



WHATCOM DSA

INTERNAL CHAPTER POLICY

Endorsement Policy

1. **Two Types of Candidates:** Whatcom DSA makes a clear distinction between DSA Cadre Candidates and Externally Endorsed Candidates.
2. **DSA Cadre Candidates:** The expectations for DSA Cadre Candidates are higher than those for Externally Endorsed Candidates. DSA Cadre Candidates will have a significant amount of experience organizing in DSA as a member and will commit to an ongoing relationship with DSA. Whatcom DSA will have a significant and central degree of involvement in the campaigns and administrations of DSA Cadre Candidates. We expect these candidates to commit to the following standards:
 - a. **Putting Socialism Forward:** All DSA Cadre Candidates should actively, explicitly, publicly, and prominently do the following:
 - i. Identify as “**democratic socialists and/or socialist**” including on their literature, mailings, and scripts supplied for canvasses and phonebanks, regardless of their party ballot line.
 - ii. Present themselves as DSA candidates, present their campaign as a product of DSA, and consistently call on their base and constituency to participate in DSA campaigns, to mobilize to DSA events, and to join DSA.
 - iii. Use their voices to cultivate movements and act against the forces of capital inside and outside of legislative chambers, and publicly recognize that building socialism requires a mass orientation and cannot be achieved through backroom deals and collaboration with capitalist parties.

- iv. Be on the side of working people and marginalized communities
- v. Refuse any donations from corporations, corporate officers, corporation-backed front groups, private prisons, real estate sources, and police unions/law enforcement.

b. **A Working Class Platform:** All DSA Cadre Candidates should commit to the National DSA platform (and a Whatcom DSA Platform, should one be adopted). Candidates will put forward the ideas and priorities outlined in the platform(s) throughout their campaigns and time in office. Candidates will also run on a platform determined by Whatcom DSA ahead of each election cycle—regardless of whether a chapter platform has been drafted.

c. **Sturdy Candidate-Chapter Coordination**

- 1. If candidates do receive the Whatcom DSA endorsement, they will endorse all other Whatcom DSA endorsed Cadre Candidates, and will not challenge any other Whatcom DSA endorsed Cadre Candidates for office.
- 2. If an endorsed candidate is elected, they will coordinate closely with Whatcom DSA and endorsed Whatcom DSA candidates. They will commit to attending GMs, steering committee meetings, and other meetings on a regular basis.
- 3. DSA Cadre Candidates serving in the same legislative body will form an openly socialist caucus in order to coordinate block voting and cohere support for socialist politics and DSA, and will utilize uniform branding throughout their campaigns and times in office.

3. **Externally Endorsed Candidates:** There will be many elections where no candidate meets the standards for a DSA Cadre Endorsement. In such cases, there may be candidates running that the chapter desires to collaborate with and support. An External Endorsement is suitable for these candidates.

- a. Externally Endorsed Candidates are not expected to be DSA members and are not required to have a long term relationship of accountability with the chapter. However, the chapter should consider these candidates to be in line with our principles to some significant extent, and should consider their campaign worthy of an independent orientation.
 - i. An independent orientation is one which does not subsume the politics of the chapter to the politics of the candidate or campaign, but instead presents the chapter as a distinct political force.
 - ii. As such, Whatcom DSA campaigns in support of Externally Endorsed candidates may mobilize DSA members to canvasses, phonebanks, and other events that are put on by the candidates' campaign. Whatcom DSA should also make an effort to organize our own canvases, with our own independent messaging, at which we actively discuss DSA as an organization with voters in order to build socialist power.
- b. Externally Endorsed Candidates are not required to agree with the National DSA Platform (and the Whatcom DSA Platform should one be adopted). However, Externally Endorsed Candidates will be asked about the extent to which they agree with the platform and/or chapter principles in their statement to the chapter and will be asked to endorse the platform(s) (if any should be adopted), and chapter membership will be empowered to decide during the voting process whether or not their response is satisfactory.

- c. In order for the chapter to organize canvasses for a candidate or to mobilize to canvas for a candidate in an official capacity, the candidate must be endorsed as either a DSA Cadre Candidate or as an Externally Endorsed candidate.
- d. The Steering Committee and any working groups or committees will make efforts to engage Externally Endorsed candidates and their campaigns in the political projects of the chapter, and will also make an effort to engage the chapter in all of the above for the campaign and candidate. These bodies will be responsible for crafting the chapter's presentation of external endorsements.

4. Endorsement Process

a. Application For Endorsement

- i. A page on the chapter website will display information on our endorsement process, including this policy and the Endorsement Application Form.
- ii. Candidates wishing to be endorsed will fill out the application form, which will include questions on contact information, the seat they are contesting, social media accounts, and campaign websites, and links to the National DSA Platform, and the chapter platform (should one be adopted), and Chapter Statement of Purpose (By-Laws Article II). Candidates will be asked to confirm they have read this policy and to either apply for an External Endorsement or a DSA Cadre Endorsement.
- iii. Candidates that have previously been endorsed by Whatcom DSA on one campaign will have to re-apply for endorsement in order to receive an endorsement for a subsequent campaign.

b. Nomination For Endorsement

- i. Once an application form has been submitted, an SC member will post the candidate's responses to the application form (excluding those that divulge sensitive or personal information) on the chapter communication platform. The Endorsement Nomination Form will also be posted internally so chapter members can sign on in support of bringing the endorsement to a GM.
- ii. In order for the candidate to be nominated and for the endorsement to be brought to a GM consideration, 2% of members in good standing must sign the nomination form.
- iii. If this threshold is reached, the SC will invite the candidate to prepare their statement with regard to their alignment with Chapter Statement of Purpose and will be scheduled to speak at the subsequent GM for the chapter to hear their statement and vote on the endorsement.

c. Endorsement Vote

- i. At the GM where the endorsement is considered, the candidate will make a statement to the membership. Afterwards, time will be allotted for a period of question and answer, followed by a debate on whether the candidate should be endorsed or not.
- ii. Candidate endorsement votes must be announced to WDSA membership at least one week prior to the General Meeting.
- iii. WDSA members become eligible to vote on endorsements 30 days after the day they sign up and pay their membership dues.
- iv. A candidate endorsement shall require a two thirds majority vote during a general meeting with a quorum of 10% of chapter membership.

5. Expectations for endorsed candidates

a. Chapter will provide to candidates

CADRE candidates

- i. Only cadre Candidates will have access to the chapter membership list.
- ii. The chapter will make a financial donation to the candidate.
- iii. Invitation to speak at General Meetings to update on campaign and ask for volunteer support.
- iv. Use of Whatcom DSA logo on candidate's campaign material.
- v. Submission of nomination to National to access resources.
- vi. Consider sponsoring fundraising events.
- vii. Whatcom DSA will organize and host campaign events including but not limited to canvassing, text-banking, phone banking, and other activities in support of candidates.

External Candidate

- viii. Steering committee may call and email member list to support candidate.
- ix. Invitation to speak at General Meetings to update on campaign and ask for volunteer support.
- x. Use of Whatcom DSA logo on candidate's campaign material
- xi. Chapter will not make financial contributions to the external candidate

b. Candidate will provide to chapter

Cadre candidates must:

- i. Identify as "democratic socialist and/or socialist" including on their literature, mailings, and scripts supplied for canvasses and phonebank. Place Whatcom DSA logo on campaign materials.
- ii. Attend monthly meetings (either the candidate or a representative) during the campaign and during their elected term.
- iii. Present themselves as DSA candidates, present their campaign as a product of DSA, and consistently call on their base and constituency to participate in DSA campaigns, to mobilize to DSA events, and to join DSA.

External candidates must:

- iv. Attend at least one general meeting and make a statement about their platform as it relates to DSA, and allow for membership questions.
- v. Remain available to the steering committee throughout the election process should questions or concerns arise.
- vi. Remain true to statements made to the chapter.

6. **Financing:** Any candidate seeking WDSA endorsement must commit to refuse funding from corporate, private prisons, law enforcement, or real estate sources.

7. **Community Guidelines:** Any candidate seeking WDSA endorsement must agree to abide by Whatcom DSA's Community Guidelines.

8. Rescinding Endorsements:

- a. WDSA may vote to rescind a candidate endorsement by a 50 percent + 1 vote at any general meeting.
- b. Requests for a candidate endorsement rescindment must be sponsored by five WDSA members in good standing who have attended three chapter meetings, and be submitted in writing to the Steering

Committee.

- c. Candidate endorsement rescindment votes must be announced to WDSA membership at least one week prior to the General Meeting.
- d. If new information comes to light after the endorsement which casts serious doubt on the compatibility of the candidate with the WDSA's values, the Steering Committee may rescind a WDSA endorsement at any time by an 80 percent supermajority vote. In this event, the Steering Committee will immediately inform membership of the action and the reasons for it.