

# Tejano Democrats

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

### Preamble

We, Tejano Democrats, seeking to maximize the participation of Hispanics in the Democratic Party as a powerful force in determining elections at all levels of the political process intend to contribute fully to an inclusive and effective Texas Democratic Party. We shall raise our voices on issues which directly affect the Hispanic community, and thus, the progress of our State. We hereby adopt the Constitution and Bylaws of Tejano Democrats.

### ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be Tejano Democrats.

### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to seek full representation of Hispanics at all levels and in all activities of the Democratic Party. This shall include, but not be limited to, participating in the delegate selection and committee processes at all levels of the Democratic Party conventions and organizations; selecting, screening, supporting, recruiting and endorsing Democratic candidates; taking appropriate public stands on issues relevant to our communities; and proposing, supporting, and, when necessary, opposing legislation relevant to the Hispanic community.

### ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1.           **Qualifications:** The Membership of Tejano Democrats shall be open to any person supporting the purpose of Tejano Democrats.
- Section 2.           **Application Procedures:** The Credentials Committee of Tejano Democrats shall adopt mandatory application forms which shall, at a minimum, include the applicant's name, address, voter registration number, date of signature, and a mandatory signature line. The Credentials Committee of Tejano Democrats shall also adopt verification procedures of membership.
- Section 3.           **Dues:** Dues of \$15.00 shall be collected from each Tejano Democrat member of each year and the dues year shall be from August 1 until July 31 of the following year. The dues paid shall be applied to the dues year during which they were paid, but members may pay dues during June and July of each year and have those dues apply to the following dues year as well.

Section 4. **Chapter Roster Reporting:** The Chair of each Tejano Democrats Chapter or an authorized representative shall submit to the Treasurer of Tejano Democrats a notarized roster of members of said local chapter in both hard copy *and* electronic version by first class U.S. Mail, postmarked at least thirty (30) days prior to a general membership convention. The electronic version of the roster shall be in an excel format provided by the Treasurer of Tejano Democrats. Failure to comply with this subsection may result in said chapter not being certified to vote at the subsequent general membership convention.

Section 5. **Report to Senatorial District Executive Committee members:** The Treasurer of Tejano Democrats shall submit a copy of each chapter's roster to the Tejano Democrats Executive Committee member from the respective senatorial district by May 1 of each odd numbered year.

Section 6. **At-Large Members:** At-large members shall be those members who are not members of a local chapter.

#### **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

Section 1. A. The officers of Tejano Democrats shall be a Chair, two Vice Chairs, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, each of whom shall be elected by a majority vote at the annual Tejano Democrats meeting held in odd-numbered years. The Chair and at least one of the Vice Chairs shall be a person who identifies as a different gender one from the other. Their terms of office shall be for two years, or until their successors are elected, beginning immediately. Should the position of Vice-Chair, Treasurer, or Secretary become vacant, then the Executive Committee shall elect a person to temporarily fill that position and the officer so elected shall serve until the next Tejano Democrats meeting, at which time a person will be elected according to the procedures set out in the Constitution and Bylaws to fill the unexpired term. This temporary officer must possess all of the qualifications and fulfill all other requirements set out in the Tejano Democrats Constitution, particularly Article IV.

B. Vice Chair for Youth: The Vice Chair for Youth shall oversee and coordinate activities for recruitment purposes limited to the identified age groups as Youth. The Vice chair for Youth shall be elected by caucus of youth at the State Convention.

Section 2. **A. Chair:** The Chair shall lead with the planning of Tejano Democrats; execute the directives and programs of Tejano Democrats; coordinate Tejano Democrats efforts in support of Hispanic officeholders and candidates for public office, as well as of Democratic office holders and candidates endorsed by Tejano Democrats; present to appropriate legislative bodies those problems and solutions which affect our community; appoint a

Parliamentarian, Executive Director, and Standing Committees, except the Screening and Endorsement and Credential committees; and preside at all Executive Committee and general membership meetings.

- B. **Vice-Chair:** The Vice Chairs shall serve as Co-Chairs whenever the Chair is unable to serve or is precluded from serving; preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair; and preside at meetings called in compliance with the Bylaws by someone other than the Chair. The Vice-Chairs shall also be the Co-Chairs of the Tejano Democrats Political Action Committee (PAC).
- C. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee; oversee the funding activities for Tejano Democrats and be responsible for the collecting, recording, and disbursing of Tejano Democrats funds, according to the policies set forth by Tejano Democrats; establish and maintain financial records using accepted accounting methods; propose and submit a budget at the beginning of each fiscal year; and keep and update a membership roster for Tejano Democrats and discharge the duties of Section 5 of Article III. The Treasurer shall provide financial and membership updates to the Executive Committee in February and August of each year.
- D. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall accurately record, transcribe, distribute, and maintain the minutes of all Executive Committee and general membership meetings.

Section 3. The Chair and Vice Chairs shall reflect gender and geographical balance and at least one shall be a person who identifies as a different gender one from the other. Treasurer and Secretary shall be a person who identifies as a different gender one from the other.

Section 4. No more than one person from the same County may serve as a Tejano Democrats officer at the same time. *[This amendment will not take effect until the end of the Annual meeting of 2013.]*

Section 5. Tejano Democrats officers and Tejano Democrats Democratic National Committee members shall be prohibited from publicly endorsing a candidate who has been opposed by the general membership, but may endorse when Tejano Democrats has taken a non-committal position.

Section 6. The Executive Director shall ensure that meeting notices and ancillary matters shall be issued timely and shall maintain the records of Tejano Democrats. The Executive Director and Parliamentarian of Tejano Democrats shall serve at the direction of the Chair.

## **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

### Section 1. Membership – Annual

The Tejano Democrats shall have at least one meeting of the Membership between June 1 and November 1 of each year. The above described meeting shall be referred to as the “Annual Tejano Democrats Meeting” and shall be called by the Chair.

The Call to the Annual Tejano Democrats Meeting, when held in odd-numbered years only, must be mailed to the membership by the Chair at least sixty (60) days prior to the meeting. Included in this notice each Tejano Democrats chapter must be advised that dues and a membership roster including the name, address, and voter registration number of each member must be submitted to the Treasurer at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. An electronic copy of the roster in an excel format provided by the Treasurer shall also be submitted along with the hard copy roster. The notice shall include the Treasurer’s current mailing address, where chapter rosters are to be mailed.

### Section 2. Membership – Special

A. Special meetings of the Membership can be called for any purpose under the following requirements:

- The location must be within the boundaries of the State of Texas.
- A special meeting may be called by the Chair.
- A special meeting may be called at the written request of any two of the officers.
- A special meeting may be called at the written request of a majority of the membership of the Executive Committee.

B. Meetings called at the written request of the officers, other than the Chair, or by the Executive Committee, shall be presided over by the Vice Chairs.

Section 3. Notices: Notices of any meeting to the membership must be by email or by United States mail and postmarked no later than three weeks prior to the date set for the called meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1. The Tejano Democrats, recognizing that their ability to maintain an effective program is dependent upon its ongoing organizational structure; that an

organizational structure is essential to the maintenance of effective legislative programs; and that any organizational structure speaking on behalf of Tejano Democrats must be a representative cross-section of the Hispanic community of Texas, therefore directs that an Executive Committee be comprised of the following members for their respective terms of office:

- The Chair of Tejano Democrats, who also shall be the Presiding Officer of the Executive Committee.
- The two Vice-Chairs of Tejano Democrats.
- The Vice Chair for Youth.
- The Secretary of Tejano Democrats.
- The Treasurer of Tejano Democrats.
- Any Hispanic member of the Democratic National Committee who is also a member of Tejano Democrats.
- Any Hispanic member or officer of the Texas State Democratic Executive Committee who is also a member of Tejano Democrats.
- One representative from each Texas State Senatorial District.

Section 2. Prospective members of the Executive Committee, as Senatorial District Representatives must be elected by July 1 prior to the Annual Tejano Democrats Meeting by bonafide members registered as members of the Senate District Caucus and registered to vote in the senatorial district which they represent. The term of office shall be for a two-year term commencing at the annual meeting held in odd numbered years. Each Senate District Representative shall have an Alternate elected by the same method as the representative, and the Alternate shall be a person who identifies as a different gender one from the other to the Representative. The Alternate's term of office shall be concurrent with the Representative's. Any Senate District Representative who has not called a Senate District Caucus prior to July 15 in odd-numbered years shall forfeit his/her office and the State Chairperson shall fill the vacancy by appointment and the appointee shall call the caucus within two (2) weeks of this appointment. The Credentials Committee shall require of each Senatorial District Representative seeking to be seated a list of certified members present when the Representative was elected.

Section 3. If any vacancy on the Executive Committee occurs, the Alternate for that seat shall fill the vacancy. If no Alternate exists, then the seat shall be filled by a vote of the forum which elected the member.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once annually.

Section 5. All meetings of the General Membership shall be immediately preceded by a meeting of the Executive Committee. Said meeting of the Executive Committee shall convene within twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting of the General Membership. The purpose of this Executive Committee

meeting shall be to set the agenda for the General Membership meeting by a majority vote of the membership of the Executive Committee. Other meetings of the Executive Committee may be called as outlined herein by the section on meetings.

## ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES

- Section 1. There shall be standing committees of Tejano Democrats, and those committees shall have the following names and functions:
- A. Credentials Committee:** To verify the credentials of members and to report with recommendations on all challenges to credentials. The Treasurer shall be the Chair of this committee.
  - B. Constitution, Bylaws and Rules Committee:** To initiate and to supervise those changes necessary in the Constitution and Bylaws and to draft and propose Standing Rules to permit Tejano Democrats to function.
  - C. Finance:** To fund Tejano Democrats and to set the financial policy of Tejano Democrats with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Tejano Democrats Treasurer is automatically Chair of the Finance Committee. For audit purposes the fiscal year is from August 1 to July 31.
  - D. Voter Registration and Participation:** To develop and to implement an ongoing statewide voter registration and participation program in the Hispanic community.
  - E. Screening and Endorsement:** To guide the Tejano Democrats in screening, selecting, and supporting candidates for public offices and issues of statewide or national interest to Hispanics. It shall further establish guidelines for support or opposition to candidates or recommendations on appointed public officials within the State Democratic Party of Texas.
  - F. Political Appointments Committee:** This committee will establish a formal process by which any member may submit his or her name for appointment to any state or federal position and shall act as a conduit for appointment.
  - G. Public Relations and Media Committee:** To publicize the activities of the Tejano Democrats.
- Section 2. The temporary chair of the standing committees shall be appointed by the Tejano Democrats chair. The Chair of each committee shall then be elected by the membership of each committee.
- Section 3. The Chair of Tejano Democrats shall appoint all committees except the Screening and Endorsements Committee, and the Credentials Committee, as herein provided.

Section 4. The Screening and Endorsement Committee and the Credentials Committee members shall be elected at the Senate District caucus by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each odd numbered year. The Screening and Endorsement Committee and the Credentials Committee shall be constituted by the same number of representatives from each Senate District as the Executive Committee. All other committees may have no more than one member from each Senate District.

Section 5. All standing committees shall adopt their own standing rules which will govern their operations at all meetings.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – LOCAL CHAPTERS**

Section 1. **Formation:** Tejano Democrats shall allow the formation of any number of local Tejano Democrats chapters in each senatorial district upon the request of twenty-five (25) registered voters.

Section 2. **Application Procedures:** A local chapter shall be certified upon submission of a request to the Tejano Democrats Treasurer containing the following:

- A. Minutes of the organizational meeting.
- B. A notarized roster in conformance with Article III – Membership, herein, containing the signatures of at least twenty-five (25) registered voters. All members of Tejano Democrats must sign an application form in order to be a member.

Section 3. **Certification:** Said new chapters shall be permitted to function on a temporary basis pending certification by the Credentials Committee of Tejano Democrats.

Section 4. **Autonomy:** Local Tejano Democrats chapters shall operate autonomously but in compliance with the Tejano Democrats Constitution and Bylaws. The Tejano Democrats state organization is not liable for any third party agreements or contracts Local Chapters engage in.

Section 5. **Local Dues:** Members from those local chapters requiring local dues will be counted as part of that chapter’s voting members only if their dues are current at all levels.

Section 6. **Residence:** Persons must be registered to vote in the county and Senate District in which they join a local Tejano Democrats chapter, except students, and may be a voting member of only one Tejano Democrats chapter at a time.

Section 7. **Unauthorized Chapters:** Any entity or individual promoting itself as a Tejano Democrats organization without authorization will be notified by

certified return receipt mail by the Chair, notifying such entity or individual(s) to cease and desist or face potential legal action.

### **ARTICLE IX – VOTING**

Voting on resolutions, election of officers, screening and endorsements, general policy and legislative programs shall be open to all members who have joined Tejano Democrats at least thirty (30) days before the state meeting at which they seek to vote and who have been certified by the membership of Tejano Democrats as members. Voting shall be by credentialized chapter strength.

### **ARTICLE X – SCREENING AND ENDORSEMENT**

A candidate must receive sixty percent (60%) vote of the full Tejano Democrats membership in order to receive the Tejano Democrats endorsement.

### **ARTICLE XI – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Rules contained in Robert’s Rules of Order (newly revised) shall govern Tejano Democrats at all levels in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with any rules which Tejano Democrats may adopt.

### **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution and Bylaws can be amended at a convention or special meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Tejano Democrats membership, provided that amendments be mailed to all members at least three weeks prior to said meeting.

### **ARTICLE XIII**

Repealed August 20, 2011

### **ARTICLE XIV**

Repealed August 20, 2011

### **ARTICLE XV**

Any Chapter, member, or officer of Tejano Democrats who violates the provisions of the Constitution shall face expulsion after a full hearing before the Tejano Democrats Executive Committee as authorized by Robert’s Rules of Order (newly revised).