

**Democratic Socialists of America
National Political Committee
April 11-12, 2020**

Via Zoom

Present

NPC: Marianela, Jen M, Sauce, Sean E, Tawny T, Maikiko J, Abdullah Y, Hannah A, Kristian H, Dave P, Austin G, Jen B, Megan S, Amelia B, Kristen C, Erika P, Blanca E
Staff: Maria S, Heidi C, Kristina S, Glenn R, Alison B
Chair: Natalie M

Saturday, April 11

Called to order: 11:53am EST

Approve Agenda & [Set Standing Rules](#)

- Agenda approved unanimously.
- Standing rules approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Business from Executive Session

Maikiko moves to adopt *Meeting Code of Conduct*, with the option to amend the language, as a baseline to prompt discussion with chapters, and to initially present at the Chapter Leaders call on 4/15. The Grievance Committee in collaboration with the GDC Training Subcommittee will take up developing further processes for chapter adoption within four weeks.

- Erika moves to amend: section 5, paragraph 2 - replace "Additionally" with "Solely as an option of critical need." Clarifies that our relationship with law enforcement should be limited only to a path of last resort.
 - *Motion to amend carries*
- *Motion to adopt carries*

Operations & Staff Reports

Budget & Finance Committee Report

Discussion of deficit, uncertainty around COVID19, promising numbers from membership growth -- especially monthly members. Some discussion of convention planning.

Motion to approve B&F Committee Report, from committee

- *Motion to adopt carries*

Staff Reports

Maria (National Director): How DSA's staff is adjusting to the pandemic, cross-training, contingency planning and remote work. How to communicate our political analysis around COVID-19 and continue to improve communication with chapters.

Alison (Development Director): Membership and monthly dues income is up, average monthly dues amount is down, staff dealing with members cancelling due to job loss and illness. Discussion of digital ad strategy and efficacy of marketing vendor.

Heidi (Fiscal Officer): Process improvement, planning for audit.

Glenn (Organizing Director): Challenges with no travel or in-person chapter visits, success of national training calls, YDSA strategy questions since campuses are closed. Discussion of what to do with the "gap" left by the DSA for Bernie campaign.

Kristina (Operations Director) - Dues shares, chapter pipeline and tech tools. Compliance work, hiring a full-stack developer. Discussion of convention planning.

YDSA Report

Amelia gives an overview of the [YDSA Report](#). ([YDSA COVID memo here.](#))

Introduction of national YDSA "Youth Bailout Campaign" as part of Beyond Bernie work. Discussion of hiring YDSA staffer, pipeline into YDSA leadership, coordination and cross-membership between national DSA bodies and YDSA committees, how to ensure that DSA and YDSA are on "equal footing," uncertainties about revenue and budget concerns amid COVID-19.

Convention Follow-Through

Kristian introduces a [breakdown resolutions passed at the 2019 convention](#).

Discussion of how to plan for 2021 and narrow the scope of work, sharing this with a broader audience, including Campaigns Council, and bring chapter leaders into the conversation. How to coordinate across all national bodies given NPC and staff capacity, how to consolidate national bodies. How to shift culture leading into 2021 so it's not about scarcity (limited resources/capacity). How can 2021 be more about a broad and comprehensive program instead of a long list of disparate resolutions? How can we facilitate chapters having strategic conversations then filtering up to us? Discussion of how to tackle the question of regional structures, discussion of political platform. Who generates the platform and how, what are the goals? Can Campaigns Council play a role? Can this be an organizing project that we use to build shared strategy and politics across the country?

Kristian motions that we present the 2019 Convention status document to all WGs and committees on the first Campaigns Council call. Seconded.

- *Motion carries*

Meeting recessed: 6:05pm EST

Sunday, April 12

NPC: Abdullah, Austin, Blanca, Dave, Erika, Hannah, Jen M., Jennifer B., Kristian, Maikiko, Marianela, Megan, Natalie, Sauce, Sean, Tawny, Amelia, Kristen

Ex officio: Maria, Glenn, Kristina, Alison, Griffin (YDSA COVID)

Absent:

Chair: Natalie

Called to order: 11:53am EST

Covid-19 Discussion & Strategic Planning

Memos/proposals to weigh in on related to how we fold COVID-19 work into other structures.

1. [\(Maikiko authored structural proposal\)](#)
2. [\(Maikiko/Abdullah authored political proposal\)](#)
3. [\(Megan authored political proposal\)](#)

4. ([Internal Organizing team - Blanca, Jen, Sauce, Austin - authored internal organizing political + structural proposal](#))

Grounding discussion

Discussion of DSA as a place to fight for material demands vs. a place to find emotional support. You can't divide the two -- COVID-19 has shown this. Fighting for collective self-interest, moving from feeling of powerlessness in a time of crisis to hope, working-class power through community-building. Bernie did that, how do we do that with COVID. Our job is to create a clear socialist analysis of what's happening and something to fight for collectively.

Need to absorb people and show them that there's a path beyond the presidential campaign into other political organizing. Need to do quick absorption, strengthen our structures to highlight campaigns to work on. Replace the person (Bernie) with the movement. Discussion of building community as a means of building power, especially when talking about organizing unhoused, unemployed, people in crisis. Need to pay attention to what our members need so they can continue organizing.

Discussion of proposals

Moving COVID work to permanent structures, having national working groups give direction to the org, plan to present Megan's proposal to the Campaigns Council.

Motion to adopt Maikiko's structural resolution. Seconded.

- Motion to table Maikiko's structural resolution
 - *Motion fails*
- Sean moves to amend to immediately shut down COVID Slack
 - *Motion carries*
- *Motion to adopt carries*

Motion to adopt Abdullah and Maikiko's political proposal resolution

- *Motion carries*

Megan motions to adopt her resolution and refer to Campaigns Council for future discussion. Seconded.

- Jenbo makes substitute motion to refer (without adopting) to Campaigns Council for report and then bring back to NPC for final decision
 - *Motion fails*

- Hannah makes substitute motion to adopt and refer the petition demands language (rather than Megan's proposal) to the Campaigns Council
- Abdullah: point of information. Does this mean the COVID demands petition would replace Megan's entire proposal, or some subsection of it?
 - Chair response: if adopted, Hannah's proposal does away with Megan's proposal entirely, and we would only use the petition language Hannah listed.
- Dave: point of information. So this is basically a way of voting down this document, but not doing it directly?
 - Chair: If we adopted this substitute and then acted on that, we would say we don't want to touch Megan's proposal, though it could be brought again in the future.
- Tawny: point of information: I thought when we voted on these petition demands we were just voting to go to independent expenditure coalition partners to discuss with them. Is that true?
 - Chair: I believe when we voted at that time it was essentially to adopt those demands as national DSA.
- Vote on Hannah's substitute motion
 - *Motion carries*

Motion to adopt Internal Organizing resolution

- Sean moves to amend: "the NPC shall create a national mutual aid working group ~~following this proposal~~ **if no other national working groups are willing to absorb the mutual aid structures that were created by the the Internal Organizing subcommittee of the COVID committee**" (*this replacement to be in all parts of the overall proposal*).
- Debate:
 - Sean for: there are no other national WGs that are tactical, I originally proposed EcoSocialists but people pushed back, I'd like this to be discussed with other WGs before creating a tactical national body.
 - Jenbo against: I don't believe that it's the only tactical one, for example Electoral Politics is tactical, also Housing Justice. Having a WG that works in connection with other WGs that push issues would be beneficial.
 - Kristian for: there are things that haven't been fleshed out about mutual aid, I've seen a lot of talk about community but what does that mean in DSA as we try to build a multiracial movement? Concerned this will just bring in more white people.
 - Sauce against: one thing I do hear from people in DSA is that they don't know what mutual aid is, and how we do it. Establishing a working group

can help clarify how mutual aid fits into DSA and is part of building working class power and gets us socialism, so people understand it is not charity but rather done intentionally and as part of creating socialism.

- *Motion to amend fails*

Back to main motion

- Marianela against: good motivation but ultimately are not rooted in democratic participation: adding 15 minutes at end and start of NPC meetings will not bring more participation, member involvement in our org is much deeper. Don't think opening up all national committees to more people will be meaningful, I don't see a plan for that. The last two points are alarming: Don't think they build political discussion, think they fabricate political agreement that doesn't exist. I think we are strongest when we have to articulate our differences.
- *Motion to adopt carries*

Motion to [establish a National Mutual Aid Working Group](#)

- *Motion passed*

Social Media Committee Report & Proposal

Tawny introduces social media committee report and [proposal](#).

Discussion about hiring a Comms Director, more cooperation, clarity about roles of staff vs. volunteers. Committee should not replace parts of development and outreach that lives with staff, envisioned these subcommittees as subcommittees that ensure the flow of work. Discussion of how national working groups fit into this plan and whether NPC Visibility Resolution (from October 2019 NPC meeting) could be incorporated.

Abdullah: amended copy of proposal based on conversation [here](#)

Sauce moves to adopt Abdullah's proposal

- *Motion to adopt carries*

Growth & Development Committee Report & Strategic Planning

Discussion of GDC goals, using chapter survey to identify needs and develop resources (i.e. new member onboarding), clarifying how GDC and Campaigns Council work

*together. GDC as the machinery to move the whole org and to help chapters move.
Repository of resources and skills.*

Motion to adjourn: 5:45 EST

- *Motion carries*