

Somerset County Democratic Convention Rules

(Adopted January 24, 2024)

Section 1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Convention is to endorse candidates for Federal, State and County office in the Democratic Party in Somerset County under the slogan Somerset County Regular Democratic Organization. Each candidate achieving the endorsement of the Committee Members shall receive the Organization's support for the forthcoming primary election. Regardless of whether he or she has the endorsement of the Organization in the primary, the candidate who wins the primary election for each elective office shall have the endorsement and support of the County organization in the general election.

Section 2. Membership:

The Somerset County Democratic Convention shall consist of delegates who are registered as Democrats in Somerset County from the following categories:

- (1) All municipal and county elected officials in Somerset County;
- (2) Elected officers of the Somerset County Democratic Committee;
- (3) All members of the Somerset County Democratic Committee;
- (4) All Democratic State Committee members from Somerset County;
- (5) The Democratic Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of each Somerset municipality;
- (6) The President and Vice President of the Somerset County Young Democrats;
- (7) The Chair or other representative (as selected by the Caucus) of each of the following Caucuses: Asian American, Black, Communications, Disability, Hispanic American, Labor, LGBT, Social Action, Veterans and Women's Federation.
- (8) Up to twenty-five (25) delegates selected by the County Chairperson.

Section 3. Convention Chair:

The County Chair or her designee shall be the presiding officer of the Convention.

Section 4. Challenges:

Only duly recognized delegates may challenge the seating of another delegate at the convention. All challenges shall be addressed to and decided by the County Chair. Appeals of the decision of the County Chair shall be made to the members of the county committee present at the County Convention. The decision of the Convention shall be final.

Section 5. Candidate Qualifications, Nominations and Speeches:

Individuals seeking the endorsement of the Convention shall submit their name and such supplementary information to the County Chair as the Chair deems necessary. All potential candidates must meet the legal qualifications and requirements for the office sought as specified in the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, the applicable provisions of N.J.S.A. Title 19, and the Constitution of the Democratic Party of the State of New Jersey. The County Chair shall appoint a Screening Committee who shall interview the individuals who have submitted their names to ensure such individuals are qualified for the office sought and thereafter, to submit the names of all qualified candidates to the County Convention for its consideration, with or without recommendations for endorsement. The Chair shall open the floor to nominations. All candidates must be nominated and seconded to be considered for endorsement by the Convention.

All qualified candidates may speak to the convention. Each qualified candidate may select nominating and seconding delegates to speak on the candidate's behalf to the Convention. The time and order of speeches shall be determined by the Convention Chair, who in making such determination, shall consider the total number of persons seeking to speak, fairness to the candidates, and the time reasonably required to complete the business of the Convention.

Section 6: Voting Procedures:

Each delegate shall have only one vote, regardless of the number of qualifications the individual may have in order to become a member of the county convention. When the office being voted upon is only for a portion of Somerset County (i.e. New Jersey State Legislature and United States Congress), only County officers, Caucus representatives and those delegates residing in that respective part of the County shall be eligible to vote.

All voting shall be conducted in public.

The first candidate(s) for any office who receives more than fifty percent (50%) of the ballots cast shall be the endorsed candidate(s). In the event that no candidate receives more than fifty percent (50%) of the ballots cast, there shall be a runoff between the top two candidates for each unendorsed office, except when an office has more than one seat and not all seats are endorsed by candidates receiving more than 50 percent (50%) of the ballots cast, then there shall be a runoff among all candidates who received at least twenty percent (20%) of the ballots cast unless such action would decide the winner(s). Then the runoff will be between the candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes corresponding to the number of seats available plus the next highest vote getting candidate.

When an office has more than one seat and no candidate receives at least twenty percent (20%) of the vote on the first ballot, there shall be a runoff for each seat separately among all the candidates except the low vote-getter whose name shall be eliminated from consideration. The process shall continue until all seats are endorsed by candidates who receive more than fifty percent (50%) of the ballots cast.

Section 7. Convention Notice:

The Somerset County Chair shall, pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws and in consultation with the County Executive Committee, set the date, time and place of the Convention and shall cause notice of the Convention to delegates.

Section 8. Quorum and Rules:

A Quorum and conduct of the Convention shall be determined by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Somerset County Democratic Committee, and in the case wherein they do not provide direction, by Roberts Rules of Order (Revised).

Section 9. Convention Day:

The Convention shall be held on one day, unless the Convention Chairperson decides that good cause exists for the Convention to be continued to another day or days.