

Constitution of the Texas Young Democrats

Firmly believing that the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party provide the best guides to peace, security, liberty, dignity, and prosperity for the people of the Great State of Texas, we the members of the Texas Young Democrats, in order to foster and perpetuate those ideals, to stimulate an active interest in the political process, to promote the involvement of young people in all aspects of the political arena, and to provide the highest degree of justice and social welfare for the citizens of our Great State, do associate ourselves together and do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Texas Young Democrats.

Article I Chartered Organizations

Section 101: Chartered Organizations

The Texas Young Democrats shall be composed of local, autonomous organizations (clubs). To charter as distinct entities, clubs in counties with over one hundred thousand (100,000) votes for the Democratic candidate in the last gubernatorial election must consist of ten (10) or more members, and clubs in counties with one hundred thousand (100,000) or fewer votes for the candidate must consist of five (5) or more members.

Clubs representing educational institutions, to charter as distinct entities, must consist of ten (10) or more members on campuses with enrollment greater than ten thousand (10,000) students, campuses with ten thousand (10,000) or fewer enrolled students must consist of five (5) or more members

Section 102: Duration of Charter

A club's charter shall be in effect from its granting until the following State Convention, unless one of the following applies: a) the charter is found to have violated criminal law, b) the charter is found to have violated the rules set forth by the Texas Ethics Commission regarding campaign finance, c) a complaint filed against the charter is upheld by the grievance committee, or d) the charter fails to meet the required deadlines for updating chapter information as set forth by this document or TYD Bylaws.

Section 103: Granting Charters

Clubs shall receive a charter by submitting a charter application to the State Convention that is in compliance with any requirements or time limits established for such an application, for verification by the convention's Credentials Committee and approval by the State Convention. A charter may also be submitted between conventions to the Rules Committee for verification and approval by a majority vote of the State Board, or three-fourths vote of the Executive Committee between quarterly meetings.

Section 104: Chartering and Membership Fees

Texas Young Democrats will not charge membership or chartering fees to individual clubs.

Article II Membership

Section 201: Age Requirement

Democrats not less than fourteen (14) years of age and not greater than forty (40) years of age shall be eligible for membership in the Texas Young Democrats. Any member that holds an elected or appointed office in the Texas Young Democrats shall be eligible to serve out the remainder of their term regardless of age requirements, and will retain any voting rights applicable to their office during that period.

Section 202: Membership Criteria

Regular membership to the Texas Young Democrats shall be granted to individuals who meet all membership requirements in the governing documents of the Texas Young Democrats and either:

1. Join an affiliated county club in the county where the member resides, works, or attends school; or if there is no such county club available to them, join a county club in any county adjacent to their residence, work, or school place;
2. Join an affiliated specialized county club in the county where the member resides, works, or attends school that addresses a certain specific issue or demographic group; or if there is no such specialized county club available to them, join such a specialized county club in any county adjacent to their residence, work, or school place; or
3. Request and are granted at-large membership to the Texas Young Democrats at any State Convention, in which case the at-large membership shall expire at the beginning of the following State Convention or upon joining an affiliated club as per 1) and 2), whichever comes first.

Section 203: Special Memberships

Special classes of membership may be established that do not meet the standard criteria for membership, as defined in the Bylaws. Special memberships are not granted voting privileges at any level of the Texas Young Democrats.

Section 204: Loyalty Pledge

Membership in the Texas Young Democrats shall require the signing of a Loyalty Pledge to the Democratic Party.

Article III Officers

Section 301: Elected Officers

Section 301(a): Officer List

The Elected Officers of the Texas Young Democrats shall be the President, the Executive Vice President, the Finance Director, the Policy Director, the Membership Director, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the two Young Democrats of America (YDA) National Committee Representatives.

Section 301(b): Elections

All officers shall be elected at each State Convention. Runoffs shall be held for any officer elections as necessary until a majority is achieved. Officers shall hold office until the next State Convention or when their successors are elected. At any occasion where officers are elected, a forum of all officer candidates to be elected shall be held. No member shall hold more than one simultaneous elected office in the Texas Young Democrats. An officer accepting a nomination and being elected to a second office is considered to have immediately resigned their prior held office.

Section 301(c): Election Code

At the fourth-quarter meeting of the State Board the year before a State Convention, the State Board shall approve an Election Code that shall include but is not limited to: campaign expenditure limits, a campaign code of ethics, nomination and disqualification processes, campaign timelines, and dispute resolution procedures. The Election Code must be published and accessible to the membership at least 30 days prior to the convention.

Section 301(d): Filing for Offices

The offices of the Executive Board will require a filing application filed to the State Board no later than 30 days prior to the convention in which elections take place. The offices required to file early are President, Executive Vice President, Finance Director, and Policy Director.

Candidates who miss the filing deadline may file for a position by a petition of at least 25% of convention attendees.

In order to file for candidacy for the offices of the Executive Board, a candidate must have:

- a) affiliated with a chartered Texas Young Democrats chapter,
- b) be an at-large member of the Texas Young Democrats, or
- c) have signed an Oath of Affiliation to the Texas Democratic Party at least six months prior to the date of election.

Section 301(e): Residency Requirements

In order to file for candidacy for the offices of President and Executive Vice President, an applicant who wishes to serve in these respective roles must live, work, or go to school within the state of Texas for at least one year prior to seeking nomination and upon election, be required to maintain full time residency in Texas for the entirety of their term.

In order to file for candidacy for the remaining offices of the Executive Board, an applicant who wishes to serve as an officer must live, work, or go to school within the state of Texas for at least six months prior to seeking nomination, and upon election, be required to maintain full time residency in Texas for the entirety of their term.

Section 302: Duties

The officers of the Texas Young Democrats shall execute the duties assigned to them by the TYD governing documents, the President and the Executive Committee. Nonperformance of such duties as are defined by the governing documents of the Texas Young Democrats shall be grounds for removal from the office.

Section 303: Order of Succession

When a vacancy occurs in the Office of the President, the following shall be the order of succession: 1) Executive Vice President, 2) Finance Director, 3) Policy Director, 4) Membership Director, 5) Secretary, 6) Treasurer.

Section 304: Appointed Officers

The President may appoint such officers as are needed to aid in the operation of the Texas Young Democrats, with approval of the Executive Committee.

Section 305: Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs among the Officers, the President shall appoint a regular member to fill the office upon majority approval of the State Board at their next meeting.

Section 306: Removal from Office

All elected and appointed positions of the Texas Young Democrats may be subject to removal from office for misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance of assigned duties as per these governing documents; or, for violations of any law or rule of the Texas Young Democrats; or, for committing a felony under the laws of the State of Texas or the United States of America while in office; or, for failure to maintain decorum while acting in a capacity as an officer of the Texas Young Democrats.

Section 307: General Guidelines for Dismissal

The Texas Young Democrats, as a volunteer organization, appreciates all the hard work freely given by its members and officers. As such, it is understood that even the best laid plans are complicated by life. That being said, the success of the organization depends on the smooth functioning of several critical aspects of one's job roles. Repeated or chronic nonperformance of duty, in particular, is a severe blow to the efficacy of the organization; given that life throws everyone difficulties, it is necessary that officers be able to either perform their duties or appropriately delegate them; or, if such management of duty is not possible, to either step down from office or be removed from said office.

Article IV State Convention

Section 401: Authority

The State Convention shall be the highest authority of the Texas Young Democrats, subject to the provisions of the Texas Young Democrats governing documents.

Section 402: Purpose

The purpose of the State Convention shall be to elect the Officers of the Texas Young Democrats; to hold statutory meetings of Regional and Senate District Committees; to elect Regional Directors; to adopt a platform and resolutions which embody the basic principles of the Democratic Party and which set forth the positions of the Texas Young Democrats on current issues of statewide significance; to establish and amend the rules of the Texas Young Democrats; and to take such action as it deems necessary and proper to effect the operations of the Texas Young Democrats.

Section 403: Time and Place

The Texas Young Democrats shall hold its State Convention in odd-numbered years at a time and place selected so as to maximize participation. The time and place shall be decided by a three-fourths vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 404: Call

The Call for the State Convention shall be issued by the President no later than two months prior to the selected convention date to all affiliated clubs and such unaffiliated clubs as the President may be able to contact.

Section 405: Delegations

Section 405(a): Delegate Strength

All clubs placed on the Temporary or Permanent Roll of the Convention shall be allotted delegates as specified by relevant bylaws and standing rules of the Texas Young Democrats. Members of the Texas Young Democrats who registered for the State Convention at-large will be combined into a pool which shall also be allotted delegates as similarly specified.

Section 405(b): Unit Rule Use

The use of the unit rule shall not be permitted; delegation votes should reflect the breadth of opinion of all members within the represented unit.

Section 405(c): Delegation Assignment

Attendees shall designate the club whose delegation they are a member of at the time of registration.

Section 405(d): Delegation Attendance

No club shall be deemed to have been in attendance and/or seated at a State Convention which is not represented at the Convention by at least one (1) registered delegate.

Section 406: Convention Officers

Section 406(a): Temporary Officers

The Executive Committee shall designate a Convention Director, who may designate whatever such assistants as may be necessary to plan, to arrange, and to conduct the necessary work of the Convention. The President of the Texas Young Democrats shall serve as Temporary Chair to call to order and preside over the State Convention until a Permanent Chair has been elected.

Section 406(b): Permanent Officers

The Permanent Officers of the Convention shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. The Permanent Chair shall be elected upon the adoption of the Temporary Roll, and shall appoint the Vice Chair, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and Chairs of the Permanent Convention Committees.

Section 407: Committees

Section 407(a): Temporary Convention Committees

The temporary committees of the State Convention shall be: the Temporary Credentials Committee and the Convention Procedures committee. Temporary committees will be appointed by the President and confirmed by the State Board at the fourth-quarter meeting the year prior to the respective State Convention.

Section 407(a)(1): Temporary Credentials Committee

The Temporary Credentials Committee will be responsible for reporting the initial roll at the start of the convention, which must include what chapters submitted complete and valid chartering packets, how many chapters have registered attendees to the convention at that time, and the total count of attendees at that time. The Temporary Credentials Committee must hold at least one public meeting at a time and place prior to the start of the Convention and approved by the State Board to examine submitted charters and credentials in preparation for the initial roll. The Temporary Credentials Committee is discharged upon the adoption of the initial roll at the beginning of the convention, and all further updates are the responsibility of the Permanent Credentials Committee.

Section 407(a)(2): Convention Procedures Committee

The Convention Procedures Committee is responsible for creating the initial convention program and the standing rules for the convention, for approval at the final State Board meeting before the convention and recommendation for adoption by the State Convention. The Convention Procedures Committee is discharged upon the adoption of the convention program and the standing rules of the convention following the adoption of the initial roll.

Section 407(b): Permanent Committees

The Permanent Committees of the State Convention shall be the Credentials Committee, the Rules Committee, the Platform and Resolutions Committee, and the Nominations Committee. The membership of the Permanent Credentials Committee shall consist of a Chair appointed by the Permanent Convention Chair and one delegate from each club on the Temporary Roll of the Convention. The membership of all other Permanent Committees shall consist of a Chair

appointed by the Permanent Convention Chair and one delegate from each club on the Permanent Roll of the Convention. The Permanent Convention Chair shall appoint a Vice Chair to a Committee if such a position is needed to insure that the Committee consists of an uneven number of members. A simple majority of the clubs present at the convention shall constitute quorum for the committee, provided that at least two clubs of which the committee chair is not a member must be present.

Article V

Executive Committee

Section 501: Authority

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for conducting the day-to-day affairs of the Texas Young Democrats between conventions.

Section 502: Membership

Section 502(a): Voting Members

The voting members of the Executive Committee shall be the President, Executive Vice President, Finance Director, Policy Director, Membership Director, Treasurer, Secretary, and all Regional Directors.

Section 502(b): Nonvoting Members

The nonvoting members of the Executive Committee shall be the two YDA National Committee Representatives, the Chair of the Rules Committee, the president of the Texas College Democrats, and any officer appointments made by the President.

Section 503: Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held monthly, and at the call of the President. Meetings shall be held by any means, including electronic, which allows for all members to hear and participate in all proceedings in real time. A majority of the voting membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute quorum.

Article VI

State Board

Section 601: Authority

Except for powers reserved to the Executive Committee, the governing body of the Texas Young Democrats between conventions shall be the State Board.

Section 602: Membership

Section 602(a): Voting Members

The voting members of the State Board shall be all elected Executive Committee officers, the chair of each caucus of the Texas Young Democrats, the president of the Texas College Democrats, the President of each chartered or local unit or club of the Texas Young Democrats, and the two YDA National Committee Representatives.

Section 602(b): Nonvoting Members

The nonvoting members of the State Board shall be all nonvoting members of the Executive Committee not expressly specified as voting members above.

Section 603: Meetings

The State Board of the Texas Young Democrats shall meet at least once per calendar quarter, save for quarters where a State Convention is held. The President shall issue the call for each State Board meeting to all chartered clubs of the Texas Young Democrats. One-quarter (25%) of all voting members of the State Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 604: Standing Committees

The State Board shall have Standing Committees as follows:

- The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Finance Director.
- The Platforms and Resolutions Committee shall be chaired by the Policy Director.
- The Rules Committee shall be chaired by a member appointed by the President with majority approval of the Executive Committee.
- The PAC Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer.

Article VII

Regional CommitteeSection

701: Regions, Apportionment

There shall be ten (10) Regional Committees of the Texas Young Democrats. Each Regional Committee shall be composed of all chartered units within the region as provided for in the Bylaws. Each chartered unit shall receive one (1) vote in their Regional Committee. A chartered club may only cast a vote in one Regional Committee; clubs whose primary members represent more than one region may choose the region in which they are represented at a State Convention and shall participate in that Regional Committee until the next State Convention.

Section 702: Regional Committee Meetings

The Regional Committees shall convene during each State Convention, and as called by their respective Regional Director.

Section 703: Regional Directors

Section 703(a): Election

A Regional Director shall be selected from among the members of the chartered clubs within each Regional Committee at the statutory meeting of the Regional Committee at the State Convention. Regional Directors shall hold office until the next State Convention or when their successors are elected.

Section 703(b): Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs among the Regional Directors, the TYD President may appoint a replacement from within the same region upon majority approval of the Executive Committee at their next meeting.

Article VIII Grievance Committee

Section 801: Membership

A Grievance Committee shall be formed which shall be composed of the Executive Committee's Rules Committee Chair and six (6) members of the State Board, drawn at random by the Rules Committee Chair, upon the receipt of a formal grievance by the Rules Committee Chair as prescribed by the Bylaws.

Any party described by the grievance shall not participate in the selection process and shall not be eligible for membership in the Grievance Committee during the deliberation or resolution of said grievance. If a member selected at random to participate in the Grievance Committee does not respond to the Rules Committee Chair within seventy-two (72) hours indicating their ability to serve on the Grievance Committee, a different State Board member shall be drawn at random by the Rules Committee Chair within twenty-four (24) hours after that period expires to replace said member.

Section 802: Duties

The Grievance Committee shall be responsible for resolving disputes arising within the Texas Young Democrats, and for the adjudication of removal proceedings for officers, as requested by the formal grievance which gave cause to its formation.

Section 803: Meetings

Meetings of the Grievance Committee shall be open to the membership of the Texas Young Democrats and to any applicable witnesses as needed for the proceedings of the meeting. Three-fourths (75%) of the Grievance Committee shall constitute quorum.

Article IX Caucuses

The Texas Young Democrats shall create caucuses to represent certain groups and issues as defined by the Bylaws and the State Convention. The purpose of caucuses is to meet, discuss, and organize action on particular constituency issues within the Texas Young Democrats, as well as educate our membership on important issues affecting each of these constituencies.

Article X

Procedural Provisions

Section 1001: Open Meetings Policy

Section 1001(a): Meetings

All meetings of the Texas Young Democrats and any body or unit thereof shall be open to the public, save for administrative matters internal to the organization.

Section 1001(b): Voting

All votes conducted by any body or unit of the Texas Young Democrats shall be open and there shall be no secret ballots, save for administrative matters internal to the organization.

Section 1002: Open Records Policy

All records of the Texas Young Democrats are presumed to be open for inspection by the membership. Upon a classification by the Executive Committee of certain records as confidential, such records will not be open for inspection until the earlier of the passage of five (5) years or a reclassification by the Executive Committee.

Section 1003: Procedural Guarantees

Section 1003(a): Anti-Discrimination Standard

All activities of Texas Young Democrats, at all levels of the organization, shall be open to all members of Texas Young Democrats regardless of race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (except as provided in requirements for membership), color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, economic status, disability, or philosophic persuasion.

Section 1003(b): Right of Access

The time and place for all public meetings of the Texas Young Democrats shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons and parties.

Section 1003(c): Right of Participation

Section 1003(c)(1): Procedural Disclosures

The Texas Young Democrats shall publicize in a timely fashion a full description of the procedures and rules by which the organization operates.

Section 1003(c)(2): Candidacy Requirement Disclosures

The Texas Young Democrats shall publicize, fully and in a timely fashion, a full description of all elected offices within the Texas Young Democrats, including their required qualifications and duties.

Section 1004: Parliamentary Authority

The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, will be the procedural and parliamentary authority of the Texas Young Democrats and all subsidiary assemblies referenced in the Texas Young Democrats governing documents, unless contrary to other provisions within this Constitution or Bylaws.

Article XI Amendments

Section 1101: Constitutional Amendments

The Texas Young Democrats State Convention may amend this Constitution by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of all delegates on the Permanent Roll after passing the convention's Rules Committee by similar vote.

Section 1102: Bylaws Amendments

Bylaws shall be adopted to thoroughly explicate the principles espoused by this Constitution. The Texas Young Democrats State Convention may amend the Bylaws of the Texas Young Democrats by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all delegates on the Permanent Roll after passing the convention's Rules Committee by similar vote.

Section 1103: Interim Amendments

Between State Conventions, the Constitution of the Texas Young Democrats may be temporarily amended for good cause by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the entire membership of the State Board, and the Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership of the State Board. Any such amendments must be first passed by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Rules Committee and presented to all members of the State Board at least thirty (30) days in advance. All amendments so passed by the State Board shall be presented to the next State Convention for approval, although they shall be in effect and binding until such convention is held.

Section 1104: Rejection of Amendments by Convention

If any amendment introduced at a State Convention is rejected by the convention, it may not be proposed again until the following State Convention.

Article XII Supremacy Clause

This Constitution of the Texas Young Democrats shall be the supreme governing document of the organization, and under no circumstances may the rules set forth in this document be suspended. No changes may be made to this Constitution, or to the Bylaws, except as provided in Article XI above. Affiliated clubs retain all rights as to the organization and management of their local affairs free from interference from the Texas Young Democrats; however, the provisions of this Constitution shall take precedence in any matters relating to the relationship of the affiliated clubs with the Texas Young Democrats.

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Ratified in Convention, assembled, April 16, 2000

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 8, 2001 (§ 402 – internal addition. § 501 – internal addition)

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 21, 2002 (§ 402 – internal addition)

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 26, 2004 (§ 307(b) – internal modification. § 204 – addition)

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 23, 2006 (§ 201, 402, 501, 806(c)(2) – internal modifications. § 308 – addition)

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 13, 2008 (§ 305(a) – internal modification)

Revised and Amended in Convention, April 19, 2009 (§ 304, 403(c), 702, 806(a) – internal modification)

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Revised and Amended in Convention, April 3, 2011 (§ 103 – internal addition, § 305(a), 906(c)(2) – internal modification)

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Revised and Amended in Convention, April 28, 2013 (§ 101 addition, § 301(d) addition, § 405 modification, §602 modification, §802 rewrite)

Revised and Amended in Convention, August 13, 2017 (as per convention minutes)

Revised and Amended in Convention, May 19, 2019 (§102, §103, §202, §301(a), §301(b), §702, Art. VIII removed & subsequent renumbering, §602(b))