

BYLAWS

Of The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR)

(hereinafter referred to as the 'Chapter')

A CHARTERED CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER + DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

(hereinafter referred to as the 'Caucus')

Bylaws approved May 9, 2022, as further amended June 12, 2023.

Preamble:

We, the members of The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR) (representing the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) communities), united in a common purpose, to strengthen and further the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party, which recognizes and promotes diversity, goodwill, and respect for all members of the community, do hereby adopt and uphold these chapter bylaws. This chapter was born out of the recognized differences between our rural communities in the west central portion of the State of Florida and those of the urban communities found elsewhere.

ARTICLE I. SCOPE OF THE ORGANIZATION, OBJECTIVES, MISSION, AND ENDORSEMENTS

Section 1: Scope

1. Upon approval of these bylaws, the Democratic Equality Caucus of Citrus County will be renamed The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR),
2. Under the initial charter of this new organization, the organization will encompass Citrus, Hernando and Sumter Counties and represent our community to Democratic Organizations

Section 2: Objectives

1. To strengthen and to further the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party;
2. To promote participation, fellowship, and camaraderie among Democrats;
3. To support and elect the duly selected nominees of the Democratic Party in national, state, and local campaigns; and
4. To work with other LGBTQ+ and like-minded organizations united with a common purpose

Section 3. Mission.

Further, it shall be the mission of this organization to foster goodwill between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and allied members of the Democratic Party and the community at large. The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR) seeks to promote LGBTQ+ individuals who seek public office and further advance our issues at the local, state, and national levels. The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR) seeks to work with other LGBTQ+ organizations and like-minded chapters who are united in common purpose. In addition, we seek individual freedom in the framework of a just society and political freedom in the framework of meaningful participation by all citizens.

Section 4. Endorsements.

In all federal and statewide primaries, elections, or runoffs, the Chapter shall be bound by the Caucus endorsement or non-endorsement action. In all state and local races within the Chapter's geographic area, the Chapter reserves the right to endorse candidates in primaries, elections, or runoffs once the qualifying period has ended. The Chapter shall develop and maintain an endorsement procedure for candidate endorsements. Those who have been members for at least forty-five (45) days are eligible to vote on endorsements. At no time will this Chapter support any non-Democrat against a Democrat in any election, including judicial and non-partisan elections.

4.1 Endorsement Committee Responsibilities

The Endorsement Committee is responsible for researching Democratic candidates and maintaining a permanent electronic record regarding all activity within the Caucus' cloud storage system. Additionally, the Committee will have to adhere to the following:

- A. The Committee will have an odd number of members to ensure ties are avoided when voting to move a candidate forward.
- B. The Committee must include a member from each of the counties constituting the regions as set out in Article 1 Section 1.
- C. All candidates must complete and submit an electronic candidate questionnaire before being considered by the Committee.
 - i. The Committee may use the Caucus questionnaires or develop its own form
 - ii. Video submissions answering our candidate questionnaire are acceptable as long as said video can be stored on our Chapter's cloud storage as a permanent record.
- D. Recommendations to the membership should be made no later than 2.5 months before a candidate's election day.
 - i. To further elaborate, the above means a final decision regarding candidates should be made no later than three (3) months before the candidates' election day. The deadline will ensure adequate time to organize and communicate a special membership meeting for endorsements if it cannot be incorporated into a general membership meeting.
- E. Creates presentation materials for the membership meeting that outlines each candidate being recommended for endorsement.
 - i. Should include highlights to how they answered critical questions within their questionnaire.
 - ii. Include information as to why they were chosen over other candidates they are running against, if applicable.
- F. Work with the Communications Chair to create marketing material for public announcements

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION.

Section 1. Membership Eligibility and Requirements

A. Membership.

Democrats registered to vote in Florida interested in the objectives of this Chapter shall be eligible for regular membership. No other residency restrictions may be placed upon membership or the privileges of membership in this Chapter. Under Article VI of the Florida Democratic Party Bylaws, except for the organizational meeting of this Chapter, those members permitted to vote in any Chapter election must have been a member of the Chapter at least forty-five (45) days before the date of such election.

B. Student Membership

All rules and benefits of Section 1.A (Membership) except the cost of membership are half that of Section 1.A.

C. Associate Membership.

Associate members must follow the same items as Members, except they may not vote but may speak at meetings. They may also assist in committees.

D. Friends of the Caucus

Friends of the Caucus members is for those individuals not residents of Florida or who are not eligible to register to vote in Florida, but who subscribes to the purpose and mission of the organization shall be a "friend" upon payment of dues specified by the Board of Directors. Friends" may speak at meetings and assist on committees but may not vote.

Section 2. Dues.

By a vote of the Board of Directors, the organization shall determine the annual dues of each category of membership or affiliation. Dues are payable upon joining and, thereafter, on or before January 1 of each year. Dues paid during the calendar year's final quarter will carry membership privileges through the end of the following year. Members who do not renew by the last day of February will be considered in arrears and will lose voting privileges until dues are paid. The Membership Committee will notify those in arrears before the membership expires. Renewal after the last day of February will reset the 45-day requirement to vote for the Board of Directors and in Endorsements.

Section 3. Sponsors.

The Board of Directors may develop sponsorship levels and benefits for any individual, business, or organization that subscribes to and supports the Chapter's mission. Sponsorship benefits shall not include voting privileges.

Section 4. Elected Officials.

Any elected official(s) registered as a Democrat in the Counties set forth in Article 1 Section 1 are automatically considered members of The LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus of the Nature Coast Region (NCR). Elected officials do not count towards the quorum.

Section 5. Resignation.

Members wishing to resign from the organization shall notify in writing, electronic or otherwise, the Secretary and President.

ARTICLE III. RE-CERTIFICATION.

.In July of the year during which the Florida Democratic Party re-certifies caucuses the Chapter shall apply to the Membership and Chartering Committee of the Caucus for charter re-certification. Failure to do so shall result in the forfeiture of all rights and privileges of the use of the word Democrat, Democratic, or derivative thereof.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

All Officers and Directors shall perform the duties prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order, the organization's parliamentary authority, as amplified and modified by these bylaws.

Section 1. Officers.

The elected Officers of the organization shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers can hold Chair positions on Committees, except the President.

Section 1.1 Restrictions.

The President and Vice President must be from different counties. The President and Treasurer may not reside in the same household.

Section 2. At-Large-Director

The President must appoint an At-Large Director from the County with the least amount of representation on the board, so that no county controls a majority of seats on the board.

Section 3. Term of Office.

The Officers shall be elected by open ballot to serve for two years or until their successors are elected, and their term of office shall begin at the close of the biennial reorganizational meeting at which they are elected.

Section 4. Office-Holding Limitations.

No member shall hold more than one elected office at a time.

Section 5. Adequate Opportunity to Participate.

Chapter elections will be held during the Biennial Reorganization meeting held on every odd numbered year in March,

Section 7. Nomination Procedure, Time of Elections, and Open Ballot Election.

Section 7.1 Nominations.

A. In January of every odd numbered year, the President shall appoint a Nominating & Election Committee, composed of three members, one from each county as described in Article 1 Section 1. The duty of this Committee is

- i. to publicize the election and requirements fully on the organization's website and other appropriate community media, at least 30 days in advance of the biennial reorganization meeting;
- ii. to recruit members for office;
- iii. to ensure the eligibility (consistent with these bylaws) of all members seeking office;
- iv. to ascertain their willingness to serve;
- v. to nominate a candidate for each office to be filled at the biennial organization meeting in March; and
- vi. to conduct the election process.

B. No committee member may be nominated or elected to any office to be filled at the annual meeting.

C. At the regular meeting held in February of every odd numbered year, the Committee shall report and accept further nominations from the floor, subject to the Committee's subsequent determination of eligibility. The Committee will afford each candidate a reasonable opportunity to submit campaign material to the general membership, which will be distributed along with the call for the annual meeting.

Section 7.2 Elections

A. In-person Elections

- i. Before the biennial reorganization meeting (March of every odd numbered year), the Committee shall prepare one ballot with each duly qualified candidate's name for each position. Each ballot shall be printed with the organization's name and address at the top, followed by the position to be voted upon, with the candidates' names printed. There will be a blank line or lines provided for each office, equal to the number of persons who can be

elected for that position. There will be two blank lines at the bottom of the ballot to be completed by the voter with the voter's signature and printed name.

ii. Voting for the Board of Directors will be by open ballot, per Florida Democratic Party rules, at the biennial reorganization meeting. Members must be present to vote; absentee or proxy voting is prohibited. The Nominating & Election Committee will preside over and conduct the election process. Following each vote, the Committee shall collect and count ballots as necessary and announce the results at the end of the count. A majority of those present and voting is required for election. The Committee will afford any candidate the right to a recount, after which the Committee will certify the results.

B. Online Elections

i. Alternatively, electronic voting is permissible. After asking for further nominations from the floor, the Communications Chair will be responsible for programming a Poll through the meeting software that will also record, anonymously, the results of each position's vote outcomes. An export of those records will be provided to the Secretary for electronic storage in the caucus cloud storage.

C. Overall Elections Rules

i. To be eligible to vote, participate in elections, and be a candidate, a member must have been a member by the forty-fifth day before the annual meeting and maintain membership through the annual meeting date. The Secretary of the organization shall provide the Nominating & Election Committee a list of members eligible to vote and be candidates forty-four days before the annual meeting and on an updated basis, thereafter, as required by the Nominating & Election Committee.

iii. Suppose a candidate for office runs unopposed or the number of candidates for directorships equals or is less than the number of directors provided in these bylaws. In that case, such candidates may be elected by acclamation.

iv. Any candidate may be required to provide proof for verification of residency, address, voter identification, certification, etc.

v. All ballots shall be kept by the Secretary of the Chapter for thirty days following the election date and shall be available for review by any member. Thereafter, all ballots will be held for a period of three years, after which time they may be destroyed.

D. Special Rules for First Election

- i. Upon approval of these bylaws by the Caucus Membership and Chartering Committee, the current President of the Democratic Equality Caucus of Citrus County will appoint a nominating committee made up of a member from each county as specified in Article 1 Section 1.
- ii. The nominating committee will follow the procedures set forth under Article IV Section 6 A. with the exception that for the initial election the 45 day rule will be waived and the election must be held at the next scheduled chapter meeting that is more than one week away.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND ADVISORS.

Section 1. President.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and Board of Directors; shall be a member ex officio of all committees (except the Nominating and Elections Committee and the Audit Committee) and shall appoint the Chairs and members of all standing and special committees (except as provided in these bylaws). The President, or the President's designee from among the Board of Directors,

- A. Shall represent the organization at regional, state, and national meetings, and functions and
- B. Shall act as the spokesperson for the organization.
- C. Shall serve as the official representative to the Democratic Executive Committee(DEC) in the county they reside as the Caucus President, and appoint a member from each other county as outlined in Article 1 Section to serve as the official representative to the other counties within the organization's scope.

The President shall serve as chief executive and administrative officer and shall guide the committee Chairs. The President shall preserve order at meetings and remove any person found to be disruptive at meetings and shall ensure that appropriate physical arrangements and furnishings are in place for each meeting with the assistance of the other Board of Directors.

Section 2. Vice President.

The Vice President shall assist the President in the discharge of the President's duties and shall assume that office in the absence, or inability to serve, of the President. The Vice President shall advise the President, other Board of Directors, committees, and members on matters of parliamentary procedure. The Vice President can also hold chair positions within any of the Standing Committees if appointed by the President.

Section 3. Secretary/Historian.

The Secretary is the recording officer of the Board of Directors and general membership meetings and is the custodian of all organization records, except those assigned to other Board of Directors or Committee Chairs by these bylaws. These records include but are not limited to the minutes of all meetings, committee reports, the official membership roll, lists of committees and their members, bylaws, special rules of order, and standing rules. These

records (in addition to all photographic materials that may become available) shall be maintained as a narrative account of the organization's activities during the Secretary's term of office, which, when approved by the organization, will become a permanent part of the organization's official history. All information will be stored by the Secretary in electronic form on the organization's cloud storage device. Any hardcopies should be converted to electronic records and stored in this area.

The Secretary shall issue the call of meetings, prepare an order of business for the presiding officer, and - in the absence of the President or Vice President - shall call a meeting to order until a Chair pro tempore is elected. Can also hold chair positions within any of the Standing Committees as appointed by the President.

Section 4. Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall provide a monthly report to the Board of Directors and an annual report to the Finance/Fundraising Committee with sufficient time for its review and approval. All reports, signed by the Treasurer (and the Finance/Fundraising Committee for annual reports), should be distributed, to the extent practicable, to members at least two days in advance of each Board of Directors meeting.

The Treasurer shall present a written summary financial report, including cash balance on hand less outstanding obligations, at each regular general membership meeting and shall have the detail available for member review. With the approval of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer may appoint deputies to receive and account for funds. The Treasurer shall chair the Finance/Fundraising Committee and hold chair positions within any of the Standing Committees if appointed by the President.

Section 5. Financial Operations

1. Budget.
 - a. No later than the 1st membership meeting of each calendar year, the Treasurer and Finance/Fundraising Committee shall present to the membership a proposed budget for approval.
 - b. The President will have discretionary spending authority for purchases up to \$100 on budgeted items. Receipts for any discretionary spending shall be submitted to the Treasurer not later than 7 days after the expense.
2. Banking
 - a. Checks shall be signed and countersigned by the Chair and Treasurer; however, in the absence of either the Chair or Treasurer, the Vice Chair shall be authorized to countersign checks for the Chapter.
 - b. The chapter is authorized to obtain a Debit Card from the chapter's bank
 - c. Debit, Credit Card and Electronic Check transactions must be approved by one signatory and the Treasurer.
 - d. The Chapter may use online banking.

3. Auditing of Books
 - a. Books of the Treasurer shall be audited by the Finance/Fundraising Committee at the end of each calendar year.

Section 6. Loyalty Oath.

Board of Directors and Committee Chairs shall execute a loyalty oath, in the form and manner prescribed by the rules of the Florida Democratic Party, immediately upon taking office at the annual meeting, or as soon thereafter as possible (within 30 days), and before the discharge of their duties. Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, failure to comply shall result in immediate removal from office.

Section 7. Maintenance of Membership.

All the Board of Directors shall pay dues and follow the same deadlines as other paying members. Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, failure to comply shall result in immediate removal from office.

Section 6. Organization Records.

All records created and maintained by the Board of Directors in the discharge of their duties shall be the exclusive property of the organization. The Board of Directors shall be custodians of such records during their term of office. All records shall be maintained in electronic form throughout each Board of Directors tenure and housed within the organization's cloud storage area. However, if paper materials, or other storage forms, exist; they shall be presented at the annual meeting (or such time when their term ends) to ensure the smooth transfer of all records to the succeeding Board of Directors immediately upon the election of their successors.

ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Board of Directors Composition.

The Officers and Directors shall constitute the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall have full power and authority over the organization's affairs, except as explicitly reserved to the general membership in these bylaws. The Board of Directors shall be subject to the orders of the organization, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the organization.

Section 2. Board of Directors Meetings.

Board of Directors meetings shall be held quarterly unless otherwise ordered by the President or the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President and shall be called, within seven days, upon the written request of three members of the Board of Directors. Except in cases of emergency, at least seven days' notice of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be given, which notice shall include the time, date, and the location of the meeting.

Section 3. Quorum.

A majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Voting.

No vote at a Board of Directors meeting shall be taken by secret ballot. Proxy voting shall be prohibited. A Vote may be taken at an in-person meeting or through electronic means. The Board of Directors must subsequently report any such action taken to the general membership at the next regular meeting.

Section 5. Emergency Authority.

In case of emergency, if a special Board of Directors meeting cannot be called in a timely fashion, the President may convene a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer as voting. A quorum shall be three voting members. At any such meeting, the Executive Committee may take action and vote on matters of urgent interest to the organization, provided that such vote is unanimous to be valid. The Board of Directors must subsequently report any such action taken to the general membership at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.

Section 1. Regular Meetings.

Regular general membership meetings of the organization shall be held at least quarterly as called by the President or by a majority of the Board of Directors, unless otherwise ordered by the organization, except that a regular general membership meeting shall be held in March in compliance with Article V, Section 5. Speakers can request to speak at these meetings with prior Board of Directors approval.

Section 2. Biennial Reorganization Meeting.

In March of every odd-numbered year, the general membership will meet to elect the Board

Section 3. Special Meetings.

Special general membership meetings may be called by the President or by a majority of the Board of Directors in writing. They shall be called upon the written request of twenty percent of the organization's membership. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least seven days' notice shall be given.

Section 4. Quorum.

Twenty percent of the organization's voting membership shall constitute a quorum at general membership meetings. Twenty percent of the organization's membership shall constitute a quorum at the biennial reorganization meeting

Section 5. Meetings Open to All Democrats.

The time, dates, and location for all regular, annual, and special meetings of the organization shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Except in cases of emergency, at least seven days' notice shall be given. Meetings shall also follow Article XIV regarding anti-discrimination provisions.

Section 6. Voting.

No vote at a meeting of the organization shall be taken by secret ballot. Proxy voting shall be prohibited.

ARTICLE IX. VACANCIES AND REMOVAL.

Section 1. Vacancy of the office of the President.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of the President, the Vice President shall become President.

Section 2. Other Vacancies.

A. In-person Elections

a. Other vacancies shall be filled on an interim basis, by appointment of the President, until the next regular meeting of the organization, provided that ten days notice is given of the vacancy. At this time, the position will be filled for the remainder of the term by nominations from the floor. The election shall be by open ballot; members shall indicate their choice for the vacancy and sign and print their name. The election may be by acclamation if only one nominee is presented for the vacancy. All ballots shall be kept by the local representative of the Chapter for thirty days following the election date and shall be available for review by any member. Thereafter, all ballots shall may hold such ballots for a period of three years, after which time they may be destroyed.

B. Online Elections

a. Alternatively, electronic voting is permissible. After asking for further nominations from the floor, the Communications Chair will be responsible for programming a Poll through the meeting software that will also record, anonymously, the results of each position's vote outcomes. An export of those records will be provided to the Secretary for electronic storage in the caucus cloud storage.

Section 3. Removal.

Any officer may be removed upon a two-thirds vote of the members at any regular or special general membership meeting after ten days' notice to the membership that a motion for removing such officer will be considered at such a regular or special meeting. The removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, abandonment of office, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, and conviction of a felony. Any absence from four Board of Directors meetings shall constitute neglect of duty. Unexcused absences from two consecutive regular Board of Directors meetings shall constitute abandonment of office.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES.

Section 1. Standing Committees

The standing committees shall be Finance/ Fundraising, Political Action/Campaign, Membership, and Communications. Chairs shall be appointed by the President promptly following the election of officers. All chairs, including ad hoc, shall be dues-paying members or Friends of the Chapter and will continue to renew during the tenure of their services as chairs of their respective committees.

Section 2. Committee Responsibilities

Finance/Fundraising Committee shall assist the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget and maintaining the financial records of the Chapter. This committee is also responsible for raising funds to support Chapter activities, reviewing the financial records for accuracy and submitting a report to the Board of Directors summarizing the results of the review.

The Political Action/Campaign Committee shall work toward the election of Democratic nominees who support the goals of this Chapter for the area covered by the Chapter, including county, state, and national candidates.

The Membership Committee shall verify that all persons applying for membership are, in fact, registered Democrats and shall also organize and assist with membership campaigns.

The Communications Committee shall see that all activities, including meetings, are advertised through the media. It is also responsible for maintaining the Chapter online presence.

Subsection 1.2. Special Committees

D. Nominating & Election

a. Is solely responsible for elections as outlined in Article V Section 6.

E. Endorsement

a. Shall be formed by the President during election season to begin the endorsement procedures outlined in Article I Section 4..

ARTICLE XI ACCOUNTABILITY

Section 1. Dissolution

In the event this Chapter wishes to dissolve, a resolution stating the date of dissolution and the reasons for the same shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Chapter after being submitted in writing at the previous meeting. When the Chapter disbands for any reason, the Chapter's assets and funds, after all debts are satisfied, shall become the property of the Caucus.

Section 2. Grievances

Chapter disputes and grievances shall be resolved with the Caucus.

ARTICLE XII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws, any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt, the rules of the Caucus, Florida Democratic Party and Democratic National Committee.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote at a regular meeting pursuant to notification in writing one week prior to the meeting. Bylaws and any changes or amendments are subject to approval of the Florida Democratic Party Committee on Clubs, Organizations, and Caucuses together with copies of the minutes of the meeting at which these amendments were adopted.

ARTICLE XIV. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROVISIONS

The Chapter hereby adopts and shall enforce the following anti-discrimination provisions:

Section 1. Loyalty Oath

No Democratic Loyalty Oath shall be used which has the effect of requiring members of the Democratic Party to condone or support discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Section 2. Time and Place

The time and place for all public meetings of the Chapter shall be publicized fully in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons, and shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Section 3. Adequate Notice

In order to fully and adequately inform prospective and current members of a full description of the legal, practical and pertinent procedures for selection of all Democratic Caucus Chapter representatives and officers, the Chapter should publicize fully, and in such a manner, as to assure notice to all interested Democrats in time to have adequate opportunity to participate.

HISTORY

The current Bylaws were adopted on May 9, 2022.

The revised Bylaws were further amended on June 12, 2023, by the general membership meeting on that date, a quorum of 11, being present.