



2010 Washington State Democratic Party

Steps for Preparing for a Successful Legislative District Caucus or County Convention



January 29, 2010

Dear State Party Chair or Vice Chair,

Included with this letter is a document to help you begin preparing for your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention.

Some of the materials it contains include:

1. **Timeline** – Information for Democrats in your area about the next steps in the caucus and convention cycle.
2. **Preparing for a Successful Caucus or Convention – The Process** – Ten (10) things to do to right now to prepare for your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention.
3. **Preparing for a Successful Caucus or Convention – The Meeting** – Things to think about before your caucus or convention to make sure that the location is ready and things run smoothly.
4. A sample **agenda and rules**
5. Answers to some **commonly asked questions**

In the next few weeks you will also be receiving the following items:

6. Guidelines and rules regarding **platforms and resolutions**.
7. **A script** for the Chair of your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention is included in a separate document because of its length.
8. Detailed **materials for your Credentials Committee**.

If you have any questions about these materials please contact me at jaxon@wa-democrats.org or (206) 583-0664 and I, or one of the other State Party staff members, will be happy to assist you. I will also be contacting each local party organization to make sure that this information is clear.

Thank you for all of your hard work.

Sincerely,

Jaxon Ravens
Executive Director
Washington State Democrats

2010 Washington State Democratic Party Caucus and Convention Cycle

Timeline

There are three parts to the 2010 Caucus and Convention Cycle.

- 1). The first part consists of the Legislative District Caucuses where delegates and alternates will be elected to go to the State Convention. Statewide, 1,200 delegates and 600 alternates will be elected.
- 2). The second part is the County Convention where platforms are drafted and resolutions are addressed. Sometimes, but not always, Legislative Districts also develop a platform and address resolutions.

In some counties, such as Thurston and Kitsap, the Legislative District Caucuses and the County Convention will take place on the same day and at the same location. At these meetings the Legislative Districts usually meet as a sub-caucus during the County Convention and elect their delegates and alternates at that time.

- 3). The third part is the State Convention. The delegates and alternates elected at the Legislative District Caucuses will meet to craft a State Party platform, address resolutions and vote on other important issues before the party.

The dates to remember this year are:

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| Sunday, March 14 th 1:00pm | Legislative District Caucuses Caucuses begin at 1pm For the exact time, date and location of your Legislative District Caucus please go to http://wa-democrats.org/index.php?page=display&id=549 |
| Saturday, April 10 th 10:00am | County Conventions Conventions begin at 10am For the exact time, date and location of your County Convention please go to http://wa-democrats.org/index.php?page=display&id=551 |
| Friday and Saturday June 25 th and 26 th | State Convention – Vancouver Committee meetings, caucus meetings and a series of trainings will take place on Friday the 25 th . The State Convention will be called to order at 9am on Saturday the 26 th |

The 2010 Washington State Democratic Caucus-Convention Cycle

STATE CONVENTION

Saturday, June 26, 2010 – 9:00 am
Vancouver, WA

RESOLUTIONS
AND
PLATFORMS

DELEGATES
1,200 Delegates
600 Alternates

RESOLUTIONS
AND
PLATFORMS
(Sometimes)

COUNTY CONVENTIONS

39 Counties
Saturday, April 10, 2010 – 10:00 am

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT CAUCUSES

49 Legislative Districts
Sunday, March 14, 2010 – 1:00 pm

RESOLUTIONS
AND
PLATFORMS
(Sometimes)

2010 Washington State Democratic Party Legislative District Caucuses and County Conventions

Preparing for a Successful Caucus or Convention The Process

1. **Prepare Sign-In Materials** - You should prepare sign-in sheets for individuals to register at your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention. To vote in a meeting, the individual must be a resident, registered voter in the jurisdiction and sign a registration sheet stating that he/she is a Democrat, and agrees to public display of her/his attendance at the meeting. Those individuals who are not qualified to register to vote because of residence or citizenship are allowed to participate in the platform discussion, but may not vote on resolutions or for the election of delegates or alternates, nor may they be elected as delegates or alternates.

The sign-in sheets should be preprinted with the following information:

- Name
- Address
- City/Zip
- Phone
- Email Address
- Signature

Having all of this information on the sign-in sheets will give you an opportunity to get any corrections you might need to make your lists accurate for future use.

The State Party will be providing sample sign-in sheets in the next couple of weeks.

2. **Prepare Your Call to the Meeting** – As soon as possible and no later than ten (10) days before your meeting you must mail or email notice of the meeting, the **“Official Call to the County Convention/Legislative District Caucus,”** to interested parties and to the news media. This notice must contain the following information:

- The authority giving notice
- Who is eligible to participate
- Date and time of the meeting
- Location and address of the meeting
- The proposed agenda and rules
- Any fee, etc., involved in the meeting (You must include a notice that payment is voluntary, and not required to participate in the meetings.)
- Officers to be elected, if any
- Nominations for elective office, if any
- Other pertinent, concise information to prepare the attendee for the work to be accomplished
- Registration fee Information

3. **Select a Credentials Committee - You will have to appoint a Credentials Committee to oversee sign-in at your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention.** Not less than thirty (30) days prior to your Caucus or Convention your local party organization or its Executive Board needs to select a Credentials Committee Chair and committee members.

In addition to handling sign-in, the Credentials Committee will also count and report to the Chair the number of attendees. You should make sure the Credentials Committee has enough volunteers to complete the process quickly.

4. **Select a Rules Committee – This committee will draft proposed rules and a proposed agenda for the conduct of the Caucus or Convention.** These items will be mailed or emailed to interested parties and to the news media at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. You will also need to appoint a Chair of this committee. The Chair and the Committee need to be appointed at least thirty (30) days before your Caucus or Convention. A sample agenda and rules are included later in this document.

5. **Select a Platform and Resolutions Committee – You do not need to do this for Legislative District Caucuses.** The Platform and Resolutions Committee can hold hearings, meet and consider platform issues and resolutions submitted from the County or Legislative District, and draft a proposed platform and resolutions. These items should also be mailed to delegates and alternates or posted on line for review and comment at least ten (10) days prior to the Caucus or Convention. You will also need to appoint a Chair of this committee. The Chair and the Committee need to be appointed at least 30 days before your caucus or convention.

6. **Appoint an Affirmative Action Chair** - Each Legislative District and County Chair needs to appoint an Affirmative Action Chair, and where possible a committee, to develop for the legislative district and county party organization a program or plan to ensure full participation and representation of targeted groups within the legislative district or county.

7. **Review the Delegate Selection Plan** - The 2010 Delegate Selection and Affirmative Action Plan has been approved by the State Party. It lays out the basic format for the caucus and convention cycle and the delegate selection process. Pay special attention to the affirmative action section at the end of the document.

8. **Determine the Chair for your Caucus or Convention** - You may decide to do it yourself, but if you don't want to do so you can choose any Democrat you think will be able to conduct an orderly and fair meeting. If you do pick some other person to conduct the meeting it will nonetheless be your responsibility to call the meeting to order. You can then appoint a Temporary Chair. Shortly thereafter there will be an election for a Permanent Chair of the meeting. Your Temporary Chair will need to run for this position and be elected. This is not usually a problem as attendees are interested in having the meeting run quickly and smoothly. If you do appoint some other person as Temporary Chair you should sit down with him or her well before the meeting and go through the agenda and the procedures of the elections of Delegates and Alternates so that there are no mistakes made in the process.

In the next couple of weeks the State Party will be providing a script to assist the Chair with the process of running a caucus or convention.

9. **Plan for Other Appointments** – The Permanent Chair of the Legislative District Caucus or County Convention will need to appoint the following officers at the meeting; Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Parliamentarian. For the election of Delegates and Alternates to the State Convention it will also be necessary to for the Chair to appoint a Tally Committee.
10. **Return Materials Immediately** - After your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention it will be your responsibility to collect your credentials materials and convey them and the results of your delegate and alternate elections to the State Party. We will supply you with delegate and alternate report forms that you will use to report the names and addresses of the delegates and alternates elected to attend the State Convention.

There will be a State Convention registration fee of \$50 for the delegates elected at your Legislative District Caucus or County Convention. While this fee, like all fees in this process, is not a mandatory levy on each delegate it is strongly suggested in order to help defray the expenses of the convention. The State Party will be providing State Convention registration materials for the delegates and alternates elected at your caucus or convention. Please collect registration information as soon as possible and forward it to the State Party.

2010 Washington State Democratic Party Caucus and Convention Cycle

Preparing for a Successful Caucus or Convention The Meeting

Before Your Caucus or Convention – Be Prepared

1. Recruit and train enough people to assist with the various tasks at your location.
2. Have emergency contact information for your facility. Who will you contact if the facility is locked when you arrive? If they are not answering their phone who will you call next? Who will have the keys to the facility?
3. Know the layout of your facility. Are there enough tables and chairs? Where are the restrooms, drinking fountains, etc.? Will there be appropriate space available for sub-caucus meetings and tally committees? What type of sound system is needed and available?
4. What is the sign policy at your facility? Make this policy known to campaigns that might be interested in posting materials at your location. What are the rules about posting signs on the walls? Can you use tape, pins, etc.?
5. Make sure that you have an American flag available for the Pledge of Allegiance. Does the facility have one or do you need to bring your own?
6. Know about access for those with disabilities.
7. What are the rules for food and beverages at your location?

At Your Caucus or Convention – Suggested Staff and Materials to Have on Hand

1. Know when and where the State Convention is being held.
2. Have volunteers assigned and trained for the following tasks at your area caucus.
 - **Greeter** – It is important that caucus and convention attendees feel welcome and are given assistance on where to go and what to do next.
 - **Information Table** – These individuals need to be familiar with the layout of your facility as well as the caucus and convention process.
 - **Food and Beverage** – Caucuses and conventions can take several hours. In addition to serving as a source for fundraising, it is necessary to provide caucus attendees with a source of free water. You should also think about making arrangements for lunch and provide additional beverages. These volunteers should also understand the rules for food and beverages at your location.
3. Signs. Make and post signs announcing the caucus or convention, identifying the caucus or convention site, showing where attendees can and can't park, telling people where their sub-caucus is meeting at the facility, indicating where the restrooms, food and beverages, information table, and accessible entries are located.
4. Calculator. Make sure to have a several calculators just in case.
5. Paper suitable for use as ballots. Make sure to take enough. Voting for delegates and alternates shall be by written ballot. You may want to use a computer in creating these.
6. Pens and markers.
7. Clipboards.

Proposed Agenda for
2010 Legislative District Caucuses
(Optional items are underlined)

1. 1:00 pm - Registration
2. 1:45 pm - Call to Order
Sign-in tables close upon completion of credentials report.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Credentials Report
5. Adoption of Agenda and Rules
6. Election of Permanent Chair
7. Appointment of Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Parliamentarian
8. Election of Delegates and Alternates to the State Convention
9. Adoption of Platform and Resolutions
10. Good of the Order
11. Adjournment

Proposed Rules for
2010 Legislative District Caucuses
(Optional items are underlined)

1. The Legislative District Caucus shall be held on Sunday, March 14, 2010 commencing at 1:00 pm, at_____.
2. To vote at the Legislative District Caucus an individual must be a resident, registered voter in the _____ Legislative District and sign a registration sheet stating that he/she is a Democrat, and agrees to public display of her/his attendance at the meeting. Individuals who are not qualified to register to vote because of residence or citizenship shall be allowed to participate in the platform discussion, but may not vote on resolutions or for the election of delegates or alternates, nor may they be elected as delegates or alternates.
3. There will be a registration fee for all participants to the Legislative District Caucus of \$ _____ at the door. Payment of this fee shall not be a condition of participation or election.
4. The Legislative District Chair or the Chair's designee shall serve as the Temporary Chair of the Legislative District Caucus.
5. The Chair of the Credentials Committee shall present the report of the Credentials Committee which shall include:
 - A. The total number of eligible voters in attendance at the Caucus at the time the report is given.
6. The Chair of the Rules Committee shall present the report of the Rules Committee.
7. Any voting member of the Caucus may nominate themselves or be nominated by another voting member for the position of Permanent Chair. Nominations, seconding speeches and speeches by the candidate on his or her own behalf shall not total more than three (3) minutes per nominee. A majority is required to elect. If no person has a majority, the candidate receiving the least votes is dropped and balloting shall be repeated using the remaining names. This procedure shall be repeated until a candidate receives a majority.
8. The Permanent Chair shall appoint a Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Parliamentarian.
9. The Chair shall announce the allocation of State Convention delegates and alternates including the following information:
 - A. The total number eligible to vote at the Caucus.

10. The election of State Convention delegates and alternates:
 - A. Each candidate for State Convention delegate or alternate must be a resident registered voter in the Legislative District.
 - B. Each candidate for State Convention delegate or alternate shall be nominated individually. No second is required. A candidate who is not present must signify in advance, in writing individually that he/she will serve if elected and that he/she is a Democrat and is willing to be known as such. The letter of any absent candidate shall be read by the sub-caucus chair and shall constitute a nomination, no second required. All other nominations shall be made by signing the nomination list at the registration table. Each candidate shall have up to one minute (including the time spent by the sub-caucus chair reading an absent candidate's nomination letter) for speech on his/her behalf. Nomination of alternates shall occur after the election of delegates.
 - C. Voting shall be by signed ballot and a ballot to be counted must have all potential positions filled with no duplications (This prevents a candidate for delegate from skewing the vote by only voting for themselves and leaving the other positions blank). A plurality is required to elect. In case of a tie vote, the assignment of a delegate position shall be by lot.
 - D. State Convention alternates shall be selected from the same set of ballots used for the election of delegates. The candidate for delegate receiving the most votes after all delegate slots are filled shall become alternate number one, and the alternate receiving the next most votes shall be alternate number two, and so forth.
 - E. Each delegation elected shall be equally divided between women and men in both the delegate and alternate categories unless there are an insufficient number of nominees from one gender to fill available positions (If a legislative district can elect 40 delegates but 10 men and 30 women are running then the women can take the delegates spots that the men are unable to fill and the delegation will consist of 10 men and 30 women.)
11. At the time of the election, each elected State Convention delegate shall be requested to pay the \$50.00 State Convention Registration fee to the Secretary who shall send fees and a list of delegates and alternates with addresses and phone numbers to the State Chair within five (5) days. No person shall be excluded or disqualified from any part of the process for failure to pay such fee.
12. At the discretion of the Chair, consideration of resolutions may commence without suspension of the rules.
13. The motion "to table" shall be out of order at all times.

14. A quorum shall consist of 40% of the number eligible to vote as shown on the credentials report, as most recently amended.
 15. The Chair shall appoint a representative tally committee. All ballots shall be returned to the State Democratic headquarters and shall be retained by the State Chair until the State Convention has adjourned.
 16. The Unit Rule* shall not be permitted at any time.
 17. Proxy voting shall not be allowed.
 18. All possible efforts shall be made to insure maximum participation of ethnic minorities, women, youth, persons over 65 years of age, lesbians and gays, Labor, persons with a high school education or less, disabled, and persons of economic disadvantage.
 19. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall prevail in other matters not specifically covered herein.
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* The Unit Rule is a rule of procedure at a national political convention under which a state's entire vote must be cast for the candidate preferred by a majority of the state's delegates.

Allowing the unit rule at your caucus or convention would mean that all delegates would be chosen for one candidate. This would be in conflict with the current system which allows for proportional representation.

Proposed Agenda for
2010 County Conventions
(Optional items are underlined)

1. 10:00 am - Registration
2. 10:45 am - Call to Order
Sign-in tables close upon completion of credentials report.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Credentials Report
5. Adoption of Agenda and Rules
6. Election of Permanent Chair
7. Appointment of Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Parliamentarian
8. Election of Delegates and Alternates to the State Convention by Legislative District Sub-Caucus
9. Adoption of Platform and Resolutions
10. Good of the Order
11. Adjournment

Proposed Rules for 2010 County Conventions (Optional items are underlined)

1. The County Conventions shall be held on Saturday, April 10, 2010, commencing at 10:00 am, at_____.
2. To vote at the County Convention an individual must be a resident, registered voter in _____ County and sign a registration sheet stating that he/she is a Democrat, and agrees to public display of her/his attendance at the meeting. Individuals who are not qualified to register to vote because of residence or citizenship shall be allowed to participate in the platform discussion, but may not vote on resolutions or for the election of delegates or alternates, nor may they be elected as delegates or alternates.
3. If the County is holding multiple Legislative District Sub-Caucuses to elect delegates and alternates to the State Convention then attendees will sign in by Legislative District. There will be a registration fee for all participants to the Legislative District Caucus of \$ _____ at the door. Payment of this fee shall not be a condition of participation or election.
4. The County Chair or the Chair's designee shall serve as the Temporary Chair of the convention.
5. The Chair of the Credentials Committee shall present the report of the Credentials Committee which shall include:
 - A. The total number of eligible voters in attendance at the Caucus at the time the report is given.
6. The Chair of the Rules Committee shall present the report of the Rules Committee.
7. Any voting member of the Caucus may nominate themselves or be nominated by another voting member for the position of Permanent Chair. Nominations, seconding speeches and speeches by the candidate on his or her own behalf shall not total more than three (3) minutes per nominee. A majority is required to elect. If no person has a majority, the candidate receiving the least votes is dropped and balloting shall be repeated using the remaining names. This procedure shall be repeated until a candidate receives a majority.
8. The Permanent Chair shall appoint a Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Parliamentarian.

Rules #10 - #12 are not necessary unless Legislative District Sub-Caucuses are meeting in conjunction with the County Convention.

9. The Chair shall announce the allocation of State Convention delegates including the following information for each Legislative District Sub-Caucus:
 - A. The number of eligible voters.
 - B. Allocation of State Convention delegates and alternates.
10. The election of State Convention delegates and alternates by Legislative District Sub-Caucus:
 - A. Each candidate for State Convention delegate or alternate must be a resident registered voter in the Legislative District.
 - B. Each candidate for State Convention delegate or alternate shall be nominated individually. No second is required. A candidate who is not a delegate to the convention or who is not present must signify in advance, in writing individually, his/her presidential preference, that he/she will serve if elected and that he/she is a Democrat and is willing to be known as such. The letter of any absent candidate shall be read by the sub-caucus chair and shall constitute a nomination, no second required. All other nominations shall be made by signing the nomination list at the registration table. Each candidate shall have up to one minute (including the time spent by the sub-caucus chair reading an absent candidate's nomination letter) for speech on his/her behalf. Nomination of alternates shall occur after the election of delegates.
 - F. Voting shall be by signed ballot and a ballot to be counted must have all potential positions filled with no duplications (This prevents a candidate for delegate from skewing the vote by only voting for themselves and leaving the other positions blank). A plurality is required to elect. In case of a tie vote, the assignment of a delegate position shall be by lot.
 - G. State Convention alternates shall be selected from the same set of ballots used for the election of delegates. The candidate for delegate receiving the most votes after all delegate slots are filled shall become alternate number one, and the alternate receiving the next most votes shall be alternate number two, and so forth.
 - H. Each delegation elected shall be equally divided between women and men in both the delegate and alternate categories unless there are an insufficient number of nominees from one gender to fill available positions (If a legislative district can elect 40 delegates but 10 men and 30 women are running then the women can take the delegates spots that the men are unable to fill and the delegation will consist of 10 men and 30 women.)

11. At the time of the election, each elected State Convention delegate shall be requested to pay the \$50.00 State Convention Registration fee to the secretary who shall send fees and a list of delegates and alternates with addresses and phone numbers to the State Chair within five (5) days. No person shall be excluded or disqualified from any part of the process for failure to pay such fee.
12. At the discretion of the Chair, consideration of resolutions may commence without suspension of the rules.
13. The motion "to table" shall be out of order at all times.
14. Debate shall alternate pro and con, limited to three speakers for and three speakers against any motion, each speaker to speak no more than one minute.
15. A quorum shall consist of 40% of the number eligible to vote as shown on the credentials report, as most recently amended.
16. Resolutions shall be submitted in writing, and whenever possible on disk or by email to the Chair. Resolutions may be submitted prior to the meeting to (Name, Address, Email, Phone)
17. The Chair shall appoint a representative tally committee of alternates or non-delegates. All ballots shall be returned to the State Democratic headquarters and shall be retained by the State Chair until the State Convention has adjourned.
18. The unit rule* shall not be permitted at any time.
19. Proxy voting shall not be allowed.
20. All possible efforts shall be made to insure maximum participation of ethnic minorities, women, youth, persons over 65 years of age, lesbians and gays, Labor, persons with a high school education or less, disabled, and persons of economic disadvantage.
21. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall prevail in other matters not specifically covered herein.

* The Unit Rule is a rule of procedure at a national political convention under which a state's entire vote must be cast for the candidate preferred by a majority of the state's delegates.

Allowing the unit rule at your caucus or convention would mean that all delegates would be chosen for one candidate. This would be in conflict with the current system which allows for proportional representation.

2010 Washington State Democratic Party Caucus and Convention Cycle

Frequently Asked Questions

How are State Convention delegates and alternates allocated?

Delegates and alternates to the State Convention shall be apportioned among the Legislative Districts in proportion to the votes cast for Barack Obama and Christine Gregoire in the 2008 general election.

There will be 1,200 elected delegates and 600 elected alternates to the State Convention. Any county with less than ten delegates may send up to 10 people, with fractional votes, to the convention. In addition to the elected delegates, the following shall be automatic delegates to the State Convention: all state committee members, county chairs, congressional district chairs, legislative district chairs, Democratic Members of Congress from Washington State, Democratic Statewide Elected Officials, and Democratic State Senators and Representatives

Who is allowed to vote on resolutions and platforms?

To vote in a meeting, the individual must be a resident, registered voter in the jurisdiction and sign a registration sheet stating that he/she is a Democrat, and agrees to public display of her/his attendance at the meeting. Furthermore, those individuals who are not qualified to register to vote because of residence or citizenship shall be allowed to participate in the platform discussion, but may not vote on resolutions or for the election of delegates or alternates, nor may they be elected as delegates or alternates.