



## **Democratic State Committee Meeting**

*December 4, 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 announced that the Democratic State Committee (DSC) was hosting a holiday food drive to support local families in Holyoke and encouraged all who were able to donate to the food drive.

The Chair then asked everyone to observe a moment of silence for the State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, State Senator Edward J. Kennedy II, William R. Shemeth III, Marie A. Turley, and Setti Warren, all of whom had passed since the last DSC meeting.

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

There was a motion and vote to suspend the rules to hear from guest speakers, which passed.

The Chair introduced Holyoke Mayor Josh Garcia who welcomed everyone to Holyoke, told a story about his mother's resiliency in overcoming adversity and how it inspires him to do more to help the most vulnerable in the community, and thanked everyone for their support in light of the recent fires in Holyoke.

The Chair then introduced Congressman Richard Neal who pre-recorded a video welcoming everyone to Holyoke. Congressman Richard Neal expressed his belief that Americans were coming together to oppose Donald Trump and recognized what a mistake it was to re-elect him. Congressman Richard Neal emphasized the importance of retaining the big tent nature of the party, expressed optimism for the year ahead, and finished by thanking everyone for their work in electing Democrats.

The Chair thanked the Mayor and Congressman and began by thanking everybody on the DSC for the work they've done during his tenure as Chair. The Chair highlighted the amazing work done in recent elections, emphasized the importance of the work that everyone on the DSC does, and how much can be accomplished when we all work together. The Chair then highlighted many of the incredibly important elections that will be taking place over the next year and encouraged everyone to commit to working even harder next year to elect Democrats so that we can realize our opportunity to make real change.

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

The Chair began the process of electing the Judicial Council in accordance with Article Five - Section One of the DSC Charter and introduced Parliamentarian Jim Roosevelt to give a brief overview of what the Judicial Council is and does. Jim Roosevelt explained that the Judicial Council is an appellate body outlined in the Charter and Bylaws of the DSC and is unable to begin any process. It solely hears appeals from the DSC or from a Ward or Town Committee exclusively; mostly in the course of trying to remove a member, successful or otherwise. The appeal is not based on fact, but is instead based on procedure. The Council may review matters in which someone was removed and they are appealing that decision and can also consider matters in which complaints have been made, but the relevant body has not acted and in these instances may compel the relevant body to act.

The Chair announced that the following election would fill the existing vacancies on the Judicial Council in the following manner: a five year term, a four year term, a three year term, a two year term, and a one year term. The Chair then clarified that, going forward, the seats would all have five year terms and would be filled on a rolling basis. The Chair then outlined the rules regarding nominating and electing candidates for the Judicial Council.

Jack Perenick made a point of order, referencing the original motion he made regarding the Judicial Council, and requested different rules for electing candidates for the Judicial Council. The Chair briefly outlined why these rules were selected. Jack Perenick then made a motion to adopt his changes to the rules for electing candidates for the Judicial Council. The Chair then opened the floor to debate on the motion.

Jack Perenick began by explaining his reasoning for wanting the change to the rules of the election. The Chair recognized Anne Roosevelt who spoke against the motion. The Chair then recognized Diane Masters who raised concerns about how the virtual attendees would vote, how long the voting process would take, and how votes would be counted. Due to persistent technical issues in person, the Chair announced a five minute recess to allow DSC Staff to resolve the technical issues. After the recess, the Chair responded to Diane's questions. The Chair recognized Drew Russo who asked a question about how candidates for the Judicial Council would make their preferred term clear. The Chair responded to Drew's question. The Chair then recognized Jeremy Comeau who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Norma Shulaman who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Steve Leibowitz who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Andrew Laberge who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized John Harney who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Bob Massie who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Mary Henry who asked a question about slates. The Chair clarified. Mary Henry then spoke in favor of the motion and expressed frustration at the time of the meeting. The Chair then clarified on why the time of the meeting was selected. The Chair recognized Dennis Naughton who spoke in favor of the motion. The Chair recognized Elaine Almquist who then made a motion to call the question, which passed. The Chair then announced that he would not consider this as a challenge to the chair, so that the motion would only need a simple majority to pass.

The Chair opened the floor to nominations for the Judicial Council. The Chair then yielded the gavel to Vice Chair Debra Kozikowski. Vice Chair Kozikowski recognized Chair Steve Kerrigan

who nominated Cheryl Cronin, Sanji Alwis, Freddie Kay, Chip Flowers, and Kathy Gasperine. The Vice Chair recognized Kate Donaghue who nominated James Nichols-Worley and then yielded the remainder of her time to him. James Nichols-Worley spoke on his candidacy for the Judicial Council. The Vice Chair recognized Bob Colt who nominated Cabell Eames and then yielded the rest of his time to her. Cabell Eames spoke on her candidacy for the Judicial Council. The Vice Chair recognized Sandi Bagley who nominated Judith Dilday and yielded the remainder of her time to her. Judith Dilday spoke on her candidacy for the Judicial Council. The Vice Chair recognized Tara Jacobs who nominated Ross Jacobs and yielded the rest of her time to him. Ross Jacobs spoke on his candidacy for the Judicial Council. The Vice Chair recognized Diane Masters who nominated Katie Wallace and yielded the rest of her time to her. Katie Wallace spoke on her candidacy for the Judicial Council. The Vice Chair recognized Vice Chair Leon Brathwaite who motioned that nominations be closed, which passed.

The Vice Chair announced that ballots would be handed out in person and that a virtual ballot would be placed in the chat for virtual attendees. The Vice Chair then yielded the gavel back to the Chair. The Chair recognized Jeremy Comeau who asked that the names of the candidates be visible for virtual attendees. The DSC staff then spotlighted the appropriate screen for all virtual attendees. The Chair recognized Tracy Pratt who expressed an inability to find the virtual ballot in the zoom chat. The DSC staff then reposted the virtual ballot in the zoom chat and sent a virtual ballot to Tracy Pratt via direct message on zoom. The Chair recognized Rachel Toepfer who then clarified how virtual attendees may be able to find the candidates names if they could not already see them. The Chair then recognized Mabel Amar who also expressed an inability to find the ballot. The DSC staff then reposted the virtual ballot in the zoom chat and sent a virtual ballot to Mabel Amar via direct message on zoom. The Chair recognized Justin Klekota who asked that the genders of the candidates be placed in the zoom chat so that voters could correctly fill out the appropriate gender balance laid out in the rules. The Chair respectfully declined to assume the candidates genders and encouraged voters to make their best guess. The Chair recognized Steve Leibowitz who asked what would happen to a ballot without the correct gender balance. The Chair responded that the correct gender balance would be decided in the count room after the votes had been tallied. After a considerable amount of time, the Chair announced that voting had closed.

The Chair announced that the next election would be to fill two vacancies for add-on seats in the category of affirmative action female. The Chair then opened the floor to nominations for Errin Davis, Minnah Sheikh, and Persis Yu who submitted their letters of intent to seek the vacant seats. The Chair recognized Charlotte Golar-Richie who nominated Errin Davis and yielded the remainder of her time to her. Errin Davis spoke on her candidacy for the Female Affirmative Action seat. The Chair recognized Juan Pablo Jaramillo who nominated Minnah Sheikh and yielded the rest of his time to her. Minnah Sheikh spoke on her candidacy for the Female Affirmative Action seat. The Chair recognized Dallas Ducar who nominated Persis Yu and yielded the rest of her time to her. Persis Yu spoke on her candidacy for the Female Affirmative Action seat. The Chair recognized seconds to their nominations, announced that the floor was now closed to nominations, thanked the candidates for their time, and encouraged everyone to stay involved regardless of the votes result.

The Chair announced that ballots would be handed out in person and that a virtual ballot would be placed in the chat for virtual attendees. The Chair recognized Ken Parker who reflected on the virtual ballot's requirement that you select two candidates and asked if it would be possible to change that to allow voters to only select one candidate if they wish. The Chair responded that the DSC staff would quickly make that change to the virtual ballot. After a considerable amount of time, the Chair announced that voting had closed.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chair of the Site Selection Subcommittee, Jason Palitsch, to give his report on the site selection for the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Party Convention. The Site Selection Subcommittee updated the request for proposals (RFP) used by the party to solicit interest from convention venues in previous years. The updated RFP was then sent by party staff to all venues that have hosted the convention over the past twenty years in July and responses were due by October. A singular proposal from the DCU Center in Worcester was received by the deadline and the Subcommittee met in November to review that proposal. The Subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend the DCU Center in Worcester. Jason Palitsch thanked members of the Site Selection Subcommittee and the Disability Outreach Subcommittee for their involvement in this process.

The Chair thanked Jason Palitsch and the members of the Site Selection Subcommittee and the Disability Outreach Subcommittee for their involvement in this process. The Chair further clarified that this year's convention would be a two day convention on Friday, May 29th and Saturday May 30th. There was a motion to accept the Site Selection Subcommittee's report and to approve the location and date of the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Party Convention, which passed.

The Chair recognized the Chair from the Rules Subcommittee, Bill Eddy, to give his subcommittee report. Bill Eddy reported that the subcommittee met to craft the method of selecting delegates, as well as the rules for the upcoming convention. Bill Eddy further reported that the following changes had been made to the method of selecting delegates: establishing a five week caucus window that lasts from February 19th through March 22nd, requiring in person caucuses with an exception for special circumstances approved by the Chair of the DSC, requiring in person attendance to be nominated to be a delegate with an exception for those in the Armed Services, and an increase in the registration fee to \$85, which is a \$10 increase, due to increased overall costs of the convention.

Bill Eddy recognized Robert Logan who noticed typos within the method of selecting delegates and sought clarification. Bill Eddy clarified that these were typos and would be corrected. Bill Eddy then recognized Jessica Nahigian who noticed additional typos within the method of selecting delegates and also sought clarification. Bill Eddy clarified that these were also typos and would be corrected. Bill Eddy recognized Terry Altherr who had a question regarding the discounted rate for youth delegates between sixteen and twenty-five, as the youth category includes those up to thirty-five. Bill Eddy responded that the discounted rate was meant for students and encouraged those over the age of twenty-five with financial difficulty to apply for a partial or full fee waiver instead. Bill Eddy recognized Diego Sanchez who asked whether the Armed Services exception for in person nomination extended to the National Guard and/or

those who have been hospitalized? Bill Eddy responded that he interpreted that exception as extending to all in military service. Bill Eddy recognized Dennis Naughton who asked for clarification on whether alternates needed to be present in order to be nominated. Bill Eddy clarified that alternates did not need to be present in order to be nominated. There was a motion to accept the 2026 method of selecting delegates, which passed.

Bill Eddy further reported that following changes had been made to the rules of the convention: in section three, number five a recommendation that the endorsed candidate of the convention be the endorsed candidate of the Democratic Party was removed due to the legislature not acting on this recommendation in over twenty years, in section three, number six language was condensed regarding the appointment of tellers (formerly Senate District Chairs), in section five the subcommittee tried to make the process of appealing a ruling simpler, in section six, the subcommittee streamlined the process for suspending the rules and set a thirty day prior minimum for charter amendments.

The Chair recognized Peter Bakula who expressed his opinion that the current fifteen percent threshold is too high. Bill Eddy clarified that the fifteen percent threshold is in our charter and cannot be changed at the moment and argued that the fifteen percent rule forces candidates to talk to the grassroots of the party, rather than just hiring a signature collection firm. The Chair echoed Bill Eddy's argument. The Chair recognized Vice Chair Leon Brathwaite who further echoed Bill Eddy and the Chair. There was a motion to accept the rules of the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Party Convention, which passed.

The Chair reminded everyone that the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Party Convention will be held on Friday, May 29th and Saturday May 30th.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chairs of the JFK Scholarship Subcommittee, Charlotte Richie and Max German, to give their subcommittee report. Max German and Charlotte Richie reported that the JFK Scholarship Subcommittee had started their internship recruitment process and that, thanks to the Chair, the subcommittee would be able to double the amount of interns for 2026. Max German and Charlotte Richie encouraged everyone to reach out to high school seniors, college students, or participants in apprenticeship programs they know who are registered Democrats and encourage them to apply by the deadline on December 19th. Max German and Charlotte Richie finished by thanking the Chair and the MassDems staff for their support.

The Chair recognized the Chair of the Resolutions Subcommittee, Joe Kelly, to give his report. Joe Kelly reported that the subcommittee met to discuss a proposed resolution but ultimately decided to table the resolution as the proponent of the resolution wasn't able to attend to answer the subcommittee's questions.

The Chair recognized Co-Chair of the Disability Outreach Subcommittee, Kathleen McCarthy, to give her report. The subcommittee met to debrief the convention in Springfield and authored a report that was shared with the DSC Executive Director, Adam Roof. Kathleen McCarthy thanked the Site Selection Subcommittee for including the Co-Chairs of the Disability Outreach

Subcommittee in the site selection process to ensure accessibility for all attendees and thanked Executive Director Adam Roof for proactively including the Disability Outreach Subcommittee and eliminating barriers to access for the upcoming convention.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chair from the LGBTQIA+ Outreach Subcommittee, Justin Klekota, to give his report. The LGBTQIA+ Outreach Subcommittee has hosted weekly phone banks and contributed thousands of volunteer hours to campaigns across the country. Justin Klekota further reported that the subcommittee would restart its phone banks in mid-January and has found considerable success specifically targeting LGBTQIA+ and getting them to phonebank when they may not have otherwise. Justin Klekota finished by announcing the subcommittee would begin in person events and outreach, in addition to virtual phonebanks, in the coming year in order to better target potential volunteers.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chairs of the Labor Outreach Subcommittee, Brian Dunn and Jim Pimental, to give their report. Brian Dunn thanked his Co-Chair, Jim Pimental, the members of the Labor Outreach Subcommittee, and the pro-worker Democratic candidates who won their elections and have been fighting hard for workers. Jim Pimental emphasized the importance of focusing on bread and butter issues and cited recent electoral victories as proof positive of the importance and effectiveness of focusing on those issues.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chair of the Rural Affairs Subcommittee, Lee Harrison, to give his report. Lee Harrison reported success in events across Massachusetts and success in helping start and restart Democratic Town and Ward Committees. Lee Harrison encouraged everyone to get involved in the significant amount of work in the year ahead.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chairs of the Youth Outreach Subcommittee, Mark Lannigan and Leslie Templeton, to give their report. Mark Lannigan and Leslie Templeton introduced the two new Co-Presidents of the Massachusetts High School Democrats (MAHSD), praised their hard work, and yielded the remainder of their time to them. Patrick Reed and Lauren Peloquin introduced themselves, described their future goals, and reported on their success so far this year. Patrick Reed and Lauren Peloquin concluded by asking everyone to reach out to high school Democrats they know and encourage them to get involved with the Massachusetts high school Democrats. The Chair echoed their remarks and thanked them for their hard work.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chair of the Charter Amendments Subcommittee, Sandi Bagley, to give her report. Now that the rules have been approved, the Charter Amendments Subcommittee will begin setting up this year's Charter Amendments process and will have a report at the next DSC meeting regarding that process. Sandi Bagley concluded by thanking everyone for their support.

The Chair recognized the Co-Chair of the Public Policy Subcommittee, Martina Jackson, to give her report. Martina Jackson reported that the subcommittee looks forward to prioritizing affordability and looks forward to partnering with other DSC subcommittees, as well as with local Democratic Town and Ward Committees.

The Chair announced that, for the Judicial Council election, there was a tie for the five year slot between Judith Dilday and Katie Wallace, however Katie Wallace graciously decided to let Judith Dilday take the five year slot and opted for the three year slot. The results of the Judicial Council election are as follows: Judith Dilday for the five year slot, James Nichols-Worley for the four year slot, Katie Wallace for the three year slot, Ross Jacobs for the two year slot, and Cabell Eames for the one year slot. The Chair thanked everyone who participated in this election.

The Chair then announced that, for the vacant Affirmative Action Female election, there were three amazing candidates, but only two vacant seats, which were filled by Errin Davis and Minnah Sheikh. The Chair thanked Persis Yu for her hard work and hoped that she'd continue working with the DSC in the future.

The Chair announced that there was vacancy in the Female ballot seat for the Bristol and Norfolk district and that there would be a conference held to fill that vacancy. The Chair further announced two vacancies in the Female Caucus seat in the First Essex and Middlesex district and the Second Essex and Middlesex district and that there would also be a conference to fill that vacancy. The Chair then added that, per DSC bylaws, more information on these conferences would be available at the Winter DSC meeting. The Chair finally announced additional vacancies in the following add-on categories: Two Affirmative Action Add On Females and Gay Male Add on, and that information on the elections to fill these seats would be available at the Winter DSC meeting. Finally, the Chair also announced that there would be a vote on a Young Democrats of Massachusetts (YDMA) vacancy that was recently filled at a later date.

The Chair reminded everyone that the Winter DSC meeting would be held virtually.

The Chair then opened the floor to new business.

The Chair recognized Nancy Stenberg who expressed frustration over the DSC's lack of acknowledgement of Mayor Zohran Mamdani's electoral victory in the New York City mayoral election.

The Chair recognized Mark Lanigan who, citing the YDMA vacancy, moved to nominate Patrick Reed and Lauren Peloquin, who were selected by the MAHSD, to be seated on the DSC.

The Chair recognized Brian Corr who motioned to adjourn. The vote passed and the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee meeting was adjourned.

After Brian Corr was recognized, but prior to his motion, he was interrupted by Jack Perenick who raised a point of order arguing against the need to vote on the YDMA or MAHSD seats that were recently filled.