

# Rules for the Selection of Democratic Candidates and Nominees for Public Office

As approved by the Washington State Democratic Central Committee on September 26, 2009

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- 1 I. **Applicability.** These Rules shall apply to the selection of any candidate or nominee for  
2 public office who intends to be, or is, associated with the Democratic Party, directly or  
3 indirectly, on any ballot used in a publicly financed election or candidate selection  
4 process.  
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- 6 II. **Exclusive Means of Selection.** Candidates and nominees of the Democratic Party for  
7 public office must be selected by one of the means specified in these Rules.  
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- 9 III. **Democratic Primary.** Where State law provides for a public primary that complies with  
10 these Rules (hereinafter a “Democratic Primary”), candidates and nominees shall be  
11 selected by means of that Democratic Primary; provided that in the event of a vacancy  
12 on the Democratic ticket, the State Chair may fill the vacancy as specified in State law  
13 and applicable Party rules.  
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- 15 IV. **Rules Governing Democratic Primaries.** A public primary must comply with the  
16 following rules in order to qualify as a Democratic Primary where candidates or  
17 nominees will be selected by means of the primary:
- 18 A. **Separate Democratic Ballot Required.** All Democratic Primaries occurring on a  
19 single date shall appear on the same ballot. The ballot provided to voters in the  
20 Democratic Primaries may not contain the names of any candidate for office who  
21 is affiliated with any other political party, or of no political party, except that the  
22 State may provide to voters a ballot that may be simultaneously used in the  
23 Democratic Primaries and in primaries for offices in which no candidate’s name  
24 is associated with any political party or persuasion, and in such case the ballot  
25 may contain the names of all candidates for such offices.
- 26 B. **Opportunity to Join or Confirm Membership in the Party Must be Provided.**  
27 Voters participating in the Democratic Primary must be offered the opportunity  
28 to publicly affiliate with the Democratic Party but public affiliation with the  
29 Party shall not be a requirement of participation in the Democratic Primary  
30 unless such public affiliation is required by law. As a condition of participating  
31 in the Democratic Primary, voters must either publicly affiliate with the  
32 Democratic Party or publicly indicate that they are not affiliated with any  
33 political party.
- 34 C. **Voter Participation is Public Record.** The participation of any voter in the  
35 Democratic Primary shall be a public record to the extent necessary to verify that  
36 only voters eligible under party rules receive a Democratic ballot and, in  
37 addition, the choice by any voter whether to voluntarily affiliate with the  
38 Democratic Party at the Democratic Primary or to declare a lack of affiliation  
39 with any political party shall be a public record.

1 D. **A Statewide System of Voluntary Voter Registration by Party** which allows  
2 voters to publicly affiliate with the Democratic Party shall satisfy the  
3 requirements of Subparagraph B, of this paragraph.  
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5 V. **Alternative Means of Selection.** Where State law does not provide for a Democratic  
6 Primary that complies with these Rules, candidates and nominees shall be selected in  
7 accordance with the following rules, provided that in the event of a vacancy on the  
8 Democratic ticket, the State Chair may fill the vacancy as provided by State law and  
9 other applicable Party rules.

10 A. **Authorization Required.** No candidate for public office may campaign as a  
11 Democratic candidate except as authorized pursuant to these Rules. No  
12 candidate for public office may be designated, nor permit him or herself to be  
13 designated, as the Democratic nominee for any public office unless such  
14 candidate has been designated by the Washington State Democratic Party as a  
15 Democratic nominee pursuant to this Rule.

16 B. **Nomination Process**

- 17 1. **County Partisan Office Nominees.** The nominees for county partisan  
18 office shall be chosen at a county nominating convention or optionally at  
19 county council district nominating conventions, consisting of elected and  
20 appointed precinct committee officers representing precincts in that  
21 county or council district. Such nominating conventions shall be called by  
22 the Chair of the County Democratic Party not later than 45 days and held  
23 not less than 14 days prior to the date filing for office commences. The  
24 results from each nominating convention shall be reported to the Chair of  
25 the Washington State Democratic Party within 24 hours after the  
26 convention has adjourned.
- 27 2. **Legislative Nominees.** The nominees for Washington State Senate and  
28 Washington State House of Representatives shall be chosen at a legislative  
29 district nominating convention consisting of elected and appointed  
30 precinct committee officers representing precincts in that legislative  
31 district. Such nominating conventions shall be called by the Chair of the  
32 Legislative District Democratic Party not later than 45 days and held not  
33 less than 14 days prior to the date filing for office commences. The results  
34 from each nominating convention shall be reported to the Chair of the  
35 Washington State Democratic Party within 24 hours after the convention  
36 has adjourned.
- 37 3. **Majority Vote Required.** The candidate of the Democratic Party shall be  
38 the candidate who receives a majority vote of weighted ballots. If no  
39 candidate receives a majority of the first ballot, the candidate receiving the  
40 least number of votes shall be dropped from each successive ballot until a  
41 candidate receives a majority. In the event of a tie in determining which  
42 candidate shall be dropped, the candidate shall be chosen by lot.  
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4. **Failure to Call or Nominate.** If any County or Legislative District Chair fails to call a nominating convention as required by subparagraphs 1 or 2, the Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party shall issue the call or fill any vacancy created by the failure of the County or Legislative District Chair to issue a call. In any case where the appropriate convention has failed to designate a nominee, the nominee will be designated by the Democratic State Central Committee acting through its Chair.
  5. **Statewide and Congressional Nominees.** The nominees for all statewide partisan elected offices (Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, and Public Lands Commissioner) shall be selected at the Democratic State Convention in accordance with the rules for the Convention. Nominees for United States House of Representatives shall be selected by the State Central Committee. Congressional District Caucuses of those State Central Committee Members that reside in the Congressional District under consideration shall nominate a candidate. The selection of the nominees from each Congressional District shall be subject to a vote of affirmation by the State Central Committee in accordance with the rules of the State Central Committee. If a majority present and voting at the State Central Committee does not vote to affirm a selection by a Congressional District Caucus, or a Caucus does not select a nominee, then the nominee shall be selected by the State Central Committee in accordance with the rules of the State Central Committee.
    - a. The procedures set forth in subparagraph 5 may be delegated in whole or in part by a vote of those entitled to vote to the Washington State Democratic Central Committee.
  6. **Rules for Balloting.** Each candidate or the candidate's representative shall be entitled to address the convention or meeting for not less than two minutes, or longer if provided for under rules adopted to govern the convention. Each delegate shall vote by signed ballot for no more than one candidate for each office for which nominations are sought. The results shall be tallied and reported to the Chair. The convention may dispense with balloting and nominate by acclamation for any office in which a single candidate is seeking nomination.
  7. **Weighted Voting.** The number of votes at each nominating convention other than the state convention shall be equal to the sum of the number of precinct level delegates that were allocated to the precincts that are represented at the convention during the most recent National Delegate Selection process. Each elected or appointed PCO voting at the caucus or convention shall be apportioned the number of votes equal to the number of precinct level delegates his or her precinct was allotted during the most recent National Delegate Selection process. In the case of newly formulated precincts the calculation would be based on the allocation formula used in the most recent delegate selection plan.

- 1 8. These rules are mandatory and are not amendable by any party  
2 organization other than the Washington State Democratic Central  
3 Committee or the State Convention.  
4 9. **State Chair to Notify Election Officials.** To the extent required by law or  
5 appropriate, the State Chair shall submit to state and local election  
6 officials the names of those candidates authorized to campaign as  
7 Democratic candidates and those candidates designated as Democratic  
8 nominees.

- 9 C. **Vacancy on Ticket.** A vacancy caused by the death or disqualification of  
10 nominee of the Democratic Party may be filled at any time up to and including  
11 the day prior to the election for that position. For state partisan offices in any  
12 political subdivision voted on solely by electors of a single county, an individual  
13 shall be appointed to fill such vacancy by the relevant Democratic County  
14 Central Committee. For all other partisan offices, including federal or statewide  
15 offices, an individual shall be appointed to fill such vacancy by the Washington  
16 State Democratic Central Committee. The authority granted under this section  
17 may be delegated by the County or State Democratic Central Committee to its  
18 Executive Board or Chair.  
19 D. As a threshold of support for election under this Rule, a registered voter must  
20 have either (1) received a vote of approval of 25% of those present and voting at  
21 a meeting of the Democratic Party organization under the charter for the  
22 jurisdiction represented by the office sought or (2) at the time of filing the  
23 declaration of candidacy required by law submitted a nominating petition signed  
24 by at least 5% of those voters who at the time of signing are voters in the  
25 jurisdiction and registered with the Democratic Party or (3) at the time of filing  
26 the declaration of candidacy required by law submitted a nominating petition  
27 signed by at least 25% of the elected and appointed Democratic Precinct  
28 Committee Officers represented precincts within the jurisdiction represented by  
29 the office sought and who held such office as of the last meeting of the  
30 Democratic party organization for the jurisdiction.  
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- 32 VI. **Threshold demonstration of Party support required.** Any registered voter in the State  
33 of Washington is eligible for selection as a candidate or nominee of the Democratic  
34 Party for any public office provided:  
35 A. The voter must publicly attest his or her support of the Democratic Party and his  
36 or her desire to be publicly known as a Democrat; and  
37 B. The voter must be otherwise eligible under state law for election to the office  
38 sought; and  
39 C. The voter must not have been registered as a member of any political party other  
40 than the Democratic Party for at least one (1) year immediately preceding filing  
41 for office.  
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43 VII. **Decision of Executive Board Final.** The decision of the executive board with respect to  
44 any question of interpretation of these rules is final