

Torrey Pines Democratic Club

Endorsement Policies and Procedures

The Torrey Pines Democratic Club (hereafter referred to in this document as the TPDC or the Club) recognizes the importance of candidate and ballot endorsements both for the candidates involved as well as for providing a voice for TPDC voting members during the election process, and for providing guidance for the community.

The following rules serve as a supplement to the Club's Bylaws and expand upon sections relevant to the process and provide additional policies and procedures.

1. Section 1 - Candidates for Public Office Endorsement, Non-Incumbents

1.1. Relevant Races: The Executive Board (Eboard) or its designee will recommend the selection of candidate races and ballot measures for club endorsement consideration. Only registered Democrats may be endorsed. Non-Democrats may only be rated as qualified or unacceptable (see Section 1.8 below).

1.1.1. Any candidate for non-partisan public office who is a registered Democrat may request an endorsement from the Club. If the Eboard or its designee has recommended that Club should not consider a particular race for Club endorsement, but a candidate has requested an endorsement, then the members who are eligible to vote may vote select the race for Club endorsement consideration

1.1.2. In races that are considered partisan (i.e. State Assembly, State Senate, and U.S. Congress) the Club will automatically consider endorsements in only those races that have qualified delegates for the California Democratic Central Committee (DSCC) endorsements. The Club will make every effort to hold an endorsement meeting prior to the DSCC preprimary endorsement caucus.

1.1.3. It is the policy of the Club to consider candidate endorsements only in those races in which the interests of the Club members would be affected. Club members' interests would be affected if all the following factors are found to exist:

- (a) There is a nexus between the jurisdiction of the office in the race in which the candidate proposed for endorsement is running and the Club's Charter with the San Diego County Democratic Party. In other words, the territory of the jurisdiction of the office must be, in whole or in part, within San Diego County.
- (b) There is an articulable interest or concern that Club members have, or should have, in the race. An articulable interest is an *objectively perceived* interest that most reasonable people would recognize and accept.

Example 1:

The office exercises either executive authority (such as an elected executive officer) or representative jurisdiction (such as a member of a legislative body) over the territory in which Club members reside, that would be deemed an objectively perceived interest.

Example 2:

The office does not exercise executive authority or representative jurisdiction over the territory in which club members reside, but is wholly or partially within San Diego County, and there exists an articulable interest or concern that Club members have or should have.

Only those candidates who are seeking election to an office that meets the requirements of this subsection, and who are otherwise eligible for endorsement, may be considered for endorsement. This Policy may be waived upon a finding of special circumstances by a majority vote of the Executive Board, or by a majority of the Club Members present and voting at a meeting.

1.2. Candidate Questionnaire Questionnaires are an extremely important way to compare candidates' beliefs in matters of importance to the Club. Candidate questionnaires shall be prepared and approved by the Eboard or its designee and provided to the candidates upon request.

- 1.2.1. To the extent possible, the questionnaire should mirror the one used by SDCDP in order to reduce the amount of preparation burden on candidates.
- 1.2.2. Questionnaire responses must be received by the Eboard before the day of the Club general meeting in which the endorsement will be voted upon.
- 1.2.3. Completed questionnaires will be evaluated by the Eboard and or its designee, and a summary may be released only to Club members eligible to vote. Club members will be told when a candidate fails to respond to a questionnaire request.

1.3. Notices and Quorum - General Meetings at which endorsements will be voted upon shall:

- 1.3.1. Be noticed in accordance with the Club's Bylaws, Article 4.2.1. (14-day notice required).
- 1.3.2. Have a quorum as specified in the Club's Bylaws, Article 4.2.2.

1.4. Prohibition on Multiple Endorsements Only one candidate may be endorsed per seat. An endorsement implies that the Club recommends that people vote for that candidate rather than any other candidates for that seat. It does not necessarily imply that the Club supports all of the candidate's positions.

1.5. Eligibility to Vote The eligibility of a Club member to vote for an endorsement of a candidate or a ballot measure is described in the Club's Bylaws, Sections 3.3 and 3.4, in addition:

- 1.5.1. A member must have paid their dues 30 days prior to the endorsement meeting, or have at least attended one previous scheduled club meeting since joining the Club.

- 1.5.2. A member whose membership has lapsed within the last 45 days prior to the endorsement meeting shall be eligible to vote upon payment of their dues whether in advance of the meeting or at the start of the meeting.

1.6. Voting Method

- 1.6.1. Voting on any endorsement may be made by a show of hands by Club members who are eligible to vote unless the Eboard has determined that confidential paper ballots shall be used. In such case, the names of the candidates shall be listed in alphabetical order and the option to vote “no endorsement” shall be listed last. Voting can be done via multiple ballots in a runoff method, or via Ranked Choice Voting/Instant-Runoff ballots. Any approved method for video or online electronic balloting may also be used.
- 1.6.2. Proxy voting and absentee voting are not permitted, however a Club member who is eligible to vote and who attends the endorsement meeting may cast their paper ballot prior to the endorsement vote; however, the teller shall hold such ballots until the vote is called for that particular race or ballot measure. Ballots submitted in advance are considered only in the first round of balloting; they are not included in multi-ballot runoff elections.
- 1.6.3. Candidates for endorsement, members of their staff, family, their spouse or domestic partner who are Club members who are eligible to vote and who attend the endorsement meeting may cast their paper ballot prior to the endorsement vote; however, the ballots are subject to the rules stated above.

1.7. Percentage Required for an Endorsement or Recommendation: An affirmative vote in accordance with Club Bylaws, Section 5.C, shall be required to endorse a candidate, rate a candidate, or take a position on a ballot proposition.

- 1.7.1. If no candidate receives the required vote as specified in the Club Bylaws, Section 4.2.3, a runoff vote shall be taken when three or more candidates appear on the ballot. In a runoff, the candidate receiving the fewest number of votes is eliminated, and voting members will vote from the remaining candidates, on the runoff ballot, or choose to check the box provided for “no endorsement”. Repeated rounds will occur until a winner emerges, or only no endorsement is mathematically possible.
- 1.7.2. If after the completion of all balloting, and neither the candidate nor the “No endorsement” option has received the required vote, the Presider may entertain motions to rate one or more of the candidates acceptable, or to request the Club take a “No Position” in the race at this time. If a candidate is endorsed, no remaining candidates shall be rated acceptable.

1.8. Qualified and Unacceptable Ratings: Circumstances justifying a “Qualified” rating include, but are not limited to: (i) the candidate does not qualify for an endorsement, however the Club feels the person is supportable, (ii) the candidate has a good record and/or good position statements, however the Club disagrees with the candidate on one or more significant issues, (iii) there is more than one good candidate, and the Club prefers to rate some or each as qualified rather than endorse a single candidate. On recommendation by the Eboard or its designee, the Club may vote to rate one or more candidates for non-partisan office as “Unacceptable”, where the candidates

are considered to be hostile to the mission of the Club. If the Club has already voted to endorse a candidate or has voted to rate one or more candidates as acceptable, then the ‘Unacceptable’ rating cannot be considered in that race.

1.9. Primary / General Election Continuity: Endorsements or ratings of candidates in a Primary Election automatically carry forward if the candidate advances to the General Election. A candidate rated “acceptable” in a Primary Election who advances to the General Election is eligible to be considered for an endorsement in the General Election.

1.10. Endorsed Candidate Support: Club fundraising activities may only be conducted for the campaigns of those candidates endorsed by the Club and those ballot propositions earning a rating of “Support.” The Club may vote to designate certain races/issues as “priority campaigns” to indicate that those campaigns should be given priority in terms of fundraising or Club-coordinated volunteer efforts.

1.11. Rescission of Endorsement: The Club may vote to rescind an endorsement or a “No Endorsement.” Such a vote requires a Supermajority as specified in Bylaws 4.2.3 to pass.

2. Section 2 - Friendly Incumbent Endorsements: Incumbents, whether or not they have been previously endorsed by the Club, are eligible for a Friendly Incumbent Endorsement. A Friendly Endorsement vote can be requested by any Club member eligible to vote, and following a voice vote of Club members eligible to vote, be placed on the agenda of the next Club meeting.

3. Section 3 – Ballot Endorsements

3.1. The Club may rate any ballot proposition as “Support,” “Oppose,” or “No Position.”

3.2. In the event that the Club cannot agree on the assignment of any of the rating options listed above, then that proposition shall be assigned the rating of “No Consensus.”

4. Section 4: Endorsement Forum

Should an endorsement forum be held, the Eboard or its designee shall make a good-faith effort to invite all declared candidates for office who the Party has established with certainty are registered Democrats to appear, or to send a representative in their place, at the forum on the race to be considered.

4.1. The invitation must be sent at least 5 business days prior to the meeting and provide details on the date, time, and place as well as the club’s process. Clubs are also required to copy the Director of Clubs and the SDCCDP (clubs@sddemocrats.org) on all correspondence with candidates regarding endorsement meetings. Just emailing a candidate and treating a non-response as sufficient is not reasonable. Emails often go unread or are undelivered to the intended recipient. If no response is received to an endorsement meeting email, following up by phone is reasonable. Requests for information from the Club to the Party office regarding candidates must be made at least seven (7) business days prior to the meeting.

4.2. An endorsement forum shall be presided by the Chair of the Endorsement Committee or by a designee of the Eboard.

4.3. Should there be an objection to the validity of an instruction given by the presider, and the presider finds no guiding reference in the Club's Bylaws or in this document, the presider shall be allowed to make a decision on the matter; should the objector disagree with the ruling, the matter can be brought to immediate vote through a show of hands by Club members present and eligible to vote.

Any Endorsement Forum shall be structured as follows:

1) Candidate, or their representative, Opening Statements: All local Democratic candidates must be allowed to speak or be allowed a surrogate to speak on their behalf at the endorsement meeting for their race. In an order determined by a coin toss, candidates shall make 2- to 3-minute opening statements, with candidates informed of the timing in advance and shall be enforced by a timekeeper that has been appointed by the forum presider.

2) Question and Answer Period: If time permits.

1. Depending upon time constraints, at the discretion of the presider, members shall submit written questions which may be chosen and used by the presider, or be given the opportunity to submit questions from the floor.
2. No questions shall be aimed at one particular candidate; each candidate shall be given one minute to answer each question.
3. Up to six questions may be asked.

3) Closing Statements: variable by forum, but in any case, no longer than 3 minutes for each candidate.

4) Motion to Endorse - The presider will entertain a motion that the Club consider an endorsement in the race. Should a Club member who is eligible to vote make such a motion, and should a Club member who is eligible to vote second the motion, the presider will make call for discussion. After any discussion is heard, the presider will ask for a vote by a show of hands by Club members who is eligible to vote. If the motion passes, the forum will proceed.

5) Member Discussion Period: Variable by forum, but in any case, no longer than 15 minutes maximum.

1. The member discussion period shall be private; the candidates, their staff, family members, spouse or domestic partner will be asked to leave the room even though they may be Club members.
2. Only Club members eligible to vote may speak; they shall form a line and after being acknowledged by the presider, shall limit their remarks to 30 seconds.

6) Voting: Voting shall commence in accordance with Sections 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8 in this document.

7) Announcement of the Results: The outcome of the vote will be announced at the meeting once the votes are tabulated. The Club must also provide proper documentation of the Club's endorsement vote by submitting the [SDCDP Club Endorsements Form](#) to the Party at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the Area Caucus meeting at which the endorsement recommendation will occur. Endorsements are not to be construed as SDCDP or CDP endorsements; words to that effect must be included whenever the Club's endorsement is referred to. Any publication of endorsements shall delineate between endorsed candidates and candidates rated qualified.

8) Invitation to Speak: The Presider may invite an endorsement winner to come forward and say a few words.

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