

# **By-Laws of the Feel the Bern San Fernando Valley Democratic Club**

**Revised on 7/10/23**



**In order to fulfill our responsibilities inherent in a democratic society, to stimulate active participation at all levels of government, and to perpetuate the progressive ideals of the Democratic Party, we do hereby associate ourselves together to establish the Feel The Bern San Fernando Valley Democratic Club.**

## **ARTICLE I - Mission**

**By all of our endeavors, we shall seek to grow the community involvement in the Democratic Party by driving the values inherent to a party of the people. We will inspire and foster leadership among progressives in the San Fernando Valley based on the values championed by Senator Bernie Sanders:**

- **People before profits**
- **Money out of politics**
- **Fight for income equality**
- **Racial and social equality**
- **Environmental justice**
- **Single Payer Healthcare system**
- **Cancel Student Debt/Tuition Free college**
- **Immigration reform**
- **Election integrity**
- **Ending Citizens United**
- **Criminal Justice Reform**

## **ARTICLE II - Membership**

**Section 1 - All members of the Feel the Bern San Fernando Valley Democratic Club (hereinafter at times the “Club”) shall be registered Democrats except that a person who indicates an intention to register as a Democrat, upon becoming eligible to register, may be a member. Members must commit to uphold the clubs Mission Statement. The minimum age for membership shall be 14 years. Members who are not registered Democrats may not vote on Club endorsements, may not hold office in the Club, and may not vote for the Club Executive Board.**

**Section 2 - A “member in good standing” is one who has affirmatively applied for membership and has paid dues for the current year or had them waived due to economic hardship. A grace period of 60 days following expiration of membership shall be granted, during which a person may exercise all privileges of membership, provided dues are paid or have been waived before exercising the right to vote on any matter within the Club. A recording of the aforementioned types of meetings shall be a sufficient record of minutes and may be approved by the members at the next regular meeting.**

**Section 3- Annual dues shall be proposed by the Executive Board of the Club and adopted by the membership at duly-noticed regular or special meetings on an annual basis. Membership shall be for the calendar year, ending December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Membership is effective 60 days after receipt of dues, except that in the case of a renewing Member who pays dues or has them waived before March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, membership shall be effective immediately upon payment. A renewing Member who does not pay dues (or arrange for a hardship waiver) before March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year shall be automatically deemed inactive and subject to the 60-day waiting period. Payment of dues shall not be obligatory for anyone for whom it constitutes an economic hardship; hardship applications shall be considered by the Executive Board.**

**Section 4 – Members become active upon approval of their application by the Membership Committee.**

**Section 5- A member may be removed from the Club roster for non-payment of dues by the date required in these Bylaws, or upon vote of the Executive Board for cause (defined as an ongoing violation of the By-Laws of the Club).**

**Section 6 – The Club’s credentialing committee chair shall maintain a membership roster with the names and contact information of all current Club members. The Membership roster shall not be shared with entities outside of this Club unless approved by a majority of the Executive Board.**

## **ARTICLE III – Meetings**

**Section 1 - The President and the Executive Board shall schedule at least six regular membership meetings per year.**

**Section 2 - Written notice of regular and special meetings shall be sent by email at least 10 days in advance to all Members of the Club. Notice of the meeting shall be deemed sufficient if such notice includes the date, time and place of the meeting and is sent in a manner calculated to be received at least 10 days prior to the meeting.**

**Section 3 - The President or E-Board may call a special meeting on 48 hours' notice should need arise. Notice of special meetings must include the limited 3 purposes for which the meeting is being called, and no other business may be discussed or voted on at that meeting.**

**Section 4 - A quorum for any official meeting of the Club shall be the lesser of 25 percent of the total organizational membership or ten active Members physically present at the meeting, as reported by the Presiding Club Officer at the time of the meeting. The quorum shall be measured and determined at the start of the meeting and no departure of any Member after the start of the meeting shall affect the quorum or any vote taken.**

### **Subsection A**

**Our executive board is authorized to hold public meetings accessible telephonically or otherwise electronically for all members of the public seeking to attend, during periods in which State or Local Officials impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing, including but not limited to limitations on public events.**

**Section 5 - A quorum of any meeting of the Executive Board shall be a majority of the members of the Executive Board.**

**Section 6 - Proxies shall not be valid at any meeting of this club or its Executive Board.**

**Section 7 – All meetings are open to the public, but only active members may vote during general meetings.**

**Section 8 - Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, the Club may adopt events and conduct regular business with a simple majority of the members present at any duly constituted meeting at which there was a quorum to conduct business at the start of the meeting. The Club may pass resolutions not related to endorsements with a vote of 60% of those present and voting at any duly**

constituted meeting.

#### **ARTICLE IV - Elected Officers and Committees**

**Section 1 - The elected officers of this club shall be President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian.**

**Section 2 – Standing Committee Leadership: Finance Chair, Credentialing Chair, Communications Chair, Political Action Chair, Regional Committee Chair(s), or as directed by the Executive Board.**

**Section 3 - Standing and Ad Hoc Committee procedures: A standing committee shall meet at the request of the president, the executive committee, the club members, the chair of the committee or a majority of the committee members. This does not impede committees to meet without the request of the president Unless otherwise specified, no person may be a committee member unless such person is also a member of the Club.**

**Section 4 - The Executive Board may, with the approval of the membership, establish and dissolve Ad Hoc and Standing Committees. Committee members shall be appointed by the approval of the majority of the Executive Board. Regional Committees are considered Standing Committees; however their creation and dissolution must be ratified by the members of the club. Regional Committees shall elect their own committee officers, including but not limited to Chair and Secretary. Committee members join the committee following the Regional Committee's own stipulations.**

#### **ARTICLE V - The Executive Board**

**Section 1 - The Executive Board shall consist of the following elected officers: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Past President, Parliamentarian, Web Development/Content Director, Bilingual Executive Director, Student Director of Communications.**

**Section 2 - The Executive Board shall meet at the call of the President, who shall schedule one E-B meeting prior to every general membership meeting to plan the club's activities and the agenda of the membership meetings.**

**Section 3 - Meetings of the Executive Board shall be open to all members of this Club, but only members of the Executive Board shall have a vote.**

## **ARTICLE VI - Duties of Elected Officers**

**Section 1 - The President shall be responsible for the overall coordination and delegation of the Club's activities and act as its point of contact and spokesperson, in collaboration with the Communications Chair. The President shall have been a member in good standing of this Club for at least one year prior to election.**

**Section 2 - The Vice President shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President and oversees the leadership of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees. In collaboration with the President, the Vice President may write press releases and conduct other written correspondence of the club. When necessary, the Vice President will secure locations for meetings. The Vice President shall have been a member in good standing of this club for at least six months prior to election.**

**Section 3 - The Recording Secretary shall keep a written record and a copy of all reports submitted to the club. He or she shall present the minutes of the previous general membership meeting as well as a report on any executive committee meetings that have occurred subsequent to the last Club membership meeting. The Recording Secretary shall maintain a current roll of the members, a list of officers and committee members, and records of resolutions and voting proceedings that have occurred in the Club. The Recording Secretary shall send the approved minutes of past meetings to all members on a regular basis. In collaboration with the Vice President, the Recording Secretary may write press releases and conduct the correspondence of the club. The Recording Secretary shall have been a member in good standing of this club for at least six months prior to election.**

**Section 4 - The Treasurer shall receive, disburse, and account for the funds of this club, in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws. Routine and recurring expenditures of less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) may be authorized, in advance, by the Executive Board and paid upon presentation of invoice. When a club project has been approved in principle by the membership and a budget for the project authorized by the Executive Board, the board may authorize the Treasurer to make payments within the limits of the budget upon the presentation of invoice. The Treasurer shall furnish a complete financial statement at the end of his or her term of office, at monthly membership meetings and any time at the request of the Executive Board.**

**Section 5 – The Past President shall serve for 1 year as counsel to the board, and**

**support for the Club.**

**Section 6 - No individual may be allowed to represent him/herself as an agent of the club to commit funds unless so authorized by the Executive Board.**

**Section 7 - An elected officer can be removed from office by resolution of a two-thirds**

**vote of the Regular members at a General Meeting for such causes as missing three unexcused consecutive meetings or non-performance of duties, providing the membership and the officer have been notified ten days in advance of the meeting of the proposed action against the officer.**

**Section 8 – At the end of every year, the Eboard will select a Volunteer of the Year, who will be voted for nomination at the last Eboard meeting of the year. Volunteer of the year is selected according to participation in actions/events, donations, or any other related activities. The President and Vice President are the only members excluded from receiving this award.**

## **ARTICLE VII - Elections**

**Section 1 - The election of Executive Board members shall take place in December. Voting shall be conducted online. If there are three or more candidates for an office, the election for that office shall use ranked choice voting. The newly elected officers shall begin their terms at the end of the meeting of which they were elected. They shall serve for at least one year, or until successors are installed. An ad hoc elections committee created by the Executive Board will oversee the election process. If there is only one candidate for an Executive Board position, there will be no formal vote. The election for that candidate would be decided by acclamation at the election meeting on motion, or by yea or nay voice vote if requested.**

**Section 2 - A nominee to any office of this club must have agreed to serve in that capacity (either orally at the time of nomination or in writing after the November meeting of this club) in order to be included in the published list of nominees.**

**Section 3 - Members must have been members in good standing for at least 60 days and be active members before voting.**

**Section 4 - Delegates or alternates representing this Club in any other body, shall be elected by the membership.**

## **ARTICLE VIII – Participation in CDP Endorsement Process**

**Section 1 - Club representatives to the California Democratic Party Pre-Endorsing Conferences shall be allocated in accordance with the then-applicable party rules Executive Board. These rules can be found in Article VIII, section 3, subsection g (5), of the California Democratic Party By-Laws.**

## **ARTICLE IX - Endorsement**

**This club may consider the endorsement of candidates for any elective office, or its position on any ballot measure only according to the following procedures:**

**Section 1 - Only candidates who are registered Democrats may be considered for endorsement or for financial support by the club.**

**Section 2 - This article, along with the offices and measures to be considered, shall be published in the notice of the meeting at which endorsements are to be considered.**

**Section 3 - All candidates eligible for the endorsement of this club shall be afforded the opportunity to address this club or have this club addressed on their behalf at the meeting at which endorsement for that office is to be considered.**

### **Subsection A**

**No endorsement will be issued or decided upon by this Club for any election until the filing period to run for said election is expired. The Club will not endorse before this date however;**

### **Subsection B**

**After the candidate completes the Club's candidate questionnaire, which is subject to the approval of the Club, the candidate would qualify to receive the Club's Seal of Approval. The voting process would then adhere to sections 4 through 8.**

### **Subsection C**

**A candidate who's been previously endorsed but did not win their election and receives the Club's seal of approval, is eligible for early fundraising support.**

**Section 4- In order to be eligible to vote on an endorsement, a member must have been an active member in good standing of this club for at least 60 days prior to the meeting at which that endorsement is to be considered.**

**Section 5- A single vote will be taken on each office or ballot measure to be considered for endorsement. Voting, whether online or in person, will occur when endorsements are being discussed and voted on. In the case of a special meeting for endorsements, when livestream of a special endorsement meeting occurs,**

voting online shall be used. If there are three or more candidates for an office seeking endorsement and online voting is used, ranked choice voting shall be used. In all elections where online voting is used, the Executive Board shall decide the duration of online voting.

**Section 6-** The option of “No Endorsement” shall be available on the ballot for every office or ballot measure.

**Section 7-** Endorsement of a candidate or position on a ballot measure requires a 60% vote of those present and voting at the meeting at which the endorsement is considered. Blank ballots shall be ruled as abstentions and shall not count as part of the total number of votes cast. Votes for “No Endorsement” shall be counted as part of the total number of votes cast.

**Section 8-** This club may reconsider its endorsement in the run-off election for an office, in the event its endorsed candidate is no longer a candidate or there was a “No Endorsement” result under Section 7.

**Section 9-** No financial support may be provided to any candidate or ballot measure position who has not received the endorsement or seal of approval of the club.

**Section 10 –** Any candidate seeking endorsement or seal of approval from the club must agree to the Club’s Endorsement Agreement prior to appearing at an endorsement meeting, which states the following: “I hereby acknowledge that the Feel the Bern San Fernando Valley Democratic Club reserves the right to hold a vote amongst its membership to formally and publicly withdraw its endorsement, should my actions and votes no longer align with the Feel the Bern Democratic Club Mission Statement and should I no longer uphold those values.” If the Club adopts other specific eligibility criteria for endorsement candidates, then potential candidates shall execute such pledges or statements as the Executive Board deems appropriate to satisfy the board of the candidate’s eligibility before the candidate may appear at an endorsement meeting. The Club may vote to withdraw its endorsement from an endorsed candidate who subsequently violates the Club’s endorsement criteria. Said vote shall be conducted under the same rules as an endorsement vote.

## **ARTICLE X - Amendments and Bylaws changes**

**Section 1 -** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at a general



membership meeting after the proposed amendment has been presented to the membership at a preceding meeting. Two weeks' notice must be provided of each meeting.

**Section 2 - An amendment passed as described in Section 1 of this article shall become effective at the next regular meeting of this club after the one at which it is considered.**

#### **ARTICLE XI - Parliamentary Authority**

In matters of procedure not otherwise provided for in these bylaws, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order- Newly Revised, shall govern. In the absence of a Past President, the Parliamentarian will act as the tiebreaker for votes within the Executive Board.

Unless otherwise specified by the presiding Club officer at a meeting, discussions at membership meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the following Member Conduct Rules (the "Rules"):

- 1. Comments are limited to two minutes per person, subject to the discretion of the Board to determine what time may be allotted.**
- 2. The Board retains the discretion to check ID if a speaker is not known to the Board.**
- 3. Members will speak in the order established by the Presiding Officer.**
- 4. Speakers shall follow the Rules of Decorum.**
- 5. The maximum number of speakers per agenda item shall be ten per session; the presiding Club officer at the meeting may reduce or increase the number in his or her reasonable discretion.**
- 6. Priority shall be given to active members in good standing.**
- 7. Meetings may be recorded or livestreamed; a Member's attendance at a meeting constitutes his or her consent to the use of his or her likeness and/or voice in such manner.**
- 8. Decorum: While any meeting is in session, the following rules of decorum shall be observed.**

- A. All remarks shall be addressed to the Board as a whole or to the Presiding Officer and not to any single member, unless in response to a question**

from a member.

- B. Speakers shall not make personal, slanderous or profane remarks, nor use loud, threatening, intimidating or abusive language, nor engage in any other disorderly conduct that disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of any meeting.**
- C. The Presiding Officer shall request that a person who is breaching the Rules of Decorum and disrupting the meeting be orderly and silent. If the person continues to disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting, the Presiding Officer shall order that person to leave the meeting. If such person does not remove herself or himself from the meeting, the Presiding Officer may recess or adjourn the meeting. Any person removed from a meeting shall be excluded from further attendance at the meeting from which he/she has been removed. The Executive Board may consider other potential remedies to address unruly members' continued participation in further meetings, up to and including expulsion from the club.**

## **ARTICLE XII - Nondiscrimination**

**Feel the Bern San Fernando Valley Democratic Club does not require or use any test of membership or oath of loyalty which has the effect of requiring prospective or current members to acquiesce in, condone or support discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, physical ability, sex, age, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation or economic status. The Executive Board may from time to time adopt such nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies and rules as the LACDP may adopt.**

## **Article XIII – Grievance Procedure**

**FTBSFV seeks to initially employ the principles of Restorative Justice in handling grievances. Prior to processing a complaint, the Grievance Committee shall, if it determines the matter to be amenable to these principles, make attempts to bring the parties together in a safe space to address situations face-to face in order to repair harm, promote healing and learning, and build community.**

**If such efforts are determined to be inappropriate to the situation presented, or if such efforts are unsuccessful, the Grievance Procedures described below shall be undertaken.**

**The timelines described below shall be tolled until engagement in the Restorative Justice Process is concluded or determined to be inappropriate or unsuccessful.**

### **1. Grievance Committee**

- a. A Grievance Committee consisting of five (5) members and four (4) alternate members shall be appointed within twenty-eight (28) days of the election of the officers scheduled to take place in each odd-numbered year as set forth in Article VI of these bylaws. Any person not so appointed shall be elected by the membership at its next regularly scheduled meeting for which due notice can be given.
- b. Each of the five (5) Vice-Presidents shall appoint one (1) person each, to the Grievance Committee and each of the four (4) At-large members of the Steering Committee shall appoint one (1) member of This Club as an alternate member of the Grievance Committee. None of these appointments can be a Vice-President or person holding the office of At-Large member of the Steering Committee. Alternate members will be chosen to serve by lot in the event a regular member of the Grievance Committee is unable to serve or has a conflict of interest.
- c. Persons appointed by the Vice-Presidents need not be members of This Club, provided they are either members of the Policy Committee of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party or Members of the Executive Board of the California Democratic Party.
- d. The Grievance Committee may meet in person, or by telephone, but may only interview witnesses in person.
- e. Meetings of the Grievance Committee fall under the "Member Disciplinary and Other Proceedings Involving the Right to Privacy" exception to the "Policy Statement By the Rules Committee of the California Democratic Party on the Open Meeting Rule" and therefore need not be public.
- f. The Grievance Committee shall meet and elect its own chair within fourteen (14) days of the appointment of its full membership.
- g. Once a member is appointed, in the event a vacancy occurs, it shall be filled within twenty-eight (28) days of the notice of vacancy by the person holding the same position as the original appointor. In the event the vacancy is not so filled, a member shall be elected by the membership at its next regularly scheduled meeting for which due notice can be given.

## **2. Grounds and Jurisdiction**

The sole grounds for a member filing a grievance, and the jurisdiction of the Grievance Committee shall be an alleged.

- a. Violation of Local, State, or Federal laws or regulations having

a direct impact on:

- i. This Club, or,
- ii. The complainant

b. Violation of these bylaws, including the Code of Conduct and/or the Policy Against Harassment and Workplace Violence attached as appendices hereto.

### **3. Standing**

A complainant must be a member of This Club, in good standing, and be directly and adversely affected by the actions or conduct of another member of This Club, in order to file a grievance.

### **4. Remedy**

If a grievance is found to have merit, it may lead to any of the following:

- a. Private Admonishment,
- b. Public Admonishment,
- c. Suspension of Rights for a time certain not to exceed 60 days,
- d. Removal from Office, and/or,
- e. Removal from membership.

### **5. Initiating a Grievance**

A grievance may be initiated by filing a timely Written Statement with the Secretary of This Club (or President, if the Secretary is the accused) and the Chair of the Grievance Committee:

- a. Setting forth, with specificity, the text of the Code of Conduct, Policy Against Harassment and Workplace Violence, regulation, and/or law alleged to have been violated,
- b. A statement of facts supporting the allegation, and,
- c. The requested remedy.

### **6. Initial Determinations and Actions:**

- a. Within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the Written Statement, the Grievance Committee shall make an initial determination, based solely upon the Written Statement, subject to change after rebuttal

evidence is received, of standing, jurisdiction, and actionable allegations.

b. If it is initially determined that standing, jurisdiction, and actionable allegations are present, the Chair of the Grievance Committee shall contact the accused within seven (7) days of the determination and advise as to the allegation(s), without disclosure of the identity of the complainant, and make an offer of the remedy requested by the complainant.

c. If rejected by the accused, the Grievance Committee shall provide the accused with a copy of the complaint, and identity of the complainant, and request a written response, after instructing the accused not to contact the complainant, during the duration of this process.

d. If, in the determination of the Grievance Committee, the accusation involves a potential violation of criminal law, the complainant shall be advised to contact the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency. This process will continue parallel to any Law Enforcement action at the discretion of the Grievance Committee.

e. The Grievance Committee may, by a two-thirds vote, also make an initial determination, based upon the Written Statement, that the situation warrants temporarily suspending the membership rights of the accused, pending further action.

7. Confidentiality: The identity of all persons involved in the process, and all information regarding the allegation(s), shall be treated with confidentiality, and protected to the extent possible and will, except as otherwise specified herein.

8. Hearings:

a. Hearings are not required for the issuance of Admonishments, or Suspensions of Rights, but must be held if the remedy sought is removal from office, and/or removal from membership in This Club.

b. Despite the above, after review of the Written Response, any two (2) members of the Grievance Committee may determine that a hearing shall be held, regardless of the remedy sought.

c. The determination of whether or not to hold a hearing shall be made within seven (7) days of receipt of the Written Response.

d. If a hearing is determined to be required due to the remedy sought, or by four members of the Grievance Committee, it shall be held within fourteen (14) days of that determination.

## **9. Orders**

- a. Orders of the Grievance Committee shall be made within fourteen (14) days of the determination that no Hearing is required, or, fourteen (14) days of the conclusion of any Hearing.**
- b. The Grievance Committee may, by majority vote, issue any admonishment, temporary suspension of rights, or dismissal of the Complaint.**
- c. The Grievance Committee may by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote, concurred in by a majority vote of the Steering Committee, remove an accused from office, and/or membership in This Club.**
- d. If the matter did not proceed to hearing, the Grievance Committee may only impose a remedy equal to, or lesser than, the remedy sought by the complainant.**
- e. If the matter proceeded to hearing, the Grievance Committee may impose any remedy set forth herein.**
- f. At any stage of this process the Grievance Committee may issue an Order Extending Time.**
- g. If no remedy is imposed within fourteen (14) days of the determination that no Hearing is required, or, fourteen (14) days of the conclusion of any Hearing, the complaint shall be deemed dismissed, unless time has been extended.**
- h. All Orders shall be sent to the accused by first class mail, and, if an email is on file with This Club, by email.**
- i. A written decision shall be rendered at the conclusion of the Process, setting forth the allegations made, facts determined, and remedy imposed, if any, and shall be sent to the complainant, and the member who is the subject of the Written Statement.**
- j. Proof of the date and manner of delivery of any notices required under this Article shall be maintained.**

## **10. Appeals**

- a. The accused may, within fourteen (14) days of the mailing of the Order(s), appeal any Suspension of Rights, or Removal from office or membership to the Steering Committee, which shall hear the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting for which due notice can be given.**

**b. Admonishments and Dismissals of Complaints are not subject to appeal.**