

(Revised April 14, 2021)

**BYLAWS OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDER, QUEER+ DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS, A CHARTERED CHAPTER OF THE
FLORIDA LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER+ DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Hillsborough County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Democratic Caucus, united in a common purpose to strengthen and further the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party, that recognizes and promotes diversity, good will and respect for all members of the community, do hereby adopt and uphold these bylaws.

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this Chapter shall be the Hillsborough County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Democratic Caucus (hereinafter referred to as "Chapter"), a Chartered Chapter of the Florida Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Democratic Caucus (hereinafter referred to as "Caucus").

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter shall be:

- To promote the candidacy of Democrats specifically committed to the principle that ALL persons deserve equal rights, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression;
- To encourage voter registration and advocate for issues without discrimination;
- To stimulate active interest in political and governmental affairs;
- To strengthen and to further the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party;
- To promote participation among Democrats;
- To support and elect the duly selected nominees of the Democratic Party in national, state, and local campaigns; and
- To work with other LGBTQ+, like-minded organizations and allies, united in a common purpose.

Section 2. Mission

Further, it shall be the mission of this Chapter to foster goodwill between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ and allied members of the Democratic Party and the community at large. We seek to work with other LGBTQ+, like-minded organizations and allies, united in a common purpose. We seek individual freedom in the framework of a just society and political freedom in the framework of meaningful participation by all citizens.

Section 3. Endorsements

In all federal and statewide primaries, elections, or runoffs, the Chapter shall be bound by the Caucus' endorsement or non-endorsement action. In state and local races within the Chapter's geographic area, the Chapter reserves the right to endorse candidates in primaries, elections or runoffs once the qualifying period has ended. The Political Action/Campaign Committee shall develop and maintain an endorsement procedure for candidate endorsements. The procedure shall be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee and Membership as needed. Those who have been members at least forty-five (45) days are eligible to vote on endorsements. At no time will this Chapter support any non-Democrat against a Democrat in any election, including judicial and non-partisan elections.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Chapter Membership

Democrats registered to vote in the state of Florida supportive of the objectives of this Chapter shall be eligible for membership. No other residency restrictions may be placed upon membership or the privileges of membership in this Chapter. In accordance with Article VI of the Florida Democratic Party Bylaws, those Members permitted to vote in any Chapter election for officers must be a Member of the Chapter at least forty-five (45) days prior to the date of such election, except for the organizational meeting of this Chapter.

Section 2. Associate Membership

Associate Members are supporters of the Chapter but do not qualify or choose to be a Member. They may not vote but may speak at meetings and assist on committees. Elected officials and candidates in the current election cycle seeking membership will be enrolled as Associate Members.

Section 3. Dues

The Steering Committee shall determine the annual dues of each category of membership or affiliation. Dues paid during the final quarter of the calendar year will carry membership privileges through the end of the following year. Members who do not renew by the last day of February will be placed in an inactive status. The Membership Committee will notify those in arrears by mail, telephone, e-mail or other electronic means before membership expires. People in inactive status renewing membership will fall under the 45-day requirement for voting.

Payment of dues shall entitle anyone who subscribes to the purpose and mission of the Chapter to membership as either a Member or Associate Member.

Section 4. Resignation from Membership

Members desiring to resign from the Chapter shall submit their resignation in writing by mail, e-mail or other electronic means to the Secretary and President.

ARTICLE IV RECERTIFICATION

Section 1. Charter Recertification

When the Florida Democratic Party re-certifies caucuses, the Chapter shall apply to the Membership and Chartering Committee of the Caucus for charter recertification. Failure to do so shall result in the forfeiture of all rights and privileges of the use of the word Democrat, Democratic, or derivative thereof.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

Section 1.

The elected Officers of this Chapter shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President may appoint an Historian, a Parliamentarian and a Sergeant-at-Arms as ex-officio, non-voting officers. All Officers are required to be current dues-paying Chapter members and shall perform the duties prescribed in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, the parliamentary authority for the Chapter, as modified and amplified by these Bylaws. Officers are required to execute the loyalty oath form included in the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party.

Section 2.

All terms of office shall be for two years. Officers shall be eligible for no more than four consecutive terms in the same office. Assumption of a vacant office mid-term is not subject to the consecutive term limit.

Section 3.

No Member shall hold more than one elected office at a time.

Section 4.

Chapter elections will be held during the first quarter of the year in which the Florida Democratic Party re-certifies caucuses, or on a date determined by the officers. A 14-day notice by mail, telephone, e-mail or other electronic means will be given before the election.

Section 5.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) Members appointed by the President, and the Committee will establish the election guidelines. Prior to the election, the Nominating Committee shall prepare one ballot for each office, with the names of the duly qualified candidates. Each ballot will be printed with the name of the Chapter on the top, followed by the position to be voted upon, with the candidates' names printed on the ballot. There will be a blank line or lines provided for each office, for additional nominations from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall preside over and conduct the election process in person, by telephone, e-mail or other electronic means, including verifying that all voting members are eligible per Article III Section 1.

Section 6. Election Process

Election shall be by secret ballot. Elections may be by acclamation, if only one nominee is presented. All ballots shall be kept by the Secretary of the Chapter for a period of thirty days following the date of the election and shall be available for review by any member. After this, the ballots shall be retained for a period of three years, after which time they may be destroyed.

ARTICLE VI DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Chapter; shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee; shall appoint all the Standing and Special Committees and their Chairs; shall represent the Chapter at county, district and state functions or appoint a representative; shall give guidance to the Chair of each committee; and shall perform all duties pertaining to the office of the President.

Section 2.

The Vice President shall render all possible assistance to the President in matters pertaining to the Chapter and shall assume the office in the absence of, or inability of, the President to serve.

Section 3.

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all meetings of the Chapter and Steering Committee; shall maintain a current list of members with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and precinct numbers; and shall have a copy of the Chapter Bylaws with any amendments properly recorded.

Section 4.

The Treasurer shall receive all monies of the Chapter; shall keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures; shall present a statement of all income and all expenditures at each meeting occurring since the previous meeting of the Chapter, and at other times when requested by the Steering Committee; and shall pay out funds only as authorized by the Steering Committee. Books of the Treasurer shall be audited by the Audit Committee at the end of each calendar year. Checks shall be signed jointly by the Treasurer and one other elected Officer. The Chapter may use online banking with an established protocol to safeguard Chapter assets.

Section 5.

Officers are required to attend Steering Committee meetings and general membership meetings. Unexcused absences may result in removal from office per Article IX, Section 3 of these Bylaws.

Section 6. The creation of additional offices shall be undertaken in the Bylaws at the time when they are adopted or amended.

ARTICLE VII STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1.

The Steering Committee shall consist of the elected Officers and all Chairs of the Standing Committees and are required to be current dues-paying Chapter Members. Steering Committee members are required to execute the loyalty oath form included in the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party.

Section 2.

The duties of the Steering Committee shall be to plan each month's general membership meeting to be organized, to transact business of the Chapter in regular or special meetings and to make recommendations to the Chapter.

Section 3.

Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be held no more than ten (10) days prior to the regular membership meeting of the Chapter, or at the request of the President, or at the request of three members of the Steering Committee, at least one of whom must be an elected officer in person, by telephone or other electronic means.

Section 4.

Thirty percent (30%), with a minimum of two Officers at least one of whom must be an elected Officer and three people total shall constitute a quorum of the Steering Committee. Steering Committee meetings may be held in person, by telephone or other electronic means.

Section 5.

The President shall not vote except in the case of a tie.

ARTICLE VIII GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Section 1.

Regular meetings of the Chapter shall be held in person, by telephone or other electronic means monthly, on the 2nd Wednesday of the month unless otherwise ordered by the Steering Committee.

Section 2.

Special general membership meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Steering Committee, with one week's notice to the members by mail, telephone, e-mail or other electronic means. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice and will be held in person, by telephone or other electronic means.

Section 3.

Twenty percent (20%) of the total membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or special meeting. A majority vote of those members in attendance is necessary to carry motions.

Section 4.

All meetings in person shall be in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities. In virtual meetings, efforts will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities.

ARTICLE IX VACANCIES AND REMOVAL

Section 1. Vacancy of President

If a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall become President for the remainder of the term.

Section 2. Other Elected Officer Vacancies

Other vacancies shall be filled on an interim basis by appointment of the President, until an election can be scheduled. A 14-day notice by mail, telephone, e-mail or other electronic means will be given before that regular meeting, at which time the position will be filled for the remainder of the term by nominations from the floor. Election shall be by secret ballot. Elections may be by acclamation, if only one nominee is presented for the vacancy. All ballots shall be kept by the Secretary of the Chapter for a period of thirty days following the date of the election and shall be available for review by any member. After this, the ballots shall be retained for a period of three years, after which time they may be destroyed.

Section 3. Removal

Any elected Officer may be removed upon a two-thirds vote of the members at any regular or special general membership meeting after at least ten days' notice by mail, telephone, e-mail or other electronic means to the membership that a motion for the purpose of removal of such Officer will be considered at such regular or special meeting. The removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, abandonment of office, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties or conviction of a felony. Any absence from four Steering Committee meetings within a calendar year may constitute neglect of duty. Unexcused absences from two consecutive regular Steering Committee meetings shall constitute abandonment of office.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEES

Section 1.

The Standing Committees shall be Development, Bylaws, Political Action/Campaign, Membership, Communications, Audit and Legislative. The Chairs of these committees shall be appointed by the President following the election of Officers. All Chairs must be dues-paying

Members and are required to execute the loyalty oath form included in the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party. All Chairs serve at the pleasure of the President.

Section 2.

Standing Committee Responsibilities

1. The Development Committee shall assist the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget and maintaining the financial records of the Chapter. This committee is also responsible for raising funds to support Chapter activities.
2. The Bylaws Committee shall recommend such changes in the bylaws as appear necessary and feasible from time to time.
3. The Political Action/Campaign Committee shall review and recommend local candidates for endorsement per the Endorsement Policy and work toward the election of Democratic nominees who support the goals of this Chapter for the area covered by the Chapter, including county, state, and federal candidates.
4. The Membership Committee shall verify that all persons applying for membership are, in fact, registered Democrats and shall also organize and assist with membership campaigns.
5. The Communications Committee shall see that all activities, including meetings, are advertised through the media. It is also responsible for maintaining the Chapter online presence.
6. The Audit Committee shall review the financial records for accuracy and submit a report to the Steering Committee summarizing the results of the review.
7. The Legislative Committee shall keep the Chapter updated on local and state legislation pertinent to the LGBTQ+ community. They will also review and make recommendations on local referenda for endorsement.

Section 3.

Special committees may be created and dissolved by the President as needed. The President shall appoint Chairs of special committees; all Chairs serve at the pleasure of the President.

ARTICLE XI ACCOUNTABILITY

Section 1.

Dissolution: In the event this Chapter wishes to dissolve, a resolution stating the date of dissolution and the reasons for same shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Chapter after being submitted in writing by mail, e-mail or other electronic means at the previous meeting in person, by telephone or other electronic means. When the Chapter disbands for any reason, the Chapter's assets and funds, after all debts are satisfied, shall become the property of the Caucus.

Section 2.

Grievances: Chapter disputes and grievances shall be resolved with the Caucus.

ARTICLE XII PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws, any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt, the rules of the Caucus, Florida Democratic Party and Democratic National Committee.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote at a regular meeting in person, by telephone or other electronic means pursuant to notification by mail, e-mail or other electronic means one week prior to the meeting. Bylaws and any changes or amendments are subject to approval of the Florida Democratic Party Committee on Clubs, Organizations, and Caucuses together with copies of the minutes of the meeting at which these amendments were adopted.

ARTICLE XIV ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROVISIONS

The Chapter hereby adopts and shall enforce the following anti-discrimination provisions:

Section 1.

No Democratic Loyalty Oath shall be used which has the effect of requiring members of the Democratic Party to condone or support discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Section 2.

The time and place for all public meetings of the Chapter shall be publicized fully in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons and shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Section 3.

To fully inform prospective and current members of a full description of the legal, practical and pertinent procedures for selection of all Democratic Caucus Chapter representatives and officers, the Chapter will publicize in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested Democrats, in time, to have an adequate opportunity to participate.

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By a vote of 16 YEAS and 0 NAYS, on August 2, 2005, the Bylaws were approved by the Chapter.

Subsequent amendments include:

1. By a vote of 15 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of August 2, 2005 were amended by the Chapter on November 8, 2005,
2. By a vote of 18 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of November 8, 2005 were amended by the Chapter on April 11, 2007.
3. By a vote of 18 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of April 11, 2007 were amended by the Chapter on June 1, 2009.
4. By a vote of 15 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of June 1, 2009 were amended by the Chapter on February 13, 2013
5. By a vote of 15 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of February 13, 2013 were amended by the Chapter on February 12, 2014.
6. By a vote of 16 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of February 12, 2014 were amended by the Chapter on May 13, 2015.
7. By a vote of 24 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of May 13, 2015 were amended by the Chapter on June 10, 2015.
8. By a vote of 27 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of June 10, 2015 were amended by the Chapter on April 12, 2017.
9. By a vote of 27 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of April 12, 2017 were amended by the Chapter on April 10, 2019.
10. By a vote of 22 YEAS and 0 NAYS, the Bylaws of April 10, 2019 were amended by the Chapter on May 13, 2020.
11. By a vote of 17 YEAS and 1 NAYS, the Bylaws of May 13, 2020 were amended by the Chapter on April 14, 2021.