only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- (1) A petition for endorsement signed by at least six (6) members is brought to the Executive Committee.
- (2) The endorsement is opened for debate during at least one Regular Meeting (and it has

been announced at least ten (10) days prior to that meeting that the endorsement would be considered at that meeting).

- (3) Two-thirds of those present at the meeting affirm each of three propositions by sequential vote: (i) the candidate shares and will advance a wide range of values of democratic socialism; (ii) the candidate shares and will advance values of democratic socialism more than any other candidate in the field; (iii) the Heart of Iowa DSA Local Chapter should endorse the candidate.

Section 2. National Elections

The Chapter will develop a process to recommend endorsement of national candidates.

Section 3. Endorsement Definition

Endorsement is defined by a commitment to devote significant chapter resources, time, and labor to campaigning for a candidate.