

Candidate and Ballot Measure Endorsement Process

Whatcom County Democratic Central Committee

Originally adopted 5/11/2005; Amended: Summer 2005; January 11, 2006; April 15, 2010

1. *Adoption and Amendment:*

This policy may not be amended less than 60 days prior to an endorsement meeting of the Central Committee, and the policy is to remain the same for the following full Primary/General election cycle.

2. *Resources for Democratic Candidates Pre-Endorsement:*

- (a) **Definition:** Candidates may receive access to Party resources prior to endorsement if they are certified as a democrat. Certification does not imply endorsement by the Party. A candidate may not refer to certification in their campaign or publicity, but the party has no authority to bar the candidate from describing him or herself as a “Democrat”.
- (b) **Certification:** In order to be certified as a democrat, the candidate must submit a written application to the Chair of the WCDCC that demonstrates one of the following:
 - i. Ten signed declarations from Precinct Committee Officers from Whatcom County, or the jurisdiction of the position in question, whichever is smaller, stating that they believe the candidate would faithfully represent the values of the Democratic Party in office.
 - ii. Previous endorsement or certification as a Democrat.
 - iii. Strong background in Democratic Party issues and politics and wishes for the Chair to approve their application for certification based on those factors: including, but are not necessarily limited to: length of membership to a Democratic Party, involvement in Democratic issues, past donations to Democratic candidates, work with non-profits whose work closely parallels Democratic Party values.
- (c) **Approval and Appeal:** The Chair may approve (or not) the candidate for certification upon receipt of these materials. If approved, see section 5. If the Chair does not approve the certification and the candidate wishes to appeal to the Executive Board for additional consideration, the Executive Board will consider the candidate’s application at their next regular meeting using the same criteria outlined above. The Executive Board may either vote on the application themselves, or if they deem it appropriate, may refer the issue to the general membership to vote at their next regular meeting.
- (d) **Timing:** Certification and the resulting access to party resources is intended to provide resources early in the Primary campaign. Candidates may request certification any time after filing with the Public Disclosure Commission their intent to run. Once a candidate has been endorsed according to these rules, no other candidate for the same office may be certified for purposes of gaining access to party resources.
- (e) **Losing Certification:** Once a candidate has been endorsed by the membership in accordance with this Endorsement Policy, resources being provided to competing candidates for the same position will be withdrawn. Data unique to a candidate’s campaign, such as volunteer records, stored in a party-owned database, is considered the property of the candidate, and will be made available to his/her campaign. If for any reason the validity of a certification of a candidate as a “democrat” is questioned, certification may be withdrawn using the same criteria and appeal process described in Section 2.B.

3. *Endorsement:*

- (a) Current endorsement policy is made available to the public through the website and copies available at our office.

- (b) Candidates specifically make a request for consideration of endorsement to the Whatcom Democrats Chair. The Whatcom Democrats take no responsibility for initiating endorsement process for a candidate or ballot campaign.
- (c) The Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, will make every effort to schedule endorsement meetings for the election cycle, in advance, and publicize the dates to the public. In general, endorsements are considered after the candidate filing deadline and after the Primary Election. If the State of Washington conducts a partisan nominating primary election, endorsements in partisan races that are competitive between Democratic candidates shall be considered after the Primary Election.
- (d) No endorsement vote may be taken by the membership without standard notice to the membership through the regular communication channels, including the newsletter and email.
- (e) Executive Board shall strive to provide the membership with information in advance of the endorsement vote about the candidate and ballot measures being considered. Examples include links to candidate websites and space in the newsletter. In all cases, competing candidates for the Democratic Party endorsement or nomination will be granted equal time or space to present their qualifications.

4. Voting Procedure:

- (a) Candidates (or a surrogate) shall be provided an opportunity to present his/her qualifications and positions to the Central Committee, on an equal basis with other candidates and according to available time in the meeting. Members shall be provided time to ask questions, also in accordance with available meeting time.
- (b) The Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, shall recommend a balloting or voting method that will facilitate a fair and efficient process, and prepare the necessary materials in advance. The membership retains its authority to adopt procedures at the meeting to facilitate decision-making, including re-voting.
- (c) In all votes, the voters shall always have the choice of "no endorsement." A vote cast for "no endorsement" shall be counted as a vote in that race for purposes of calculating a two-thirds majority. If no endorsement is made, Certified Democrats will continue to access party resources (See Section 5).
- (d) Eligibility to vote and quorum requirements are prescribed in the bylaws, except that voters must be eligible fourteen (14) days prior to an endorsement vote.
- (e) A two-thirds majority of votes cast in a race or measure is required for endorsement.

5. Party Resources:

- (a) Once a candidate is certified or endorsed, all WCDCC resources will be made available to the candidate that can be shared equally amongst the competitors including, but not necessarily limited to: Party voter file access, membership lists, fundraising lists, office space, and institutional communications with its memberships (such as having event invitations in newsletters etc.) The Executive Board will vote on what resources will and will not be allowed if there are disagreements between the Chair and members of the Executive Board on what resources to grant to candidates.
- (b) In addition, endorsed candidates and ballot measures may be granted consumable resources, such as cash donations, at the discretion of the Executive Board and in accordance with existing campaign plans and priorities.