

Bylaws of River Valley Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America

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ARTICLE I. Name and Affiliation.

River Valley Democratic Socialists of America (“Local Chapter”) will be the Local Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (“DSA”).

ARTICLE II. Purpose.

This Local Chapter of DSA 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 on private profit, exploitation of alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender 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 River Valley Local Chapter of DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, who reside and/or work in the River Valley area. 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 Local Chapter officers and 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 Committee of DSA.

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 direct discipline of any self-defined democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from DSA. In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally prefer 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 weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting. The Local Chapter must report an expulsion to the National Director. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Dues.

As permitted 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.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.

Section 1. General Meeting.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one General Meeting annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the General Meeting. Notice may be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must be sent a paper copy. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. The General Meeting may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least eight times annually and at least twice per quarter, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Executive Committee. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they will include at least one political education session per quarter. The Local Chapter Executive Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. In general, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

Emergency Meetings may be called either by the Executive Committee or by petition of at least two thirds of quorum. Notice of an Emergency Meeting will be given to all members with at least five days' notice and include the specific items of business to be considered. Only items stated in the notice may be considered.

Section 4. Quorum.

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

Section 5. Voting.

Each member will have one vote. Whenever any corporate action is to be taken by vote of the members, it must, except as otherwise required by law or by the Articles of Incorporation, be authorized by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of members by the members entitled to vote thereon.

Section 6. Vote by Ballot.

Any action that may be taken at a General, Regular, or Emergency meeting of the members may be taken without a meeting if the Local Chapter delivers a written ballot to every member entitled to vote on the matter. A ballot must set forth each proposed action; provide an opportunity to vote for, or withhold a vote for, each candidate for election to any position; and provide an opportunity to vote for or against each other proposed action.

Section 7. Proxies.

No proxies may be permitted. A proxy will be defined as a person designated to vote on another member's behalf.

Section 8. Online Voting Between Meetings.

- a. Should a circumstance arise in which an immediate online vote to approve a resolution between meetings is deemed necessary by a minimum of fifteen percent of members in good standing, they may petition the Executive Committee with a proposal and rationale to hold an online vote. The Executive Committee will determine two officers responsible for setting up the online vote, and for notifying the membership of the proposal, rationale, and voting timeline within twenty-four hours of approving the petition, by lot.
- b. Open debate on the resolution will take place on a dedicated channel or forum to be determined and made available to the membership within twenty-four hours of approving the petition, and will stay open for three days and then close, after which voting will open for twenty-four hours.
- c. Quorum for an online vote is twenty-five percent of chapter membership.

Section 9. Accessibility.

Meetings will be held in accessible locations whenever possible. The Chapter may provide for remote participation in meetings where participants will be able to communicate in real time. Remote participation will count as presence at a meeting.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.

Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of the Local Chapter will be two Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications coordinator, and two Membership coordinators. Each officer must be a member of the Local Chapter and be current in their dues at the time of election and throughout the duration of their term. The term of office for each officer will run from January 1 to December 31 or until their successors are elected. The officers shall not all be cisgender men. No member shall hold more than one office at any given time.

No member may serve in the position of Chair for more than two consecutive years. No member may serve on the Executive Committee in any position for longer than three consecutive years. Following three full consecutive terms on the Executive Committee, officers may not hold any other Executive Committee office for one full year. Partial terms of less than one year shall not count towards the three term limit.

Section 2. Resignation.

Resignations by any Local Chapter officer will be effective upon receipt by the Secretary (or receipt by a Co-Chair or other officer if the Secretary is resigning) of written notification of the resignation or upon a later date if provided in the written notification.

Section 3. Removal.

One or more officers may be removed with or without cause by a vote of the membership at a General, Regular, or Emergency meeting for which notice of the removal vote was provided to the membership at least five days prior to the meeting.

Section 4. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office, a special election will be held within 90 days to fill the remainder of that officer's term. If the regular election for that position is already scheduled to be held within 90 days, the vacancy will be filled at the regular election. Special elections may occur at any Regular Meeting, or Emergency Meeting called for that purpose. The chapter must be given at least two weeks notice of the special election.

The Executive Committee may, but is not required to, select an acting officer to hold the position (subject to a majority vote of approval at the next meeting of the chapter, if called for) until the special election or afterwards if no candidates step forward.

Section 5. 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.
- 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 6. Secretary.

- a. The Secretary will be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date and secure membership list, an accessible and secure archive of official chapter records in

cooperation with other members of the Executive Committee. Official records include minutes, resolutions, policies, statements, and reports. They will transfer official records in good condition to their successor, and during their office will administer member requests for official records. They shall temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair, if neither Co-Chair is able to perform their duties.

- b. The Secretary will ensure effective communication with national DSA in coordination with the Co-Chairs. The Secretary will also notify national DSA in case of any change in leadership or contact information for the chapter in order to keep all records current.
- c. The Secretary will be responsible for sending an agenda for all voting meetings to members by email and/or via another electronic channel to which all members have reasonable access. The Secretary will be responsible for checking local membership records with the national committee to establish a quorum for each meeting in which business is conducted. The Secretary will be responsible for the taking of the minutes of all Local Chapter and Executive Committee Meetings and their secure and timely distribution of these minutes to the membership.

Section 7. 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 bank 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 General Meeting of the Local Chapter, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Executive Committee of the Local Chapter.

Section 8. Communications Coordinator.

The Communications Coordinator will be responsible for managing the public media of the Local Chapter. They are responsible for updating the chapter website in cooperation with the Executive Committee, Working Group and Standing Committee Chairs. They will also be responsible for coordinating with the Co-Chairs upon request in public-facing communications across media, and coordinating with and updating the membership on such efforts. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for keeping an up-to-date list of relevant media contacts for the use of the Co-Chairs.

Section 9. Membership Coordinators.

- a. Two Membership Coordinators will be responsible for ensuring that regular, accessible orientations for new members take place, for keeping up to date on DSA orientation practice and creating records and policies reflecting these, and for

coordinating with all other officers, committees, working groups and the membership at large to those ends.

- b. The Membership Coordinators will be responsible for running a “Mobilizer Program” for coordinated outreach to the chapter.

ARTICLE VI. Executive Committee.

Section 1. Composition.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will be composed of the seven officers of the Local Chapter and one chair or approved proxy from any Local Chapter branches.

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 of the Local Chapter, 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 members of the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee must be given four days’ oral, written, or email notice of regular Executive Committee Meetings, except that notice of only 24-hours will be sufficient if two members of the Executive Committee determine that special emergency circumstances justifying a lesser notice requirement exist.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of a simple majority of officers is required for the transaction of Executive Committee business. Business pertaining to any Local Chapter Branches without representation from that Branch will not be discussed or determined.

Section 5. Participation in Meeting by Communications Technology

Any or all members of the Executive Committee may participate in a meeting by communications technology, so long as members of the Executive Committee participating in the meeting can hear one another simultaneously, and such participation will constitute presence in person at the meeting.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

Section 1. Definition.

A branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least ten members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. Branches will be represented on the Local Chapter Executive Committee as a single seat according to Article VI Section 1, in addition to other elected chapter positions described in Article V.

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 have a representative on the Local Chapter Executive Committee according to Article VI Section 1, in addition to other elected chapter positions described in Article V.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees.

Section 1. Working Groups.

- a. A minimum of two members of the Local Chapter may start a Working Group, which will exist for a limited and explicit duration not to exceed six months. Working Groups may be established by a simple majority vote of members in good standing at a General or Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter.
- b. At least one week before the initial vote to establish, the proposed Working Group must submit a proposal and rationale, including an estimate of chapter resource use and an estimated end date, to the Executive Committee, who will place the proposal into the meeting agenda and notify the membership. The proposers of the Working Group are responsible for presenting the proposal.
- c. Should the Working Group wish to continue in its work past the estimated end date, they may reapply for a vote to re-establish one time, in accordance with the the procedure outlined in subsection b above, at a meeting taking place immediately before the original estimated end date.

- d. Should the Working Group no longer have a minimum of two members, it will be dissolved. The Working Group may dissolve at the agreement of all members, to be announced at the soonest regular meeting. The Working Group dissolves automatically upon the arrival of the applicable end date or the achievement of its stated purpose.
- e. A Working Group may organize itself however its members see fit so long as they are not in contravention of these bylaws or the bylaws of the national DSA.

Section 2. Committees.

- a. Ad hoc committees
 - i. Ad hoc committees to undertake portions of chapter administrative operations may be formed with a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee, or upon a simple majority vote of the membership at a meeting. Any member who wishes to have such a vote may propose to place one on the agenda and is responsible for presenting the proposal.
- b. Standing Committees
 - i. A Standing Committee is a chaired committee tasked with ongoing organizing and carrying out campaigns, actions and events to further the work of DSA according to national and local bylaws and any supporting resolutions, in coordination with the Executive Committee's duties under Article VI section 2(b).
 - ii. Any Working Group that has successfully carried out its original mandate, has expanded to at least five members, and wishes to continue related work by reforming as a Standing Committee may apply for such status by sending a proposal and rationale to the Executive Committee at least two weeks before a scheduled regular or general chapter meeting, whereupon the proposal will be sent out to the membership and placed on the meeting agenda by the Executive Committee. A Standing Committee will then be established by a two-thirds majority vote of members in good standing.
 - iii. A Standing Committee must have at least one chair, voted in by the current members of that committee by a simple majority vote. A chair's term ends one year from their election. Standing Committee chairs are responsible for coordinating the operations of the Committee internally and in cooperation with the Executive Committee. A Standing Committee chair may stand down at any time and a new chair may be voted in to finish the former chair's term. Members may call for removal of Standing Committee chairs in

accordance with Article V, section 3. Standing Committee chairs may not hold simultaneous elected leadership positions in the chapter.

- iv. A Standing Committee whose regular meeting attendance drops below three chapter members for a period of longer than three months will be dissolved.

Section 3. Duties of Working Groups and Standing Committees.

Working Groups and Standing Committees will keep a record of leadership and core Group and Committee members as an official chapter record. Working Groups and Standing Committees will keep the Executive Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on their activities. Working Group and Standing Committee meetings will be held at least once per month and will be minuted, to be reported within three days to the Secretary. These minutes belong to the official records of the chapter.

Section 4. Individual Member Participation in DSA Groups Other Than Local Working Groups or Committees.

- a. A DSA Group is here defined as a Caucus, a Committee, a national or regional Working Group or other organized formation, operating officially or unofficially within the DSA and peopled by DSA members, that does not contravene local or national bylaws or resolutions.
- b. All individual chapter members are free to participate in any DSA Groups on the state, regional or national level. All individual members participating in a DSA Group are free to form a Local Working Group that seeks to further a DSA Group's objectives, according to the process outlined in Section 1 of this Article.

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.

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

ARTICLE XI. Election of Local Chapter Officers and Delegates.

Section 1. Nominations Committee.

A three-person Nominations Committee must be established at least one month prior to every election. No person running in the election may serve on the Nominations Committee. It will solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected, which may include any Local Chapter officers for which the terms of current officers are due to expire and delegates to the National Convention and to any state or regional DSA bodies to which the Local Chapter may send delegates.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention and any state or regional DSA bodies must be opened 30 days before and closed 10 days before the election meeting. The call for nominations must be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

Section 3. Elections Process.

Elections for RVDSA leadership and delegate positions may be held at a General, Regular, or Special Meeting. All candidates must be elected at the meeting through electronic (or, in an emergency, paper) secret ballot by active members in good standing. Ballots must be counted immediately following the final ballot being cast. Deidentified electronic ballot results will be made available to the membership following the electronic tally. Paper ballots, if used, must be counted twice by a group between two and five active members in good standing in full unobstructed view of any interested Members acting as election observers. All reasonable efforts should be made to find counters that are acceptable to all candidates.

Section 4. Voting Method.

All elections in the chapter will use ranked choice voting. "Ranked Choice Voting" means a method of casting and tabulating votes that simulates the ballot counts that would occur if all voters participated in a series of runoff elections. In elections using the Ranked Choice Voting method, voters may rank the candidates in order of preference.

Elections will use Single Transferable Vote tallying (Scottish STV). Such elections will include (i) Chapter officers and (ii) Delegates to the DSA National Convention and any state or regional DSA bodies. For Chapter officer elections, each candidate will run for a specific position and each position will appear on a separate ballot. The Executive Committee and Delegate pool shall not all be cisgender men. Representation requirements are based on self-identification only.

Section 5. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee will be declared elected by acclamation.

ARTICLE XII. Indemnification.

Except as may be prohibited by law, the Local Chapter may indemnify any person who was or is an officer of the Local Chapter against all liabilities and expenses reasonably incurred by such officer arising out of or in connection with any threatened, pending, or completed claims arising from or related to the officer's service as an officer of the Local Chapter. The Local Chapter may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of the Corporation against any liability asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity or arising out of the agent's status as such.

ARTICLE XIII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of the Local Chapter of DSA, and submitted to the Executive Committee a month in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks' written notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two consecutive (Regular or General) Local Chapter meetings. No amendment to these Bylaws may be in conflict with the national DSA Constitution and Bylaws. The Local Chapter must provide copies of all amendments to these Local Chapter Bylaws to DSA.

ARTICLE XIV. Rules of the Local Chapter.

Section 1. Rules.

The Rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, will govern meetings of the Local Chapter and all of its committees, working groups, and branches 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 XV. Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of this DSA Chapter, all remaining funds and assets are to be released to the national Democratic Socialists of America.