

Democratic Socialists of America
National Political Committee
DRAFT Steering Committee Minutes
4.24.2020

Approved: 5.18.2020

Attendees

SCers: Jenbo, Natalie, Sean, Kristen, Erika, Amelia, Kristian

Ex officio: Maria, Alison, Kristina, Glenn, Heidi

Absent:

NPCers: Abdullah, Hannah, Megan, Jen, Marianela

Chair: Natalie

Minute taker: Kristian

Timekeeper:

Agenda

Start Time: 5:34 pm ET

1. Chair & Secretary Treasurer's Report
 - a. Loomio record
 - b. Minutes from 4.3.20 meeting
 - i. Approved unanimously

2. Staff Reports
 - a. National Director - Maria Svart
 - b. Organizing - Glenn Rehn
 - i. **FYI:** 400+ people and ~200 people attended part 1 and 2 of the Strategic Campaigns training national zoom trainings, followed by subsequent distribution of [the COVID-specific campaign guide](#).
 - ii. **FYI:** Currently exploring how to identify chapters that did successful and challenging mutual aid work as a follow up from the April 2nd Strategic Mutual Aid national training
 - iii. **FYI:** the training about onboarding new members will be Thursday 4/23.
 - iv. **FYI:** Florida RLT has begun
 - v. **Request for Decision:** both Tri-Cities Washington and Rochester MN Organizing Committees have been dormant for several months. We are looking to **release the zip codes back into at-large status**.
 1. Discussion: when someone new joins DSA and there's an OC in their area, that new member is informed.
 2. **SC unanimously approves releasing of zip codes to at-large status.**
 - c. Development - Alison Baldree

- i. **FYI:** Tuesday, April 14 - Monday, April 20, 1,044 new members joined and 253 members renewed. Additionally, we had 84 members stop their monthly recurring dues payments during the same timeframe (total of \$946/month.)
 - ii. **FYI:** Tuesday, April 7 - Monday, April 13, 3,368 new members joined and 534 members renewed. Additionally, we had 94 members stop their monthly recurring dues payments during the same timeframe (total of \$929/month.) We are seeing a spike in membership cancellations due to DSA's decision to not endorse Biden.
 - 1. Claudia will get a more detailed numbers
 - iii. **FYI:** Tuesday, April 1 - Monday, April 6, 389 new members joined and 92 members renewed. Additionally, we had 66 members stop their monthly recurring dues payments during the same timeframe (total of \$919/month.)
 - iv. **FYI:** DSA now has a revised post join/renew survey online. [See here.](#)
 - v. **FYI:** We have paused all online advertisements due to low conversions. We are looking for a volunteer wordpress developer with the NTC
 - vi. **FYI:** Membership cards are in production
 - vii. **Request for decision:** We need to know if we can share our membership size as defined in the constitution OR if we will be changing this practice and be sharing only our "in good standing" membership count.
 - 1. Discussion: Historically, the constitutional number is the one we have recorded and released. If members ask what the number in good standing is, do we want to share that number internally? What's the public messaging in that case? Should focus messaging on growth instead of set number. At this time no one gets the weekly numbers outside of the NPC.
 - 2. Will continue to share constitutional number**
- d. Operations - Kristina Sepulveda
- i. **FYI:** The YDSA NCC decided to move the YDSA Convention online.
 - ii. **FYI:** Eileen will be taking online courses in Data Strategy for the next 1-3 months. This means the tech and data team will have decreased capacity.
 - iii. **FYI:** Brandon completed and filed DSA Inc. FEC Quarterly report (and filed DSA PAC Quarterly Report).
 - iv. **FYI:** Following a few known incidents of Zoom Bombing during DSA meetings we have heightened security protocols for all DSA Zoom lines and encouraged chapters with their own Zoom lines to take the same protections
 - v. **FYI:** COVID-19 comms had a great training for chapter leaders last Monday wherein we went over some strategies for working with the press during the pandemic. We also had a talking points training with the NPC and hope to do more of these in the future.
 - vi. **FYI:** The swag store continues to have slow sales. We will not be ordering any further DSA for Bernie merch.
 - vii. **FYI:** The NTC is having regular meetings (for myDSA and website redesign).
 - viii. **FYI:** NTC and Red Rabbits had a joint meeting on infosec and will continue to regularly check-in.
- e. Finance - Heidi Chua

- i. **FYI:** Finance department spent most of last week ensuring we are caught up on payments including a few outstanding YDSA scholarships that required bank transfers instead of checks.
- ii. **FYI:** Waiting on the accountant to complete the 2018 990s for your review.
- iii. **FYI:** Last week we did dues calculations and are reviewing receipts in the PEX card system in preparation for Dues Share for May 7.

3. Committee Report

- a. DSA for Bernie Committee
 - i. Recommendation RE: Leaving the PPFB IE Coalition
 - 1. Discussion: Great relationships, want to leave thoughtfully, don't see a role for us as part of a "Biden table."
 - 2. Natalie motions to adopt the DSA for Bernie recommendation we leave the PPFB coalition. **Motion carries unanimously.**
 - a. Sean will relay to coalition.
- b. GND
 - i. **For Decision:** The Green New Deal campaign committee has requested access to breakdown of membership #s by Congressional district. **Should this be provided to all national WGs or national priorities only and if so, what is the correct membership number to distribute?**
 - 1. Discussion: numbers can be generated pretty easily, could be shared with Campaigns Council and chapter leaders. How often should numbers be shared? Should remind chapter leaders of tools we have to do list work with membership lists.
 - 2. Natalie moves to approve GND request and, moving forward, also to offer membership breakdown by Congressional district on a quarterly basis. Sean seconds. **Motion carries unanimously.**
 - ii. Request for LN4S signon
 - 1. Sean: public transit demands, expanded funding petition. Request to sign on.
 - a. Background: Labor Network for Sustainability (trade unionists and climate organizers, mostly union leadership)
 - b. Natalie moves to approve the request for national sign-on. **Motion carries unanimously.**
 - i. Sean will loop Maria in to follow up on signing.
- c. [GDC Report](#)
 - i. Recommendation to add Jen to replace Erika on GDC SC and on Retention Subcommittee. **Motion carries unanimously.**
 - 1. GDC will discuss on next SC meeting about where chapter leaders call will live and report back to SC.
- d. DSLC
 - i. [Request for postal support sign on](#)
 - 1. Emergency support for USPS
 - 2. Discussion: Will we be receiving names of people who've signed form?
 - 3. Recommendation to sponsor petition in support of USPS. **Motion carries unanimously.**

4. Next Steps for NPC Newsletter
 - a. Identifying big picture topics to communicate
 - b. Assigning a group to prepare 1st draft
 - Discussion: timeline midway between dispatches. Could incorporate aspects of the NPC Visibility resolution; have some more individual voice in there and rotate. Should include resolutions from NPC meeting that passed and didn't pass. Short political analysis should be presented as a body vs individual; a lot of people on the chapter leaders call expressed wanting to feel a sense of political unity post-Bernie so want to aim to do that. Should have a call to action, boost DSA member responses: use this platform to make people feel ownership of the organization. Want to show this organization is an organization of people; a good way to change the culture.
 - Maria: we have a form WG/committees can fill out
 - Volunteers: Hannah, Erika, Jenbo, Kristian
 - **Draft by Wednesday that can go to the SC for approval**
5. Follow-up re: previous discussions
 - a. Chapter Pipeline Committee Response
 - i. Recommendation from Sauce, Maikiko, & Anti-Fascist WG member
 1. Maikiko: recommendation to address the process; language included would be recommended for chapter's bylaws
 2. **Natalie moves we approve the recommended language. Motion carries unanimously.**
 - b. Affirming the BDS & Palestine WG
 - i. Discussion: What is the current structure? Has the existing WG been approached about the possibility of living as a subcommittee of the IC? Would be good to have clarity. Should bring up discussion with leadership of IC (especially since there is a Middle East subcommittee within IC). Does staff have a main point of contact? (Yes; Olivia in Portland)
 - a. Maria will connect Olivia with Abdullah, Blanca, and Austin
6. Discussion: Biden & the General Election (All NPC members encouraged to participate in the discussion)
 - a. Discussion: [Draft resolution from Kristian](#). Recommendation that all sections be removed except points 1-3 (1. using chapter leaders call to begin developing national strategy; 2. developing memo to chapter leaders; 3. releasing statement). Caution using language around "strategic organizing to defeat the Trump agenda," need to be clear about leading vs suggesting/coordinating, missing labor component.
 - b. Sean: temperature check on Megan's recommendation to narrow the focus.
 - i. Kristian: moves to adopt point 1 and 2 of this resolution. **Motion carries unanimously.**
 - c. Discussion of statement: Biden statement should not try to straddle a moral line, should focus on where DSA chapters are leading in this moment. Need to focus on campaigns that we are engaging in and putting it into strategy. Donald Trump is the most dangerous president in years, the dismantling of working class institutions is not going to be undone by Joe Biden. Focus on defeating the right, shouldn't say anything about how people in swing states should vote for Biden. Trump is the worst president in generations but not going to tell people to vote for Biden. We should have concrete steps to tell people what to do. Having clarity on campaigns, work to lift up. There would be a clear material difference between a Biden presidency and Trump presidency, what are we telling people who ask us how we're voting and how our members are voting? We need to be realistic about our ever expanding base, we need to take political

leadership, there is a material difference between Obama and Trump (ex. ICE, deportations). Need to be clear about coalition-building. Have also seen chapters retweeting Howie Hawkins. Chapters need to think about what they are doing, is it actually relevant and about power? We have to acknowledge that if we are trying to build an organization, we need to be conscious of the kind of organization we're building and what black and brown led orgs are doing. The change under the Trump administration is significant; key questions: what segments of the working class are we alienating by not relating to this election at all? Are losing opportunities to relate to coalition partners? I think we need an answer for the press. Trump is materially worse for all oppressed people than a Democrat was. Should include in any statement that we ask members in swing states to discuss and consider voting for Biden. Counterpoint: The vast majority of people don't actually have any power in elections, DSA doesn't have the power to change the outcome anyway. Expanding on what Trump's agenda is, we should also name the work that we are doing, elevate chapter work that's fighting that agenda -- how can DSA do the most good to build power for the working class?

- d. Natalie: two unresolved next steps, range of positions presented, two key questions are:
 - i. Should we tell our members in swing states to consider and discuss voting for Biden?
 - ii. Firmly laying out the concrete list of organizing work that socialists are doing - we have broad agreement on this.
 - iii. Firming up statement

7. Executive Session

End Time: 7:45pm