

Dear 2021 NHDP Midterm Convention Delegates:

The New Hampshire Democratic Party Rules Committee is proud to offer for the delegates' consideration changes to grow the membership of the New Hampshire Democratic Party. This year's amendment further empowers its members in the party's governance and expands our commitment to the inclusion of all.

Background:

Over the two last decades, the Rules Committee has brought forth changes that have been approved by the NHDP Midterm Convention that has resulted in tripling the size of the New Hampshire Democratic Party State Committee. Currently, there are 277 members; the proposed changes would add 47 members. Our NH State Party continues to have one of the largest State Committees in the nation, which further increases this ratio. The Rules Committee has carefully worked to expand the membership to ensure that no one single constituency holds a significant plurality of the entire membership. It is crucial that as we make changes to our governing document that we are mindful, there is a balance of the various stakeholders in the party - whether that be federal, state, county, local elected officials; county committees; town committees; constituency group members; or other party elected officials.

There continues to be a discussion around increasing the membership of the State Committee. There are some who have suggested that we further increase the membership by adding all Democratic House members or all Town Officers. These combined proposals could push State Committee membership very close to 1,000 members. The Rules Committee continues to be concerned that the membership is a manageable and practical number.

Process:

On March 14, 2021, the State Committee elected the following members to the Rules Committee: Ryan Mahoney, Gene Martin, Hon. Liz McConnell, Hon. Mindi Messmer, Rep. Tim Smith, and Hon. Jackie Weatherspoon. Also, on that day, the NHDP elected Attorney Bill Christie as NHDP Legal Counsel, becoming an automatic member of the Rules Committee. On April 8, 2021, the committee members met for their organizational meeting and elected Gene Martin as chair of the committee for the term. Subsequently, they set up a public hearing and a schedule of work sessions throughout the fall.

The deadline for submission was August 13, 2021 (90 days from Midterm Convention per the NHDP Constitution). NH Democrats submitted a total of 68 suggested amendments for the committee to review. The public hearing was held virtually on August 17, 2021. The Rules Committee met three additional times in open session following the public hearing to carefully review each offered change. The Rules Committee adopted nearly 80% of amendments proposed either as is or with revision.

Highlighted Changes:

The three most significant changes were made to State Committee Membership:

- *Increased Historically Underrepresented Groups Membership* - The NH Democratic Party profoundly values diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice. The previous Rules Committee was working on a proposed change that would formally recognize the constituency caucuses officers as members of the State Committee. Our 2019 amendment process was moved to 2020 due to a large arena event for the FITN in the fall of 2019, and coronavirus further delayed this. However, we are delighted to bring forward this change that grants automatic State Committee membership to the officers of constituency caucuses (e.g., African American Caucus, AAPI Caucus, Latinx Caucus, Stonewall Democrats, etc.).
- *Increased Town Chair Membership* - There were several proposed amendments regarding granting automatic membership for all town chairs. While the Rules Committee heard compelling remarks at the public hearing regarding these amendments, we were concerned about adding 231 town and city chairs to the State Committee Membership. There were concerns about the practical impact of having nearly 46% of the State Committee made up of a single stakeholder. Currently, 39 members of the State Committee also serve as Town Chairs. Historically, we have seen Town Chairs elected through the County At-Large process or other means. While there may not be a process for all Town Chairs, there are several ways they serve on the State Committee. This year we have proposed adding 10 Town Chair seats as automatic members. The duly elected Town Chairs in each county (excluding Manchester and Nashua) will vote on a Town Chair to serve as a State Committee member. If it were in effect today, there would be 49 Town Chairs on the State Committee, and they would be the most significant stakeholder for comparison; County Officers have a total of 48 seats.
- *High School Democrats Membership* - As a party, we are proud of our highly active Young Democrats, College Democrats, and High School Democrats organizations in New Hampshire. While the NHYD and NHCD have had officers on the State Committee and Executive Committee, that same opportunity has not been afforded to the NH High School Democrats. This proposed change provides parity with the Young and College Democratic organizations. The NHDP believes youth engagement is a vital success of local, state, and national candidates. We are thrilled to offer this change.

We are also proposing several changes to codify historical practice further, make technical changes, and increase access and accessibility. The full redlined document is available; however, we have provided some of the items here:

- Increases the membership on the Convention Credentials Committee and Convention Resolutions Committee
- Sets a fixed membership for the Platform Committee and provide two additional months to hold hearings and draft the platform
- Increases the threshold of the Conventions quorum and allows the Executive Committee to lower the threshold if the need arises with a unanimous vote
- Confirms the Executive Committee may vote to instruct the Rules Committee to propose processes to allow for electronic or mail-in voting if a Convention is not held in-person
- Increases the number of committees of the State Committee to seven from four

- Adds the Finance Chair as an NHDP Officer
- Clarifies the credential process for State Committee elections
- Updates inclusive language for DNC members and moves the election to a regular March meeting instead of a special April meeting
- Explains further the State Chairs role in the County Caucus process
- Eliminates outdated bonding language in the duties of Treasurer
- Moves Rules Committee duties from two different sections into one section
- Empowers Executive Committee to create other committees and removes the limitation of committee names to provide flexibility as needs arise
- Requires Executive Committee to adopt Local Committee caucus processes in November instead of January
- Provides for the creation of a County Chair and Town Chair manual be approved by the Executive Committee
- Requires all County & Local Committee meetings be open and accessible to the public with 14 days' notice and posted in three places bringing meetings in line with the caucus procedure
- Reformatting of the Constitution to allow readers to read sections more easily

Convention Rules and Procedures:

One of the previous grassroots-led reforms of the party included creating a process that provided every delegate the opportunity to read, digest, and consider all changes to the constitution. Previously, floor amendments sponsored by party leadership were routinely approved at state conventions with no time to fully process the proposals. The constitution was changed to prohibit any last-minute changes without full and thoughtful consideration by all delegates. Therefore, the constitution prohibits the offering or voting of any amendments from the floor. The Rules Committee amendment will be an up or down vote. We know that some Convention Delegates advocate all amendments should be brought for an up or down vote; however, we do not find this practicable. For example, in 2017, there were several amendments to change proxy voting; some offered a complete repeal of the practice, one envisioned a member to carry up to two proxies, and another did not limit the practice at all. Often submitted amendments have competing interests in similar topic areas as described. What happens if all amendments are adopted? Which version is the one that should be incorporated, is it adopted by balloting order, the total number of votes, or some other means? We believe this practice would be problematic and would lead to unintended consequences and confusion.

Attached are the proposed Convention Rules, which mirrors the process used during the 2020 virtual Convention in which we adopted rules, resolutions, and the platform. The only difference is we are asking the Convention to vote prior to the virtual Convention which is similar to how we successfully held both the DNC member election and the NHDP Officer election in the past 18 months. Given the timing of the Midterm Convention and we would be counting votes the week of Thanksgiving. The Rules Committee felt that option was unfair to the NHDP Staff and decided to send the balloting out with the official call and count the ballots before the Midterm Convention begins.

While the Rules Committee works to find unanimity on proposed changes, we are aware that some folks will be disappointed that their concept or proposal is a part of the final amendment. We understand this, and we hope you know we carefully considered and debated each amendment. We must weigh many factors and understand the minutiae that comes with each amendment before us. There were several proposals we supported in principle; however, we could not find a viable solution at this time.

Thank you, and I look forward to “seeing” each of you at the coming Midterm Convention.

Gene Martin, NHDP Rules Committee Chair

Ryan Mahoney

Hon. Liz McConnell

Hon. Mindi Messmer

Rep. Tim Smith

Hon. Jackie Weatherspoon

Atty. Bill Christie