



# 34th District Democrats Code of Conduct

<b>Article I Definitions.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Article II Commitment.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Article III Purpose.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Article IV Scope.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Section 1 Members and Guests.....	2
Section 2 Officials.....	2
Section 3 Language and Actions Violating the Code.....	2
<b>Article V Standard of Behavior.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Article VI Authorized Immediate Actions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Article VII Initiation of Complaint.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Section 1 Complainant.....	3
Section 2 Content of Complaint.....	3
Section 3 Filing Method.....	3
Section 4 Complaints Regarding Illegal Activity.....	3
<b>Article VIII Processing Complaints.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Section 1 Initial Review.....	3
Section 2 Sending Complaints to the Board.....	3
Section 3 Notifying Parties to the Complaint.....	3
<b>Article IX Board Review.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Section 1 Review Procedure and Authorized Actions.....	4
Section 2 No Action and Procedural Limitations.....	5
Section 3 Prohibition of Extrajudicial Action.....	6
<b>Article X Confidentiality.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Article XI Parliamentary Authority.....</b>	<b>6</b>

## Article I Definitions

Ad Hominem	a spoken or written argument or statement directed against a person, rather than their opinion, relating to a real or perceived difference, characteristic, or preference.
Assault	unwelcome, non-consensual, or inappropriate physical contact; physical violence or attack.
Bigotry	language or actions demonstrating intolerance related to real or perceived differences, characteristics, or preferences.
Bullying	language or actions perceived as ad hominem, intimidation, or harassment having the effect of instilling fear, creating a hostile environment, or oppressing or suppressing another person.
Chair	the Chair of the 34th District Democrats
Code	the Code of Conduct of the 34th District Democrats
Committee	a standing or ad hoc committee within the 34th District Democrats as defined in the bylaws of the 34th District Democrats.
Correspondence	any form of communication, formal or informal in nature, including, but not limited to, in-person conversations, emails, direct or text messages, or social media posts or comments.
Discrimination	language or actions demonstrating unjust or prejudicial treatment of others based on real or perceived differences, characteristics, or preferences.
Endorsee	a candidate for public office endorsed by the 34th District Democrats or a campaign, or its leader(s), supporting a policy measure endorsed by the 34th District Democrats.
Executive Board or Board	the appointed and elected officers and committee chairs of the 34th District Democrats.
Harassment	aggressive pressure or intimidation; unwelcome, non-consensual, or inappropriate language or physical advances.
Hate Speech	speech that offends, threatens, or insults an individual or group based on their race, ethnicity, nationality, skin color, religion or lack thereof, ancestry, marital status, age, sex or gender identity or expression, sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+), disability, veteran status, or other traits.
Member	any individual who meets the requirements for membership to the Organization as defined in the Organization's Bylaws.
Membership Policy Caucus	the legislative advocacy groups within the Platform and Legislative Action Committee as defined under the Standing Rules of the Executive Board.
Officer	a person elected to the position of Chair, Vice Chair, State Committeeperson, King County Committeeperson, King County Committee Alternate, Secretary, or Treasurer.
Official	any person elected to public office, endorsee, or member of the Executive Board.
Oppression	language or actions demonstrating prolonged discrimination
Organization	the 34th District Democrats
PCO	a Precinct Committee Officer within the 34th Legislative District elected or appointed in accordance with the Organization's bylaws.
Private	relating to correspondence or publications, that which is not available to the public to hear, read, or view.
Public	relating to correspondence or publications, that which is available to the common person in general to hear, read, or view; open to common access or use.
Publication	includes, but is not limited to; emails, print or electronic documents, promotional materials, or advertisements, whether formal or informal in nature.
State Committeeperson	a representative of the 34th District Democrats to the Washington State Democratic Central Committee.
Suppression	language or actions intended to, or having the effect of, preventing development, action upon, or expression of feelings or ideas when those feelings or ideas cannot be classified as a violation of this Code.
Vice Chair	the First or Second Vice Chair of the 34th District Democrats.

## Article II Commitment

This Code states and defines our commitment to a certain standard of behavior and conduct, to which all who attend or participate in the meetings, events, or other efforts of the Organization, or who are otherwise affiliated with the Democratic Party or the 34th Legislative District, must be held. Our Organization recognizes that our strength lies in our diversity. Members are urged to acknowledge, celebrate, foster, and build on that diversity in all they do. The Organization and, through their voluntary affiliation with this Organization, our members commit to:

- The election of Democrats at every level of government;
- The promotion and passage of policies which support and uphold Democratic values;
- Engaging each other with respect and civility, avoiding negative or inflammatory discourse and interactions; and
- Fostering a safe, open, welcoming, and empowering environment for all, encouraging participation and lifting all voices wherever and however we gather.

We also recognize that Officials, as leaders in and out of the Democratic Party, ought to be held to a higher standard which extends this commitment to their conduct both in and out of the Organization and its meetings, events, and efforts.

## Article III Purpose

The Organization is dedicated to maintaining a culture of respect, inclusion, and equity. This Code defines the standard of behavior by which all who participate in the meetings, events, or efforts of the Organization must abide. The Code establishes a process by which alleged violations shall be addressed. In defining and enforcing standards of behavior, it is the goal of the Organization to encourage, retain, and enhance membership and public trust in the Organization. As we take part in public affairs, we must remember our Commitment (Article II) and recognize that actions taken by Officials reflect on the Organization, the Democratic Party, and our work in our communities.

## Article IV Scope

### Section 1 Members and Guests

This Code shall apply to the language and actions of Members and guests of the Organization when:

1. Attending meetings of the Organization, including of the membership, the Board, committees, and Membership Policy Caucuses;
2. Events hosted by or on behalf of the Organization;
3. Events participated in or on behalf of the Organization;
4. Events sponsored by the Organization;
5. Engaging in correspondence between members, or between a member and non-member when the member identifies their status as a member of the Organization; or
6. Performing duties or responsibilities associated with the efforts of the Organization.

### Section 2 Officials

This Code shall apply to the language and actions of Officials when engaged or participating in the activities identified in Section 1 of this Article, as well as when:

1. Engaged in official correspondence or publications of the Organization;
2. Engaged in private correspondence or publication with members, or with non-members when the Official identifies their status as an Official or as a member of the Organization; or
3. Engaged in public correspondence or publication.

### Section 3 Language and Actions Violating the Code

The language and actions considered violations of the Code include, but are not limited to; ad hominem statements, assault, bigotry, bullying, discrimination, harassment, hate speech, oppression, and suppression. Language and actions considered a violation of the Organization's bylaws, and the law of any jurisdiction that includes any part of the 34th Legislative District, shall also be considered a violation of this Code.

## Article V Standard of Behavior

While we recognize that the work in which we are engaged will naturally lead to disagreement, disagreement does not excuse the types of language and actions listed in Article III Section 3. In the spirit of our Commitment (Article II), all who attend or participate in the meetings, events, or efforts of the Organization are expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and value;
- Use welcoming and inclusive language;
- Assume good intent on the part of others;
- Avoid profane, prejudicial, exclusionary, abusive, and sexualized language; and
- Respect the personal space and property of others.

Whenever there is conflict, those involved should make every effort to reach a resolution among themselves or with the assistance of the Organization's leadership. As mentioned in this Code's purpose, our conduct reflects back on the Organization. For this reason, our members and leaders must avoid initiating, participating in, or encouraging the discussion of intra-Organizational conflict in public, including on social media. If a member or leader of the Organization fails to meet this standard of behavior, their conduct is subject to the review and enforcement procedures outlined in this Code. It is expected that those experiencing or witnessing language or actions which could be found to violate this standard of behavior will report such to a Board Member.

## Article VI Authorized Immediate Actions

The Authorized Immediate Actions may be implemented by the Chair, remote meeting facilitator, or the Sergeant at Arms at the direction and discretion of the Chair or facilitator whenever a potential or actual violation of this Code occurs during a meeting of the membership or Board. Authorized Immediate Actions may also be implemented by Committee chairs and MPC leaders at their discretion during their respective meetings. Authorized Immediate Actions include:

1. A written or verbal warning.
2. Muting the violator if they are a remote participant;
3. Discontinuing the violator's privilege to speak at the meeting and reclaiming the floor for the Chair or other facilitator; or
4. Removing the participant from the meeting.

## Article VII Initiation of Complaint

### Section 1 Complainant

Any person experiencing or witnessing violations of this Code may initiate a complaint. The complaint need not be filed by the alleged victim of a violation for the complaint to be considered valid or for this Code to be considered enforceable.

### Section 2 Content of Complaint

A filed complaint should describe the alleged incident, identify persons involved, and identify any known witnesses to the alleged violation. If the victim wishes to remain anonymous, their identity may be excluded from the complaint.

### Section 3 Filing Method

Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Chair with a copy sent to a Vice Chair and State Committeeperson. If the complaint is against any of these Officers, that Officer may be excluded from receiving the complaint and shall be replaced by the other Vice Chair or other State Committeeperson.

### Section 4 Complaints Regarding Illegal Activity

When a complaint is submitted, the Chair shall advise the complainant that, if the violation includes a violation of the law, law enforcement may be notified. If the complaint is against the Chair, this responsibility shall fall to a Vice Chair. Action by the Board may continue during an investigation by law enforcement.

## Article VIII Processing Complaints

### Section 1 Initial Review

Upon receiving a complaint of an alleged Code violation, the Chair shall provide notice to the Board within two days and, in consultation with the other recipients of the complaint, review the complaint within five days of receiving the complaint. The person against whom the complaint is filed shall be excluded from all procedures related to the complaint. For steps in this procedure which do not include the Board, they shall be replaced by the other Vice Chair or other State Committeeperson. During this initial review period, those involved in the review may impose an interim suspension of thirty days from all activities of the Organization if all parties involved in the review agree.

If the Board fails to conclude the procedures outlined in Article IX of this Code during the thirty-day suspension period, the Board may vote to extend the suspension by up to thirty days. Adopting an extension to an interim suspension requires the support of a simple majority (fifty percent plus one vote) of Board members present and voting. During a suspension, if the alleged violator is a PCO, they shall retain their right to vote regarding Organization business on which only PCOs may vote. The logistics of ensuring this right shall be coordinated by the Chair.

### Section 2 Sending Complaints to the Board

Upon reviewing the complaint, the Chair shall include a review of the complaint on the agenda for the next Board meeting if one is scheduled within ten days of the end of the initial five-day review period. If the next scheduled Board meeting is not within ten days, a special meeting of the Board shall be called to address the complaint within ten days of the end of the five-day review period. All Board meetings must comply with the quorum threshold defined in the Organization's bylaws.

### Section 3 Notifying Parties to the Complaint

Once the meeting at which the complaint will be reviewed by the Board is identified, the Chair shall provide the complainant (if not the victim), the victim (if identified), named witnesses, and the alleged violator with:

1. The time, date, and location of the meeting;
2. The required information to attend and participate in the meeting remotely;
3. A copy of this Code with a note making reference to the review and enforcement procedures; and
4. A reminder of the confidential nature of the proceedings.

## Article IX Board Review

### Section 1 Review Procedure and Authorized Actions

When the complaint of a Code violation is up for consideration in the agenda, the highest-ranking officer involved in reviewing the complaint shall:

1. Identify the parties to the complaint, including: the complainant (if not the victim), the victim (if identified in the complaint), the alleged violator, and any named witnesses in the complaint filing;
2. Summarize the complaint and the section of the Code under which the the complaint alleges violation;
3. List all steps taken prior to the Board meeting, including at least the methods by which initial review was conducted, the parties involved in the initial review, whether an interim suspension was imposed, and the expiration date of any interim suspension; and
4. Explain the remaining steps in the Board Review process.

Having received the background information, the Board shall recognize each party to the complaint in the following order if they are identified and present during the meeting; complainant, victim, witnesses, then the alleged violator. The alleged violator shall be permitted to provide their own witnesses, who shall be allowed to attend and participate in the meeting. If the alleged violator presents their own witnesses, they may speak after the alleged violator.

Having heard from the parties to the complaint, mediation shall be recommended without a vote of the Board. Mediation shall be considered the method of conflict resolution only if the complainant (if different from the victim), the victim (if identified), and the alleged violator agree to mediation, and at least one Mediator candidate is willing to participate. Mediation shall follow this procedure:

1. The Chair shall maintain a list of Members in good standing who are interested in serving as Mediators. This list shall include the names and a brief background summary for all Mediator candidates. The background summaries shall be provided in writing by Mediator candidates for distribution ahead of mediation.
2. Unless the parties to mediation otherwise agree on the person to serve as Mediator, the appointment shall take place as follows:
  - a. The Chair shall provide the list of Mediator candidates to the parties to mediation prior to the adjournment of the Board meeting at which the complaint is introduced to the Board.
  - b. Any party to mediation shall have the right to delete the name of any candidate to whose appointment they object, and shall rank any remaining candidates in order of preference. Each party shall return their ranked list to the Chair within seven days of receiving the list. Any party failing to return a marked list within that period shall be deemed to have assented to all candidates appearing on the list.
  - c. If more than one Mediator candidate is identified as acceptable to all parties, the Chair shall select the Mediator from these approved candidates. If the returned lists fail to identify a Mediator who is acceptable to all parties, the process of mediation shall end and the Board shall select an alternative authorized action.
  - d. If no candidate identified as acceptable to all parties is willing, or otherwise eligible or available, to serve as Mediator, the process of mediation shall end and the Board shall select an alternative authorized action.
3. Immediately following the appointment of the Mediator, the names and contact information of the parties to mediation shall be communicated to all parties, including the Mediator.
4. Mediation shall be conducted in a manner agreed to by the parties, including meetings by telephone, videoconference, or using online tools. If the parties fail to agree on the manner of mediation, the manner shall be selected by the Mediator.
5. The Mediator shall be free to meet and communicate separately with each party on the clear understanding that information discussed at such meetings and in such communications shall not be disclosed to the other party without the express authorization of the party giving the information.
6. Each party shall cooperate in good faith to advance mediation by submitting a statement summarizing the background of the dispute, their interests and contentions in relation to the dispute, and the present status of the dispute, together with any other information and materials the party deems necessary for the purpose of mediation.
7. After considering the information provided by all parties, the Mediator shall submit a written settlement proposal to the parties, but shall have no authority to impose a settlement. If the Mediator believes the dispute is not susceptible to resolution through mediation, the Mediator may propose procedures or means for resolving those issues which the Mediator considers most likely to lead to the efficient, productive settlement of those issues. Once signed by all parties, the settlement shall be sent to the Chair.
8. No meetings nor other verbal or video communications shall be recorded. Each person involved in mediation shall respect the confidentiality of the mediation and, unless agreed to by the Mediator and all parties to the complaint, not use or disclose to any outside party any information concerning, or obtained in the course of, the mediation. Failure to respect confidentiality is subject to this Code.

9. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, each person involved in the mediation shall, upon the termination of the mediation, return any documents or other materials supplied by another party to the party providing it without retaining a copy thereof. Any records, including notes, concerning the mediation shall be destroyed upon the termination of the mediation.
10. Mediation shall be considered terminated:
  - a. Upon the signing of a settlement agreement by all parties;
  - b. By the decision of the Mediator if, in the Mediator's judgment, further efforts at mediation are unlikely to lead to a resolution of the dispute;
  - c. By a written declaration of any party at any time stating that they no longer wish to participate in Mediation; or
  - d. At midnight on the thirtieth day following the appointment of the Mediator.

If any party to the complaint rejects mediation, or if mediation fails to result in a settlement agreement signed by all parties, a special meeting of the Board shall be called for the express purpose of selecting an authorized action described in this subsection. Selecting an authorized action requires support from a two-thirds majority of the Board members present and voting. The authorized actions are:

1. Form and appoint members to an Ad Hoc Committee to further investigate the complaint and, if they so choose, recommend further action by the Board.
  - a. The highest-ranking Officer involved in the review process shall appoint the committee's members.
  - b. No party to the complaint may be appointed to or otherwise serve on the Ad Hoc Committee.
  - c. The Ad Hoc Committee must complete their investigation and submit a report, including any recommended actions, to the Board within ten days. The Board shall schedule a meeting to reconvene ten days after the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee.
  - d. If the investigation yields insufficient information to recommend an action, the Board may select an action with the support of a two-thirds majority of Board members present and voting at the meeting scheduled ten days after the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee.
  - e. If Board action is recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, it shall require a simple majority support of the Board to take effect.
2. No Action -- No Officer, Board member, or member of the Organization may take any action against the victim or alleged violator nor violate the confidentiality of these proceedings (Article X).
3. Reprimand and Warning -- The Chair, or a Vice Chair if the complaint is against the Chair, shall explain to the violator how their language or actions were inappropriate and that repetition shall result in further disciplinary action. The violator shall sign a written statement which includes a plan to reform the conduct and recommits to conducting themselves appropriately.
4. Censure -- At least one Board member shall draft a Resolution for Censure of the violator. The resolution shall be presented to the membership at the next scheduled membership meeting, along with the complaint and the findings of the Board. With the support of a simple majority of the membership, the resolution shall be adopted and published according to the Organization's bylaws.
5. Suspension -- The violator shall be suspended from all activities of the Organization for a period of time specified in the motion to suspend. PCOs shall still be authorized to vote when the Organization considers the replacement of elected officials holding partisan office and the election of Officers of the Organization.
6. Removal from Position -- Effective immediately, the violator shall be disallowed from performing the duties of any elected or appointed positions they hold in the Organization. At the next membership meeting, a vote will be called to formally remove the person from their positions and shall be approved with the support of a simple majority of eligible voting members.
7. Expulsion -- Effective immediately, the violator shall be suspended from all activities of the Organization until the next membership meeting. At this membership meeting, a vote will be called to confirm the expulsion of the violator and shall be approved with the support of a two-thirds majority of eligible voting members.
8. Restriction of Data Access -- Effective immediately, the Organization shall restrict the violator's access to Organization data. This action may be taken when a violator is found guilty of unauthorized data access or use. Data refers to member information not made public record including, but not limited to: names, addresses, emails, and phone numbers. The level and duration of restriction shall be set by the Board.

## Section 2 No Action and Procedural Limitations

If the Board chooses to take no action, or if no other action receives the support necessary for approval, No Officer, Board member, or member of the Organization may take any action against the victim or alleged violator nor violate the confidentiality of these proceedings. Motions or executive actions to extend the investigation or review process, or the taking of action beyond the timeline prescribed in this Code are not authorized.

### Section 3 Prohibition of Extrajudicial Action

Whether or not any immediate action or Board-approved action is taken, any language, behavior, or other conduct enumerated in this section that is not an authorized immediate action, mediation, or the direct consequence of a Board decision shall be considered a violation of this Code, result in an immediate thirty-day suspension from all activities of the Organization, and be reviewed for consideration of further action by the Board:

1. Violation of confidentiality (Article X);
2. Perceived as, or having the effect of being, retaliatory;
3. Perceived as or having a negative impact on the mental or physical welfare of a party to a complaint, or their ability to attend or fully participate in meetings, events, or other efforts of the Organization; or
4. Any other violation of this Code.

If an interim suspension was imposed during the review process and has not expired at the conclusion of the Board review process, it shall be considered expired at the conclusion of Mediation, if mediation ends in a resolution of the dispute, or with the adjournment of the final Board meeting in the Board Review process.

### Article X Confidentiality

All parts of these proceedings shall remain confidential in perpetuity.

### Article XI Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the procedures authorized under this Code except where otherwise provided.