

Monroe County Democratic Women's Caucus Endorsement Process & Candidate Support Calendar Proposed January 2019*

(*Provisional plan for 2019, intend full review of Endorsements in preparation for 2020)

The Democratic Women's Caucus (DWC) offers various forms of support throughout the year to progressive, pro-choice Democratic women running – or thinking about running -- for office in Monroe County.

Progressive candidates advocate for social justice and social equality, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or economic status, as well as but not limited to comprehensive health care, including unrestricted access to reproductive healthcare for women.

The DWC offers graduated levels of candidate support including various forms of training as well as endorsement and financial support, depending on our assessment of viability. "Viable" candidates are those who demonstrate a reasonable chance of electoral success *based on:*

- a strong campaign plan;
- ability to organize campaign workers and fundraise;
- knowledge of the issues and duties related to the office sought;
- participation in DWC-sponsored trainings and learning experiences;
- record of success in a leadership role in her community, neighborhood, or place of employment.

The DWC is dedicated to increasing the number of qualified women candidates for public office. The DWC membership may choose to offer formal endorsement to a candidate in some races, but may also choose to support multiple qualified candidates.

As a Political Action Committee (DWC PAC), the DWC is organized for the purpose of raising and spending money to promote its mission and to elect candidates. The DWC aims to foster an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual respect among all candidates, to elevate the level of public political discourse, and to promote informed civic engagement and participation among women more generally. Regardless of their ultimate decision at the ballot box, DWC members are encouraged to support all DWC candidates to become the best candidates they can be and running the best campaign possible.

Endorsement Process Annual Calendar

Ongoing

- The DWC keeps running track of offices that will be up for election in upcoming electoral cycles and disseminates that information to DWC members.
- The DWC encourages and recruits potential candidates for those offices.
- Designated DWC Steering Committee member(s) foster a relationship with the mayor, commissioners and councils, with a view to acting as a resource and advocate for the appointment of qualified women to boards, ad-hoc committees and other city/county functions.

November

Establish a Candidate Recruitment and Training Committee

- **Candidate Support Committee:** identifies offices up for election in the next year; assures candidates are informed of the duties of office; assists with preparation of intensive candidate training session; organizes mock-forums for candidates to practice stump speeches and responses to forum questions; works to create a pool of potential mentors and identify mentors for each candidate; encourages and assists candidates with development of issue expertise appropriate to office.
- **Training Committee:** plans circuit training for full membership twice a year (i.e., January and August)¹; plans intensive training for candidates;²

December

Identify potential representatives for Endorsement Committee (EC). Announce criteria and consequences for serving on EC (i.e. can't run or lead a candidate's campaign committee)

January

The Steering Committee will choose its representatives on the **Endorsement Committee**. For example, six Steering Committee members may be interested and deemed eligible to serve on the Endorsement Committee.

As soon as a candidate files, they will be sent an endorsement application and be encouraged to submit their application as soon as possible (requiring campaign plan submission closer to interview dates). This timeline is intended to afford the EC more time to review applications, do necessary vetting, and prepare for interviews.

¹ General membership training aims to encourage DWC members to consider running for office, and might include: answering the question of "why am I running for office?"; campaign calendar and budget, strategies for direct voter contact, free media, volunteer management, fundraising, and developing a campaign plan.

² Intensive candidate training aims to prepare registered candidates to run a successful campaign, and might include: messaging and stump speech practice, issue-specific training, in-depth review of office-specific responsibilities; ethics in public service (including campaign finance laws); developing and executive a campaign plan; fundraising; forum and speech practice.

February

DWC Breakfast meeting: member nominations to the EC will be taken (nominations from the floor or self-nominations) to total one FEWER than the number of Steering Committee Members on the Endorsement Committee. Using the example above, five Endorsement Committee members who are not members of the Steering Committee will be chosen. If more members are interested in serving than is needed, a quick ballot will be cast among the members who are present.

Endorsement Committee members must be current on membership dues and cannot be directly involved in a leadership role on a political campaign nor have expressed their personal endorsement for any candidate in any race in which the DWC endorsements may be determined. Current or Past SC members can represent the SC.

The Endorsement Committee size is most manageable at 5-7 members, though more members provide greater opportunity to vet candidates. However, the EC must be large enough to reasonably apportion the candidate vetting and review assignments to members. [Those serving on a campaign committee or team shall recuse themselves from consideration for that office in the endorsement interview process.]

Endorsement Committee Meetings:

The Endorsement Committee establishes the criteria and application form for candidates, and contacts all eligible candidates to invite them to apply and inform them of the application due date and interview date. The SC will develop and make public a set of pre-determined questions to be consistent across all candidates for the same position, but will allow for one or two questions specific to the candidates qualifications for elected office.

According to a schedule determined by its members, the Endorsement Committee interviews the applicants in person or by phone. Following the interviews, the Endorsement Committee will determine which candidates are recommended for endorsement. More than one candidate for a seat may be recommended for endorsement.

EC decisions about recommended candidates are made to the Steering Committee for final review. The SC will then notify candidates of their status.

March or April

DWC Breakfast Meeting: DWC members will receive a ballot (email votes submitted in advance are also counted), which indicates candidates recommended for endorsement, and lists ALL candidates who applied for endorsement. Decisions will be based on the following criteria:

- Candidates must receive 2/3 of the votes cast (not 2/3 of total membership) to be ENDORSED
- Candidates who do not receive the requisite votes but who are recommended for endorsement will be considered SUPPORTED
- In races in which there are multiple candidates recommended for endorsement, DWC membership votes determine if multiple or all candidates are ENDORSED or SUPPORTED, rather than endorse/support just one candidate

- Candidates who are not supported or endorsed, or who are caucused in, may be reconsidered for support or endorsement for the General Election (November) following a Primary Election victory

DWC CANDIDATE POLICY

The DWC has established the following guidelines for candidates, reflecting our mission to support the candidacy and election of progressive Democratic women.

I. Prior to Endorsement:

Announcing candidacy: The DWC chair will recognize every Democratic (male or female) candidate for office who is present at a DWC meeting (breakfast, meeting, or other event). No one will be invited to announce their own (or another's) candidacy at a DWC breakfast, meeting, or other event.

Campaign events/efforts: No one will be invited to announce their own (or another's) campaign event/request at a DWC event or meeting.

Funding: No one is eligible to receive funding from the DWC-PAC during this time period. However, an effort to "bundle checks" from the membership for a female Democrat running for a non-local office may be undertaken. In this case, individual members are welcome to contribute to a campaign, but DWC-PAC funds will not be utilized for this fundraising effort.

Distributing literature: Candidates who wish to distribute campaign literature (seeking donations, invitations to events, petition signatures, calls for volunteers, etc.) at a DWC meeting or event are asked to abide by the following guidelines: Any Democrat (male or female) may leave their campaign literature, buttons, or other materials at one centrally located table during the event.

DWC website links: Individual campaign/candidate websites will not be linked on the DWC Website. A link to the Monroe County Democratic Party website appears on the DWC website and will be included in the Monday Morning News.

II. Following vote of support/endorsement, through the Primary up until the General Election

Announcing candidacy: Every Democratic (male or female) candidate for office will have their candidacy announced at a DWC breakfast, meeting, or other event by a member of the Steering Committee. Only a candidate who is supported or endorsed by the DWC may announce her candidacy (or someone may announce it for her if she is absent) at a DWC breakfast, meeting, or other event.

In addition, the candidacy of supported or endorsed candidates may be published on the DWC website, announced in the Monday Morning News and/or included in the monthly breakfast meeting Announcements (printed sheet). A female Democrat running for a non-

local office may also announce their candidacy, and/or have that information published on the DWC website, announced in the Monday Morning News and/or included in the monthly breakfast meeting Announcements.

Campaign events/efforts: Candidates who are endorsed or supported by the DWC and female Democrats running for a non-local office are the only candidates who may announce their own campaign event/volunteer request at a DWC event or meeting. They may also announce campaign events, fundraising efforts, or calls for volunteers via an announcement (by a member of the DWC Steering Committee) at a DWC meeting or event, the printed Announcement sheet distributed at breakfast meetings, the DWC website, and/or the Monday Morning News.

Funding: Only membership determined endorsed candidates may be considered for funding by the Steering Committee. No other candidate is eligible to receive funding from the DWC-PAC during this time period. However, an effort to “bundle checks” from the membership for a female Democrat running for a non-local office may be undertaken. In this case, individual members are welcome to contribute to a campaign, but the DWC-PAC funds will not be utilized for this fundraising effort.

Distributing Literature: Candidates who wish to distribute campaign literature (soliciting donations, invitations to events, calls for volunteers, etc.) at a DWC meeting or event are asked to abide by the following guidelines: Any Democrat (male or female) may leave their campaign literature, buttons, etc. at one centrally-located table. However, only candidates who are endorsed or supported by the DWC and non-local female Democrats may distribute literature to individuals in person and/or at every seat at the event/meeting.

Campaign Literature: Only endorsed candidates may note “Endorsed by the Democratic Women’s Caucus” on their campaign website, literature, or any other published product. Similarly, supported candidates may note “Supported by the Democratic Women’s Caucus”.

DWC website links: Only candidates who are endorsed or supported by the DWC are invited to have a link to their campaign websites listed on the DWC website.