



Democrats Abroad SA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, 18 March 2025 @ 19:00 – Zoom

Minutes taken by Barbara Ludman

Members and guests in attendance (Recorded and confirmed by Robin Perros)

International Chair Martha McDevitt-Pugh (Guest)

Taxation Task Force Chair Rebecca Lammers (Guest)

Kenya/DAAC Chair Robyn Emerson (Guest)

Liz O’Leary (DASA Chair)

Tiffany Jackson Zunker (DASA Member at Large and Voting Representative)

Sunnye Collins (DASA Member at Large – Newly elected)

Robert Kelley (Previous Chair, Africa Committee)

Jennie Tsekwa

John Stremlau

Carolyn Stremlau

Griffin Shea

Vukani Magubane Taylor

Charles Belk

Cristianne Wendler

Susan Cashin

Robin Perros

Clara Priestler

Barbara Ludman

Tej Rae

Grace Reid

Nancy Krisch

Mary Tomlinson

Sarah Geline

Tanya Cruz Teller

Loren Braithwaite (not yet a registered member)

Carol Martin

Tracy Swatts Whitfield

Initial Welcome & Guest Speakers

Chair Liz O'Leary welcomed everyone to the AGM and noted that the meeting is being recorded for internal record keeping purposes.

In welcoming guests, Liz thanked Bishop Kelley for his role in getting the Africa Committee (DAAC) off the ground and leading it this past year and welcomed Robyn Emerson, the Chair of DA Kenya who will take on the role of Chair of DAAC.

Liz introduced the two guest speakers and said how much respect she has for their leadership and tireless commitment to Democrats Abroad in these challenging portfolios.

Guest speaker: Martha McDevitt-Pugh, International Chair of Democrats Abroad

Martha McDevitt-Pugh thanked the 2023-2025 DASA Executive Committee and commended DASA for their strong performance, exceeding their 2020 numbers in 2024.

She noted that DASA was in the top ten looking at Vote From Abroad registrations vs the size of the country committee; DASA was at 94%. And in 2024 DASA exceeded its 2020 numbers by 128%.

She emphasized the importance of advocacy work, of community building and of resistance, and urged members to use resources like Resistance Roundtables and the Take Action page on the Democrats Abroad website.

Martha also highlighted upcoming elections in Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia, and New Jersey, urging members to support voter outreach efforts. She stresses that every contribution, big or small, makes a difference. When asked what other country committees were doing to build community and stay engaged, she mentioned book clubs, political walks, movie nights and potluck gatherings. The Take Action page puts up actions members can do every week, and recommends committees focus on issues that are important to their community.

When asked whether DA could recommend specific media, she noted that the media generally aren't reporting enough on our resistance.

But she also noted that speaking up can be effective. For example, when the Department of Defense removed from its website a page honoring the most senior African American, a Medal of Honor winner, people pushed back and the page was restored

For DASA members, it is important to find for ourselves how to energize and have down time, have joy and beauty in our lives.

Guest speaker: Rebecca Lammers, Chair, Taxation Task Force

Rebecca Lammers described the DA Taxation Task Force as a group of volunteers who focus on tax advocacy work which is fighting against the tax discrimination and financial access problems that Americans abroad face.

She said that this year is a major year for tax reform. They're calling it the super bowl of tax, because it's not every year that they pass a tax bill in Congress. So this year the Task Force's advocacy efforts are being ramped up. There is actual potential for them to get tax reform done for Americans abroad this year.

A top priority is HR10468, a bill for residence-based taxation, which creates an optional procedure for Americans living outside of the United States to be treated as non-residents for US tax purposes. The bill was introduced by a Republican representative. The tax force is in conversation with Democrats to make the bill bipartisan.

Rebecca discussed the Social Security Fairness Act, which has benefited Americans abroad by rectifying the Windfall Elimination Provision.

The tax force has also engaged in a fight against the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), and is dealing with many other issues, like exemptions for small American business owners abroad from the global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI) tax. They are also involved in matters regarding Social Security which, for Africa, is dealt with by the SSA from London. She noted that the Taxation Task Force runs frequent webinars dealing with tax issues that affect Americans abroad.

1. Welcome (Liz)

2&3. Guest Speakers

4. Attendance & Quorum (Robin)

Robin confirmed there is a quorum.

Liz thanked everyone for volunteering, and everyone who voted in 2024. DASA is one of only two official country committees in Africa.

5. The Agenda was approved and there were no objections.

Agenda for 2025 AGM

1. Welcome
2. Guest Speaker: Martha McDevitt-Pugh
3. Guest Speaker: Rebecca Lammers
4. Attendance and Quorum
5. Approval of AGM Agenda
6. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
7. Chair's Report

8. Treasurer's Report
9. 2025-2027 Executive Committee Election Results
10. Other Business
11. Thanks and Closure

6. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Barbara)

7. Chair's Report (Liz)

Liz shared a photo slideshow of a wide range of DASA activities and events in 2024 while she spoke. She noted that DASA members came together last year for an incredible effort to support Kamala Harris and Democratic candidates across the country. There was a great deal of media coverage, including advertisements as well as articles and interviews, and Harris/Walz T-shirts and beaded pins supported the efforts of volunteers.

The prepared text of the Chair's Report is attached below.

8. Treasurer's Report (Tiffany)

Tiffany noted that DASA's finances are in good shape. In the period under review, DASA took in \$8 180 and spent \$7 010 including in-kind contributions of \$6 810. Fundraising activities included the sale of Harris/Walz T-shirts and beaded pins. There is a balance of \$1 170 in the DASA subaccount with Global.

The prepared text of the Treasurer's Report is attached below.

9. 2025-2027 Nominations and Executive Committee (NEC) Election Results (Susan)

The NEC Chair, Susan Cashin, expressed her thanks at being asked to serve in that capacity and thanked Tiwana Merritt and Cristianne Wendler for serving on the NEC. Susan reported on the process and outcomes of the elections held electronically in advance of the AGM. The results were as follows:

Chair – Liz O'Leary

Members at Large – Sunnye Collins and Tiffany Jackson-Zunker

Voting Rep – Tiffany Jackson-Zunker

There were no nominations for other posts.

The prepared text of the Nominations and Executive Committee Report is attached below

Susan congratulated the elected Exco. Liz welcomed Sunnye to the Exco and thanked Tiffany for running again.

Tiffany and Sunnye each said a few words looking forward to the term ahead.

10. Other Business

Cristianne, Susan and Charles thanked Liz and Tiffany for their energy, commitment and work over the past year. A discussion ensued in which it was noted that DASA needs ideas and involvement from all members. Member involvement in Cape Town was encouraged.

11. Thanks and Closure

Liz thanked guests and members, she thanked Tanya for assisting with her technology challenge, and then closed the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Informal discussion followed.

Elizabeth O’Leary - Chair’s Report

A few weeks ago I had been dreading this report, not the content of it, because we all came together last year in an incredible effort to support Kamala Harris and Democrats across the country. I’d been dreading it because I realised how hard it is for any of us to think about last year right now, never mind celebrate it, with the current state of the country and its impact on the world.

But it was in thinking about us needing to be Everyday American Ambassadors – of the country it can, should and will be – that I realised how to approach it and share it with you. So let’s keep reminding ourselves who we are and why we’re here...and use the spirit of 2024 to energise us for the battles of 2025.

And most importantly, I want this report to serve as a thank you and love letter to all of our volunteers, donors, active members, the Global team and everyone who voted and “did something” over the past year. THANK YOU! Some really went above and beyond... I’m also going to let our photos tell the story.

I only have time for highlights but I’m always happy to talk or meet with any of you another time.

Democrats Abroad South Africa (DASA) is an official Country Committee of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA), otherwise known as Democrats Abroad. We are the arm of the party for the millions of Americans living outside the country.

Founded to support President Obama’s first election, DASA brought many of us together at that time to support a leader who inspired us with his vision and HOPE. Though DASA was inactive for several years after 2012, we began to organise again in 2020. DASA became an official Country Committee again in 2021 and we’ve been developing our reach and capacity since then. But there is certainly much more work ahead.

Last year I shared some of the more mundane but necessary aspects of our work, aspects that are important to the smooth functioning of the organisation.

There is groundwork to be done and as a 100% volunteer organisation, we need you to help make it happen!

It really is amazing and inspiring to be part of a huge volunteer organisation spread across the world. Special thanks to the Global Executive Committee, led by our International Chair Martha McDevitt-Pugh, the Regional Vice Chair Jen Rakow Stepper, the IT Team, Communications, Get Out the Vote, Voter Protection, Phonebanking, Membership, caucuses, and other global teams.

I'd like to thank Tiffany Jackson-Zunker who has served as a Member at Large on our Exco these past two years. Tiffany, I can't begin to thank you enough! And thank you for running again this year!

I also need to give special recognition to Charles Belk who only arrived in South Africa in September but jumped right in and helped with literally everything, everything! Charles, thank you!

Our membership grew by about 20% from July through the election but since then, working on the annual database cleanup project, we reduced it by about the same percent. This year we all need work at increasing our member numbers so we're prepared for the elections ahead but we also need to continue to clean up our database, as many of the memberships are out of date – a challenge as people move in and out of the country.

Thanks to Robin Perros, in Cape Town, our Membership Database Coordinator.

We're asking all of you in your roles as Everyday Ambassadors to keep looking out for potential voters in SA, on the continent and beyond. Please encourage them to join - the link will be shared in the chat – keep it handy and share it often.

Our mission as Democrats Abroad is to provide Americans abroad a voice in our government and elect Democratic candidates by mobilizing the overseas vote.

We do this through a number of strategies and mechanisms and as you'll know – some of this is through the Global level and some local. Technology has really changed the game and made it easier for smaller Country Committees like ours!

Many of you have used Vote from Abroad – one of the most valuable services of Democrats Abroad - to make it easier for us to request our ballots and vote in each state as a non-partisan resource. The VFA helpdesk team also provides voters with individual assistance via the website, email and zoom.

We also have many State Teams that have geared up to provide critical support, events and information on a state by state basis, particularly in the battleground states.

We have encouraged you to join the Caucuses and Task Team, highlighting them in our newsletters and sharing some of their many events. Like everything, they operate through the energy of volunteers, so I encourage you to get involved.

In the past year we held over 20 in-person or online events in South Africa. Thanks to all of you and special thanks to Robin Perros, Mary Tomlinson and Nancy Krisch, for getting things going in Cape Town. I've also had the pleasure of meeting members in the Western Cape and KZN.

We held our Global Presidential Primary and had coffee, a braai, book launches, market meetups, jazz, bubbles & ballots, ballot drop offs at the Joburg Consulate, gatherings at members' homes and clubhouses, Shirts and Slices at Pizza Hut, brunch at Mike's, a middle of the night zoom for the Presidential debate, VP debate bingo, election watch and "day after" gatherings and we welcomed former Maryland Democratic Party Chair Yvette Lewis to both Cape Town and Joburg.

We also flew the Vote from Abroad flag with voter outreach activities with the American International School of Johannesburg, the American Society of South Africa, the Divine Nine, and Global Diaspora Connect. Ricardo was in LA for one of Kamala's birthday parties and Charles and I were able to get our DASA Kamala Tshirts to her last month when she received the Chairman's Award at the NAACP Image Awards.

We also reached out to the Peace Corps, Fulbright, CIEE, the Intl school in Cape Town and those studying abroad with some success – including that one of the study abroad students at UCT was able to vote from Madagascar with our assistance while she was travelling there. The nature of being a political organisation does mean some organisations and individuals are less inclined to work with us, even through Vote From Abroad, but all exposure helps and we need your help to further expand our outreach.

We also did a range of advertising this year. Because of the late nature of the campaign and funding flowing into it, it definitely felt rushed but through Democrats Abroad support and an extremely generous in-kind contribution of about \$5000 from one of our new members, Stuart Carley – who is in Australia right now and wasn't able to join us tonight, we were able to do much more than in previous years. Stuart paid a comms agency directly to help amplify the work we were already doing.

Through the funding and support from both Democrats Abroad and Stuart via the comms agency, we

- Ran \$500 worth of Google Ads
- Created and ran \$500 worth of video ads on YouTube
- Ran an advertisement in the Daily Maverick newsletter
- Had a super special rate ad package with the Mail & Guardian of a mix of ads as well as Charles' Op-ed - which also showed on the M&G homepage
- Members Heather Mason and Griffin Shea had suggested Johannesburg in your Pocket and Heather helped put together a package which included an article which she wrote profiling members and sharing info on how to vote. These ran on their website, newsletter, and social media.

- While \$500 of Meta ads approved, because they seemed to be suppressing some political ads and posts, we only ran about R2000 worth of ads (videos) late in the cycle. Lots of hassles with this.

Thank you to all of you who donated or bought a T-shirt! And a special shout out to Temi Stallings, who initiated the Beaded Harris-Walz Pins and Robin Perros who helped coordinate sales and distribution across the country - they raised \$150 for DASA!

The comms agency assisted with:

- The Daily Maverick Newsletter Ad (creative, placement and direct costs)
- Design work (ad graphics, creation of videos etc)
- Digital ad support/management for Google, YouTube and Meta
- Social media audit and advice
- Project management
- Sourcing Ad and PR quotes
- 100 Kamala – DASA Tshirts (sold at \$20 each)

We're also active on Facebook and Instagram – for now at least – and encourage you to follow us if you aren't already.

Our WhatsApp group is an active community and served as a valuable resource in so many ways. Thanks to everyone for sharing resources and camaraderie there. WhatsApp has also been a critical tool for members to quickly and easily share information with others. We did several reach out campaigns – on Africa Day and Ballot Day for instance. If you passed something on, thank you!

As you know, our monthly newsletter is our main communication tool. Please do keep an eye on it for important information as well as other emails that come through Global. And we have our pages on the Democrats Abroad website where we also house the “How to Vote From South Africa” guidance.

We had a fantastic media team composed of myself, Tiffany, Charles, Ricardo Gressel, Barbara Ludman and Griffin Shea.

Griffin updated our media list and helped get our message out. I also need to give Charles special recognition as he also reached out widely to the media himself, helping to get his Op-ed out and securing a number of interviews. Thanks also to members who wrote articles for our newsletters.

We had coverage on and in many platforms including those shared in the slides.

We had a really great time last year! As you can see, volunteers shared a wide range of skills and committed a great deal of time. And I am so thankful to each of you. Every bit helps!

This year will be different, no doubt, but its spending time with you, taking action, and feeling part of a wider community and movement for positive change that is getting me

through this. We need to fight the regression and destruction at one level and at the same time continue to pursue the paths toward freedom and justice for all.

Thank you

Tiffany Jackson Zunker - Treasurer's Report

- DASA accounts are in good standing.
 - This is the first year since we were reconstituted that we have had funds in our account.
 - As the campaign heated up after Biden dropped, donations to Global DA and the DNC increased and funding eventually flowed toward Country Committees on an application basis – generally approved in line with membership size.
 - Our current sub accounts contain \$1170.00; DASA has no debt and no outstanding payments due.
 - Total income was \$8180
 - Of which \$6810 were in-kind donations totalling \$5000 from member Stuart Carley paid directly to a comms agency to support DASA's advertising and outreach and \$1810 from Global DA for digital advertising.
 - \$1370 was received through a small member contributions including the pin sales, but primarily through the T-shirt sales
 - Total expenditure was \$7010
 - Of which \$6810 reflects the in-kind contributions and
 - \$200 from a range of petty cash expenses incurred through the year
- Please remember that Democrats Abroad has no membership fees and is run by volunteers worldwide.
 - The funds DASA received were through initiatives from our membership (Kamala Tee Shirts and pins), through generous donations from our membership (Stuart Carley), and from the Global organization.
 - Thank you to the generous and engaged members who donated to DASA
 - DASA expenditures were for events, minor administrative costs, and a media outreach campaign the last months before the 2024 election.
- We are grateful for all donated funds but must make clear the structure of DA means that donations channel through the global organization.
 - We welcome and encourage any further donations as we head towards the 2026 mid-terms elections.
- Regarding all donations and expenditures, please keep in mind that as a political party, we must comply with Federal Election Commission (FEC) guidelines.
- Thank you.

Susan M. Cashin - Nominations and Election Committee Report

Nominations and Election Committee Members: Susan M. Cashin (Chair), Tiwana Merritt, and Cristianne Wendler

Notices sent to members via Democrats Abroad website and NationBuilder mailing:

- 31 January - AGM and Exco Elections Announcement and Request for Nominations
- 18 February - Open House event via Zoom for interested candidates.
- 27 February – Reminder of 28 February closing date for DASA Exco nominations via DASA membership emails
- 4 March – Voting Guide, candidates and statements and ballot link sent to membership via email
- 14 March – Voting closed at midnight
- All information pertaining to DASA AGM and DASA Exco Election was provided in the DASA monthly newsletter and posted on the website. Reminders were posted on the DASA WhatsApp group. Voting was held by electronic ballots that were pre-filled with members information for verification and sent via the official mailing system.

Nominations received by 28 February and ballots received by 14 March were as follows:

Total Ballots Received: 20

Ballots verified: 20 (Confirmed DASA members)

Candidates:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Chair: Elizabeth O’Leary | 19 Votes (95%) |
| • Member-at-Large: Sunnye Collins | 19 Votes (95%) |
| • Member-at-Large: Tiffany Jackson-Zunker | 18 Votes (90%) |
| • DPCA Voting Representative: Tiffany Jackson- Zunker | 19 Votes (95%) |

No Nominations were received for the following positions which remain vacant:

Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Counsel

The elected Exco Committee Officers 2025-2027 are:

Chair: Elizabeth O’Leary

Member-at-Large: Sunnye Collins

Member-at-Large: Tiffany Jackson-Zunker

DPCA Voting Representative: Tiffany Jackson-Zunker