

PROPOSED AMENDMENT REGARDING BRANCHES

Proposal to amend Article V of the current chapter by-laws concerning branches. The purpose of this proposed amendment is to further clarify the procedures covering branches. Portions of the proposed text that are taken, unchanged, from the language in the current by-laws appear **bolded and underlined**.

OLD TEXT:

ARTICLE V BRANCHES

The following branch is established as part of NNJDSA: Hudson County. Additional branches may be established as circumstances warrant.

Branch leadership will consist of two co-chairs elected by members of the branch, and will be open to all members residing within the branch area as determined by zip code. Gender and racial diversity shall be the goal in electing the co-chairs.

For purposes of determining delegate elections for DSA conventions or other events based on proportional membership, branches must be established at least two months prior to local delegate elections to be eligible. Branches are entitled to a number of delegates commensurate with their size relative to the full local membership and rounded down to the nearest whole number. Branches may hold separate delegate elections unless otherwise determined by majority vote of both a branch and the local. In the event a branch's membership or time of establishment does not entitle it to at least one delegate, branch members may stand for election with the full local.

In the absence of a formal branch, members are empowered and encouraged to create working groups on local issues with the expectation that leadership of such groups should also maintain racial and gender parity and should be democratically elected.

[PROPOSED TEXT CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]

PROPOSED BY-LAW TEXT:

ARTICLE V BRANCHES

Section 5.1 - Purpose

Branches may be established within the chapter, focused around a geographical location. Branches will generally cover a specific county within the territory covering NNJDSA, though a branch may cover any appropriate geographical territory, delineated by zip code. Membership in any branch established within the chapter shall be open to every member of the chapter residing within the geographical territory covering the branch.

Section 5.2 - Process to Propose a Branch

In order to establish a branch, members must submit a formal, written petition to the Executive Committee. The proposal must be accompanied by at least 20 members residing within the geographical territory covering the proposed branch.

Upon receipt of a written proposal to establish a branch within the chapter, the Executive Committee shall ~~take a vote of its members to either reject the proposal, or advance the proposal to a vote by the chapter's general membership at the next Chapter meeting and provide at least 30 days for review and comment on the proposal.~~ If a proposal is rejected by Chapter membership, the proposing members may resubmit a revised proposal, at the next Chapter meeting.

Section 5.3 - Notice of a Vote to Establish a Branch

If a proposal is advanced by the ~~Executive Committee to the chapter's general membership~~, a vote shall be taken at the next general chapter meeting to consider the establishment of the branch, provided that chapter members are given notice, at least ~~14-30~~ days in advance, that such a vote will take place at the next general chapter meeting. If such notice of a vote to establish a branch is provided to the chapter's general membership less than ~~14-30~~ days before the next general chapter meeting, the vote to establish the branch shall be held at the following general chapter meeting.

The notice to the chapter's general membership shall include the formal, written proposal submitted by the proposed branch to the Executive Committee, along with a complete list of the members in good standing of the chapter that endorsed the establishment of the proposed branch.

Section 5.4 - Voting to Establish a Branch

A vote to establish a proposed branch shall be held at a general chapter meeting. Any member in good standing ~~present at the meeting~~ may vote on the establishment of the branch. A vote in favor of establishing the proposed branch by a two-thirds majority of the voting members in good standing during the open voting period ~~present at the meeting~~ shall establish the branch.

Section 5.4.a – Branch By-Laws and Responsibilities

Following a vote to establish a branch, the branch shall adopt by-laws under which the branch will operate within 60 days. Failure to adopt by-laws within 60 days may result in a vote at the following general chapter meeting to dissolve the branch.

At least one member of the branch will provide report backs to the chapter through general chapter meetings. In addition, branch leadership will be responsible for sharing membership information with the Executive Committee and any proposed Steering Committee, to assist these Committees in serving the needs of the greater chapter membership and their respective projects and priorities.

Section 5.5 - Branch Leadership

Branch leadership will consist of two co-chairs elected by members of the branch, and will be open to all members residing within the branch area as determined by zip code. Gender and racial diversity shall be the goal in electing the co-chairs. Branch elections will take place in January each year.

Section 5.6 - Dissolution of a Branch

A branch may be dissolved if either:

- a. the branch fails to meet for at least three months, fails to adhere to the National and/or NNJDSA by-laws, or promotes views contrary to NNJDSA/the DSA; or
- b. a petition by 20% of the branch membership is presented to the Executive Committee to dissolve the branch.

In either of the above situations, the Executive Committee may vote to dissolve the branch. An affirmative vote by the Executive Committee to dissolve shall result in a motion to dissolve the branch to be presented to the general membership of the chapter at the next chapter meeting. Notice of any vote to dissolve a branch must be provided to the general membership in accordance with the same 14 30 day advance notice requirement set forth in section 5.3. A vote in favor of dissolving the branch by a two-thirds majority of the voting members in good standing present at the meeting shall dissolve the branch.

Section 5.7 - Determining DSA Convention Delegates

For purposes of determining delegate elections for DSA conventions or other events based on proportional membership, branches must be established at least two months prior to chapter delegate elections to be eligible. Branches are entitled to a number of delegates commensurate with their size relative to the full local membership and rounded down to the nearest whole number. Branches may hold separate delegate elections unless otherwise determined by majority vote of both a branch and the chapter. In the event a branch's membership or time of establishment does not entitle it to at least one delegate, branch members may stand for election with the full chapter.

Section 5.8 - Priorities, Political Endorsements, List of Established Branches

Branches should act in accordance with the priorities set out by the chapter. Any political endorsements must be brought to a chapter-wide vote, and cannot be made by a branch alone.

In the absence of a formal branch, members are empowered and encouraged to create working groups on local issues with the expectation that leadership of such groups should also maintain racial and gender parity and should be democratically elected.

A list of all branches established within the chapter shall be maintained in an Appendix to these by-laws, and shall be amended throughout the year upon the establishment or dissolution of branches.

[APPENDIX OF CURRENT BRANCHES CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]

APPENDIX - LIST OF ESTABLISHED BRANCHES

Hudson County DSA

Rationale:

The purpose of this amendment is to create guidelines for how branches are formed and run and their relationship to the broader chapter so that there are clear procedures in place. Being a smaller sector of the NNJDSA chapter, the branches should be accountable to the chapter's democratic structure, in particular for decisions like the establishment of branches, electoral endorsements, and priority campaigns. This should help prevent procedural confusion that we've experienced in the past. Branches should still have a level of autonomy to engage in local work.

Changes:

- Branches may be established within the chapter, focused around a geographical location, by county or other relevant geographic area
- Process to establish a branch: proposal must be submitted to EC, and proposed branch must have at least 20 members residing within the geographical territory covering the proposed branch. ~~EC votes to advance or reject proposal~~
- ~~If advanced,~~ notice of a vote to establish a branch must be brought to general membership meeting at least ~~14~~ 30 days in advance with a written proposal
- Vote to establish branch held at the general membership meeting, branch to be established with a two-thirds majority of votes from voting members in good standing during the open voting period
- Branch elections will take place in January each year
- Branches that fail to meet for at least three months, fail to adhere to NNJDSA by-laws, or promote views contrary to NNJDSA/DSA may be dissolved by the EC, or may be dissolved with a petition of 20% of branch membership presented to the EC. The final decision to dissolve would be then brought to the general membership for a vote.
- Branches should act in accordance with the priorities set out by the chapter. Any political endorsements must be brought to a chapter-wide vote, and cannot be made by a branch alone.