

# Cleveland Heights Dems Club – Bylaws Committee

## Summary of proposed changes to Constitution and Bylaws

May 9, 2024

1. **Dues** – Bylaws at Section 1 provide:

The proposed change relates to setting dues. Today, dues currently \$25 per year for all members.

The change permits different dues levels. The Bylaws do not expressly allow different levels, but do currently allow the Board to determine dues, with ratification by members. As the change says, the levels we have in mind are lower dues for students and senior citizens, at \$10. We intend that this will make dues more affordable for students and senior citizens (65 and older).

Otherwise, we will retain \$25 dues, but also offer a higher dues level at \$50 as an option.

According to the Bylaws, any changes to the dues are subject to approval by the Board and ratification by the members. That remains the rule if the revision is approved. The specific changes to dues then would need to come back to the members for ratification after the Board votes. The vote at the member meeting is only to change the text to allow different dues levels.

2. **Endorsements** – The endorsement provisions are in the Bylaws at Section 6.

There are several points to consider for changes. Some are substantive and some are just formatting to make the provisions easier to read.

- a. For format, we added some indents and further paragraph labels to make it easier to understand this provision.
- b. Section 6.b.1 - Review of voting record – The changes reflect the policy we have been using, namely, that the Screening Committee will receive and consider a report on voting record of each candidate, and that the voting record search results will be shared at the member meeting at which endorsements are considered. Section 6.a now has a statement that the Screening Committee will include voting record and compliance information in its report at the endorsement meeting.
- c. Section 6.b.1 - We modified the text to drop the reference to a party affiliation affidavit because no such thing exists. Section 6.b.1 in the new version refers to confirmation of voting record by reviewing BOE records **or** seeking confirmation from the County Democratic Party (because the County also confirms voting record.) We also provided that the chair of the Screening Committee may delegate the research task to any Voting Member. Steve Ingalls has done the search in recent elections, as he is very familiar with using the BOE database.
- d. Section 6.b.3 – Look back period for party unity rules – The Bylaws at Section 6.b.3 currently require that a candidate has satisfied the party unity rules, which

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are set forth in Section 6.b.1 and 6.b.2, during the prior 5 years. We had a suggestion from a member that we shorten this to 3 years. The Bylaws Committee decided to change the rule so that a candidate must have satisfied the party unity rules during the period since the second most recent primary election held in Cuyahoga County.

- e. Section 6.c (previously labeled 6.b.4) - We added text about how non-compliance with the preconditions would be handled and disclosed.
  - f. Section 6.d. - We added a new paragraph letter for the Multi-opening Race provisions.
  - g. Section 6.e - We re-labeled what was Section 6.b.5 as 6.e.
3. **Amendments of Constitution and Bylaws** – Michael Bending pointed out that the rules for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws differ.  
In the Constitution at Article IX, 2/3rds vote is needed for amendment.  
In the Bylaws at Section 4, a simple majority is needed for amendment.  
Roberts Rules calls for a 2/3rds vote for adopting or amendment bylaws.  
We propose that we use 2/3rds for both.
4. **Miscellaneous** – We revised Bylaws Section 2 to refer to payment of expenses by debit card as well as by check, to reflect current practices.  
We made a few edits to the document to use gender neutral language.
5. **Additional change considered** – Jen Holland proposed that we add this to the Bylaws: “At any time, any current Heights Dems Board Member seeking any elected official seat within Cuyahoga County, shall recuse themselves from serving as a Board Member during their campaign.” This was discussed by the Committee. It was not approved.

The Bylaws Committee  
Harriet Applegate  
Jen Holland  
Graig Kluge  
T Nadas  
Linda Striefsky

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