



## **Democratic State Committee Meeting**

*February 12, 2025 | Meeting Minutes*

Massachusetts Democratic Party Chair Steve Kerrigan called the meeting to order.

There was a vote to adopt the agenda for the meeting, which passed.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual Winter Democratic State Committee (DSC) meeting. The Chair announced that four new members would be joining the DSC. Tamisha Civil and Eunice Ziegler, who had won seats on the Governor's Council, as well as Ella Hogan from the Young Democrats of Massachusetts and Matthew Marcil from the College Democrats of Massachusetts.

The Chair then asked that everyone observe a moment of silence for the DSC members who have recently passed: Frank Bellotti, Robert Cassidy, Mary Gail Cokkinias, and Walter McDonough.

There was a motion and vote to approve the minutes from the November meeting, which passed.

The Chair introduced Senator Edward Markey, who thanked the Chair for the introduction and for his leadership. Senator Markey began by outlining the worst parts of Project 2025 that we knew would come to pass and the danger that Trump 2.0 and Elon Musk pose to our country. Senator Markey further said that he had been denied entry to the EPA while attempting to meet with "DOGE" staffers to examine what they are doing, but reaffirmed that this wouldn't stop his resistance to illegal actions by the Executive. Senator Markey pledged to vote no on every Trump appointee. Senator Markey further outlined the damage that the Trump administration's desired cuts to the National Institute of Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Education would do. Senator Markey praised the work of the Judiciary in blocking these illegal actions, but also reiterated the importance of letting everyone in our own lives know exactly what the Trump administration is doing in the first place. Finally, Senator Markey reminded everyone that 2026 is closer than it seems and reminded everyone that we'll need all of the help we can get to outwork Republicans in 2026 and take back the House and the Senate. Senator Markey concluded by thanking the Chair and everyone for being here.

The Chair thanked Senator Markey. The Chair then reflected on the results of the election in November. The Chair reflected that, though elections were lost in Massachusetts, there was still a lot to be proud of. The Chair cited huge gains in Plymouth County, depriving Republicans from getting any net gain in seats in the Legislature, holding many seats that were in danger, the election of not one but two women of color to the Governor's Council, and the successful return of super majorities to the legislature and all Democrats to Washington to stand the line against Trump and the Republican Party. On the losses, the Chair reflected that they were a road map

to build on strengths, to build back where ground was lost, grow the party Commonwealth-wide, and not to rest on laurels. The Chair encouraged everyone to, instead of getting caught up in the haze and confusion of this administration's madness, to fight back and fight forward. The Chair announced that the party would be wrapping up its listening tour soon and would soon be launching new and improved efforts to empower local Democratic Committees with tools, trainings, and talent to make sure they are ready to win elections in the weeks, months, and years ahead. The Chair encouraged local Democratic Committees to reach out and ask for support. The Chair concluded by reminding everyone that this is our moment of change. To be bold. To be brave.

The Chair then recognized Secretary Joseph Kaplan to give the Secretary's report. Secretary Kaplan announced that there was an error in the August DSC meeting minutes and that an amended section had been drafted and needed to be reviewed and voted on. There was a motion and a vote to approve the amended section to the August DSC meeting minutes, which passed.

The Chair then gave the Treasurer's Report. There was a motion and vote to approve the Treasurer's Report, which passed.

The Chair then gave the Chair's report. The Chair began by announcing that, in January, he informed the Personnel Subcommittee Chair that he intended to put forth the nomination of Adam Roof for Executive Director. The Chair then outlined a few of Adam's accomplishments as Interim Executive Director and praised the high quality of his work and leadership. There was then a motion and a second to accept the Chair's report and Adam Roof as Executive Director.

The Chair recognized Vice Chair Leon Brathwaite. Vice Chair Brathwaite used his time to praise Adam Roof and agree that he was a good choice.

The Chair recognized John Bowman. John Bowman asked if there was ever a formalized job posting for the Executive Director position. The Chair clarified that there was not, due to short notice from the previous Executive Director, Joe Sherlock, and a nearing State Convention. The Chair further clarified that Adam Roof was brought on as an Interim Executive Director to quickly fill the need and was not promised the position; however, because of Adam Roof's incredible performance, the Chair felt he would be a good fit for the position. John Bowman further asked what the rationale was for not having a formalized hiring process. The Chair then reclarified he believes Adam Roof has earned the post, but that the DSC was within its rights to vote this down, and then a formalized hiring process for the position would begin.

The Chair recognized Juan Pablo Jaramillo. Juan Pablo Jaramillo agreed that he thought that Adam was a good pick and expressed his hope that the DSC would vote to approve him.

The Chair recognized Marsha Finkelstein. Marsha Finkelstein began by expressing her appreciation for all of the work that Adam Roof had done, but also expressed her belief that a formal hiring process was needed to ensure that a bad precedent wasn't set, as well as to ensure that candidates from a variety of backgrounds were considered.

The Chair recognized Amanda Smith. Amanda Smith felt that the DSC was at a point where it needed to move forward and was very impressed with Adam Roof's performance as Interim Executive Director.

The Chair recognized Melissa Schapero. Melissa Schapero agreed that while a formal process would be best under normal circumstances, Adam Roof had proved himself in a trial by fire and was best for the position at this time.

The Chair recognized Bill Shemeth. Bill Shemeth agreed that Adam Roof had earned the position and remarked that hiring an exceptional temporary hire is not uncommon.

The Chair recognized Representative Dan Hunt. Representative Dan Hunt agreed that Adam Roof was incredibly helpful and would be a good fit for the position.

The Chair recognized Elaine Almquist. Elaine Almquist spoke in favor of opening up a formal hiring process to avoid setting a bad precedent.

The Chair recognized Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski. Vice Chair Kozikowski agreed that Adam Roof would be the best fit and encouraged the DSC to approve him.

The Chair recognized Mark DiSalvo, who is the Chair of the Personnel Subcommittee. Mark DiSalvo noted that it was the prerogative of the Chair to choose the Executive Director and also noted that there was no rule in the charter or bylaws that required the input of the Personnel Subcommittee in the hiring of the Executive Director. Finally, Mark DiSalvo agreed that Adam Roof would be a good fit for the position.

The Chair recognized David O'Brien. David O'Brien reiterated that it is the prerogative of the Chair to select the Executive Director and called the question.

The Chair recognized that there was a motion to call the question, which passed. The Chair then recognized that there was a motion to approve Adam Roof as Executive Director, which also passed.

The Chair recognized Executive Director Adam Roof. Executive Director Roof thanked everyone for the opportunity and reflected that he felt that this was not a job, but a responsibility and commitment to the values that we believe will make the world a better place. Executive Director Roof further thanked everyone and specifically thanked the staff for their tireless work. Executive Director Roof concluded by encouraging everyone to take time to thank the staff.

The Chair recognized Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski. Vice Chair Kozikowski clarified that, while it is not unheard of to have a hiring process for the Executive Director, it is the prerogative of the Chair to select the Executive Director.

The Chair recognized Kevin Costa. Kevin Costa used his time to thank Executive Director Roof for all of his tireless work to support the people of Ukraine. The Chair agreed and clarified for

those who were unaware that Executive Director Roof has created a nonprofit and traveled to Poland and Ukraine many times, specifically to support the people of Ukraine.

The Chair recognized Dennis Naughton. Dennis Naughton raised technical concerns.

The Chair announced that the next agenda item was filling a vacancy on the DSC. The Chair briefly reviewed the means by which the vacancies could be filled and opened the floor to nominations from qualifying candidates for the position of add-on youth female. There were nominations for Rani Balakrishna, Madelyn “Maddie” Bedard, Errin Davis, Meagan Lee, Isabella Petroni, and Morgan Simko. The Chair then announced the rules by which each candidate would be allowed to give a brief speech for their candidacy.

The Chair recognized Rani Balakrishna. Rani Balakrishna explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Madelyn “Maddie” Bedard. Madelyn “Maddie” Bedard explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Errin Davis. Errin Davis explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Meagan Lee. Meagan Lee explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Isabella Petroni. Unfortunately, Isabella Petroni had some technical issues and was temporarily skipped to allow her time to rectify the issue.

The Chair recognized Morgan Simko. Morgan Simko explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Isabella Petroni. The Chair and Isabella Petroni were eventually able to rectify the technical issue, and Isabella Petroni explained why she felt she was the best candidate for this position on the DSC.

The Chair thanked the candidates for their statements and explained the instructions and resources for DSC members to vote in the virtual election.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chairs from the Site Selection Subcommittee, Jason Palitsch and Sally Rizzo, to give their subcommittee report. Jason Palitsch reported that the Site Selection Subcommittee had met for the purpose of reviewing proposals to host this year’s Democratic State Convention. Two proposals were received, one from Worcester and one from Springfield. The Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve Springfield as the site of the Democratic State Convention due to a significant discount offered by Springfield and the desire of the Subcommittee to host the convention in different locations. Jason Palitsch also reported that conversations with the Disability Subcommittee Co-Chairs Kathleen McCarthy and Colleen Flanagan had taken place to make sure that this convention is as accessible as possible and

further reported that Disability Subcommittee Co-Chairs Kathleen McCarthy and Colleen Flanagan would be joining the Site Selection Subcommittee to ensure that all future conventions would take accessibility into consideration at every possible opportunity.

The Chair recognized Will Luzier. Will Luzier asked when the convention would be held. The Chair clarified that the proposed date is September 13th.

The Chair recognized Geoffrey Feldman. Geoffrey Feldman asked why he had not been notified of the Site Selection Subcommittee's meetings and asked if it was too late to consider Lowell. The Chair clarified that Subcommittee assignment requests and appointments do not always match, so Geoffrey Feldman was likely not assigned to the Site Selection Subcommittee. Site Selection Subcommittee Co-Chair Jason Palitsch further clarified that Lowell did not submit a proposal to the Site Selection Subcommittee, despite being invited to offer a proposal.

The Chair recognized Melvin Poindexter. Melvin Poindexter asked if the concerns of the Disability Subcommittee had been addressed in the Site Selection Subcommittee's process. Site Selection Subcommittee Co-Chair Jason Palitsch explained that they were.

The Chair recognized Disability Subcommittee Co-Chairs Kathleen McCarthy and Colleen Flanagan to give their report. Kathleen McCarthy began by thanking the Chair and the Site Selection Subcommittee Co-Chairs for adding them to the Site Selection Subcommittee. Kathleen McCarthy announced their first upcoming meeting and encouraged everyone to provide feedback. Kathleen McCarthy announced that the subcommittee has discussed and been in contact with the Site Selection Subcommittee Co-Chairs, as well as Executive Director Adam Roof, regarding the upcoming convention and have identified and worked to resolve numerous issues that have appeared in previous years. Kathleen McCarthy again encouraged feedback from everyone to make sure that this process is as thorough as possible and that all concerns are addressed. Kathleen McCarthy concluded by taking a moment to remember Robert Cassidy who recently passed away.

There was then a motion and a vote to accept the Site Selection Subcommittee's report and to approve Springfield as the site for the Massachusetts Democratic State Convention, which passed.

The Chair recognized Rules Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy to give his report. Bill Eddy introduced this year's Method of Selecting Delegates and highlighted changes that were made as most of the Method of Selecting Delegates remained unchanged from the previous platform convention. After explaining the relevant changes, Bill Eddy asked if there were any questions regarding the Method of Selecting Delegates.

The Chair recognized Peter Bakula. Peter Bakula asked that a rule be introduced that stipulates that caucus attendees must be regular members of the local Democratic Ward/Town Committee. Peter Bakula further expressed frustration at the amount of individuals who show up to caucuses only to be involved in convention and are in no other way active with the local Democratic Ward/Town Committee. Rules Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy informed Peter Bakula

that caucuses are open meetings and are separate from normal Democratic Ward/Town Committee meetings and that any change to this would require significant reworking of the Method of Selecting Delegates that is not possible at this time.

The Chair recognized Steven Leibowitz. Steven Leibowitz requested that, once the Method of Selecting Delegates is approved, that a one-page document highlighting changes be sent to Democratic Ward/Town Committee Chairs.

The Chair recognized Marietta Rapetti Cawse. Marietta Rapetti Cawse asked when the caucus window was. Rules Subcommittee Chair Bill Eddy responded that the window began on March 29th and closed on May 18th.

The Chair recognized Jim Roosevelt. Jim Roosevelt clarified that a change to the open nature of caucuses would not be possible by amending the Method of Selecting Delegates, but would instead require an amendment to the charter.

There was a motion and a vote to accept the Rules Subcommittee report and the Method of Selecting Delegates, which passed.

The Chair then announced that the 2025 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention will be held on September 13th at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield.

The Chair recognized Bylaws Subcommittee Chair Brian Corr to give his report. Brian Corr reported that the Bylaws Subcommittee would be meeting soon to review a request from the DSC, review the bylaws and ensure they're in compliance with the charter, and other items to be determined.

The Chair recognized Campaign Services Subcommittee Co-Chairs Lauren Mattison and Amanda Smith to give their report. Lauren Mattison announced that the organizing hub was back and making phone calls into Wisconsin. The Chair thanked Lauren Mattison and Amanda Smith for their tireless work.

The Chair recognized JFK Scholarship Subcommittee Co-Chairs Max German and Charlotte Richie to give their report. Max German announced that the 2025 JFK Scholarship & Joe Moakley internship would be going live soon and the deadline would be March 21st. Max German asked everyone to spread the application far and wide and encouraged everyone who knew of talented students to encourage them to apply.

The Chair recognized LGBTQIA+ Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chairs Dallas Ducar, Justin Klekota, and Diego Sanchez to give their report. Dallas Ducar acknowledged the Trump administration's assault on the trans community and reaffirmed that the LGBTQIA+ Outreach Subcommittee stands ready to fight back. Diego Sanchez reported that the LGBTQIA+ Outreach Subcommittee met and had a productive meeting. Justin Klekota encouraged everyone to sign up for a phonebank for the upcoming special elections as it is one of the best ways to fight back.

The Chair recognized Labor Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chair Jim Pimental for his report. Jim Pimental announced the subcommittee had met recently to discuss the labor agenda for the upcoming year, areas of labor concern across the commonwealth, as well as why a majority of workers making under \$50,000 think Democrats are out of touch, despite the Biden administration being the most pro-labor administration in almost a century. The Chair thanked Jim Pimental for all of his work.

The Chair recognized Public Policy Subcommittee Co-Chair Martina Jackson for her report. Martina Jackson announced that the Public Policy Subcommittee would be meeting soon regarding the Trump administration's actions, as well as regarding upcoming gubernatorial issues.

The Chair recognized Rural Affairs Subcommittee Co-Chair Lee Harrison for his report. Lee Harrison reported that the Rural Affairs Subcommittee met to think of ways to strengthen our local Democratic Ward/Town Committees.

The Chair recognized Resolutions Subcommittee Co-Chair Marianne Rutter to give her report. Marianne Rutter reported that the subcommittee hasn't met yet, but will meet when resolutions are submitted to them, as well as that the subcommittee has shared several documents on how to do that appropriately.

The Chair recognized Veterans Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chair Christine Tron to give her report. Christine Tron announced that the subcommittee would be meeting in the next few weeks to plan outreach to local Democratic Ward/Town Committees to encourage veterans to get involved.

The Chair recognized Women's Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chairs Claudia Pouravelis and Norma Shulman for their report. Claudia Pouravelis reported that the first conversation in their "Her Path to Politics" conversation series was a success and they were excited to have more coming in April or June. Claudia Pouravelis concluded by thanking the staff for their support.

The Chair recognized Youth Outreach Subcommittee Co-Chairs Mark Lannigan and Leslie Templeton for their report. Mark Lannigan reported that the leadership of Young Democrats of Massachusetts, College Democrats of Massachusetts, and High School Democrats of Massachusetts got together and have set up regular meeting times to go over important updates and facilitate further co-operation. Mark Lannigan further reported that the youth working groups were up, running, and working on several projects. Leslie Templeton further elaborated on the work of the youth working groups and their efforts to reach out to groups that the Democratic party has typically struggled with.

The Chair then announced that Megan Lee was the winner of the [election](#) and would fill the female youth add-on seat.

The Chair recognized Mabel Amar. Mabel Amar had a personal problem that was able to be resolved.

The Chair recognized DNC member Brenda Brathwaite to give her report. Brenda Brathwaite reported that the DNC elected new officers. Brenda further reported that the Massachusetts DNC delegation submitted commemorative resolutions to honor Frank Bellotti, Bill Delahunt, Norma Fenochietti, Gloria Fox, Agnes Ricko, Sarah-Ann Shaw, Sue Thompson, and John Walsh. Brenda Brathwaite thanked Karen Payne, Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski, and David O'Brien for their support in drafting these resolutions. Brenda Brathwaite also thanked the Chair for authoring a resolution for Ethel Kennedy.

The Chair took a moment of personal privilege to thank the Massachusetts DNC delegation for attending the DNC meeting and getting a lot of great work done.

The Chair then opened the floor to new business. The Chair began by announcing there were two vacancies in three senate districts: Norfolk and Suffolk (male ballot vacancy), First Plymouth and Norfolk (female caucus vacancy), Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester (female ballot vacancy). The Chair then outlined how these vacancies would be filled, which the Chair announced would also be emailed to members. The Chair further announced the formation of a platform committee for the upcoming platform convention in September that would be assembled and announced no later than the next DSC meeting in June.

The Chair recognized Amanda Smith. Amanda Smith used her time to thank the PMAs for their assistance with the entirely virtual meeting.

The Chair recognized Sherwood Guernsey. Sherwood Guernsey made a motion for public distribution. The motion reads as follows: "We abhor the appointment of President Trump as the President of the Kennedy Center. As with all of the President's other destructive actions, it is an affront to the beliefs, values, and legacy of our great President Kennedy." The Chair conferred with Jim Roosevelt and pushed the motion to later in the meeting pending more information.

The Chair recognized Leon Brathwaite. Leon Brathwaite announced that the DNC Rural Council was working to get more undecideds registered as Democrats. Leon Brathwaite also motioned to nominate former Secretary Carol Ann Aloisi as Secretary Emeritus. The Chair accepted a motion and seconds to accept this nomination. The Chair then held a voice vote, which passed unanimously. The Chair then thanked Secretary Emeritus Carol Ann Aloisi for all of her years of service.

After this, Jim Roosevelt was prepared to provide further information on Sherwood Guernsey's motion. Jim Roosevelt clarified that this motion was in the nature of a resolution and should go to the Resolutions Subcommittee or could be approved with a suspension of the rules and a two thirds vote. The Chair accepted a motion and seconds to suspend the rules. The Chair then held a voice vote to suspend the rules, which passed unanimously. The Chair then accepted a motion and seconds to accept the resolution put forth by Sherwood Guernsey.

The Chair recognized Paul Yorkis. Paul Yorkis offered a friendly amendment to Sherwood Guernsey's resolution to use President Kennedy's full name: John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Sherwood Guernsey accepted this friendly amendment.

The Chair then held a voice vote to accept the resolution, which passed.

The Chair then recognized Secretary Emeritus Carol Ann Aloisi. Secretary Emeritus Carol Ann Aloisi thanked everyone for electing her Secretary Emeritus and for recognizing her years of service.

The Chair recognized Rhonda Bourne. Rhonda Bourne asked a question regarding voicing policy frustrations. The Chair responded that the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee is not a policy body and therefore has no means of voicing the policy frustrations of its members.

The Chair recognized Patricia Kirwin-Keilty. Patricia Kirwin-Keilty asked the Chair for more information on the new DNC Chair, Ken Martin. The Chair responded that Ken Martin was most recently the Chair of the Wisconsin Democratic Party and had been the Chair of the Association of State Democratic Parties for eight years. The Chair also expressed hope to get Ken Martin to New England soon.

There was a motion and a vote to adjourn. The vote passed, and the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee meeting was adjourned.