



SDCDP Endorsement Process

The San Diego County Democratic Party (SDCDP) endorses candidates for nonpartisan offices and ballot measures in San Diego County. Endorsements for partisan offices, including State Legislature and U.S. Congress, and statewide ballot measures are made by the California Democratic Party (CDP).

SDCDP Central Committee

- All Democrats who file to run for local office are sent an endorsement questionnaire, which must be returned at least five business days before the meeting where the endorsement or recommendation will be considered.
- The Central Committee membership is subdivided into the Central, East, North, and South Areas. There are approximately 175 members who participate in the Area recommendation process. All members registered in or affiliated with an Area – including Elected Ex-officio, Alternate, and Associate members – are eligible to vote on recommendations. Candidates may contact the Party to receive a list of members to contact.
- There are two phases to endorsement: the preliminary Area recommendation and the Central Committee endorsement. A 60% vote to recommend endorsement at the Area level places that item on a consent agenda for approval at the next full Central Committee meeting.
- At the Central Committee meeting, a 60% vote is required for endorsement. Items may be pulled from the consent agenda for individual consideration. At the Central Committee meeting, Elected, Ex-Officio, and Lifetime members are eligible to vote – a total of about 75 voting members. An alternate member is eligible to vote only in his or her appointer's absence. Associate members do not vote at full Central Committee meetings but may participate in debate.
- San Diego Countywide and Citywide races and ballot measures are not considered at an Area level and are only voted on by the full Central Committee.

Timeline

- Incumbent Democratic elected officials in good standing may request an early endorsement prior to their filing period for reelection. The requirement to complete a questionnaire may be waived.
- For open seats and seats where an early incumbent endorsement has not been made, SDCDP votes on endorsements following the close of the candidate filing periods in March and August. However, if a race is deemed “strategically critical” by an Area and then the full Central Committee, an endorsement in that race may be made prior to the close of filing.
- Area recommendation meetings are scheduled between the close of filing and the Central Committee endorsement meeting. Candidates are encouraged to attend the Area recommendation meetings, where they have an opportunity to speak and answer questions before members vote on the endorsement in their race.
- Following the close of filing and the Area meetings, the Central Committee votes to consider Area endorsement recommendations as well as candidates for San Diego Countywide and San Diego Citywide offices.

Benefits of the SDCDP Endorsement

- Listing and promotion on the SDCDP website, social media, and in email announcements.
- Access to enhanced voter data.
- Eligibility to participate in Member Communications and coordinated campaign programs.
- Inclusion on official Democratic Party slate door-hangers and slate mailers.
- Right to cite endorsement in campaign literature and messaging.

Endorsements for Partisan State and Federal Offices and Statewide Ballot Measures

- Endorsements for state and federal offices and statewide ballot measures are made by the California Democratic Party.
- Each county Central Committee is allotted number of delegate spots. The SDCDP elects from its membership to fill its CDP delegation.
- CDP delegates, and others who are eligible as outlined in the CDP bylaws, will vote on endorsement recommendations in local Pre-Endorsement Conferences held in January of election years.
- Any candidate who receives at least 70% of the votes at a Pre-Endorsement Conferences is placed on a consent calendar that is ratified at the annual CDP convention in February of election years.
- If a candidate receives a majority but less than 70%, a caucus is held during the convention in which delegates from that district can vote to recommend an endorsement to the full State Central Committee. An endorsement recommendation at the convention requires at least 60% of the votes and is then sent to the full Convention for voting.