

Ballot Questions¹

A two thirds majority of those [Central Committee members] voting shall be required for adoption of the official Democratic Party positions on ballot questions and marking of the official sample ballot.

Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee By-Laws, article VII, § 8

(d) Marking of Official Ballots on All Matters Other Than Candidates –

- (i) Questions on official Democratic ballots may not be marked in a discretionary manner. All ballots shall be marked in accordance with the official Montgomery County Democratic Party position adopted by the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee. The official position shall be determined only after positions on each question shall have been voted upon at a regular or special meeting of Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Area Coordinators (i.e., the Precinct Organization) having on its agenda the discussion of such markings. A meeting of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee shall convene ten minutes after the adjournment of the Precinct Organization meeting. The meeting of the Central Committee will be held in public session for the purpose of adopting the Party position on ballot questions. If the Central Committee adopts a recommendation of the Precinct Organization, that position will be the position of the Party on that ballot question. If the Central Committee fails to adopt a recommendation of the Precinct Organization, the Party will be neutral on that ballot question. No resources of the Party (or of any of its components) may be used to compile or distribute material or information on ballot questions contrary to the position of the Party. Not less than three months prior to consideration of ballot questions by Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Area Coordinators, the Democratic Central Committee shall by resolution establish a committee to report to the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Area Coordinators on the ballot question and shall give notice of the committee to interested Democrats. Applications for positions on the committee shall be sought, and the Democratic Central Committee shall name the committee not less than two months prior to consideration of ballot questions by Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Area Coordinators. Any Democrat registered in the county may serve on the committee, but a majority of the members shall be from the membership of the precinct organization. In selecting the committee, the Democratic Central Committee shall strive for a geographic

¹ The Montgomery County Democratic Party has a long standing tradition of taking positions on ballot questions. Prior to 1996, the Maryland Democratic Party, however, generally did not take positions on ballot questions. At its October 15, 1996 meeting, the Maryland State Democratic Central Committee (on the recommendation of its Issues and Legislation Committee) took specific positions on three statewide ballot questions and twenty local ballot questions – all of these positions were consistent with the positions adopted by those county central committees that took positions on ballot questions. At its October 10, 1998 meeting, the Maryland State Democratic Central Committee unanimously approved a motion that “the Maryland Democratic Party take a position in favor of the two State Constitutional ballot questions, and that we accept the local central committees’ endorsements of local ballot questions and judgeships as the Maryland Democratic Party’s position on those issues and judgeships.” (The Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee previously endorsed both 1998 statewide constitutional ballot questions.)

and ideological balance. The report of the committee shall include a detailed, objective description of each question and arguments for, against, and for no position on each question made by members of the committee or by people generally known to the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Area Coordinators. The committee's report shall be mailed so as to reach the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairperson and Area Coordinators not less than two weeks prior to the meeting at which the ballot questions appear on the agenda.

- (ii) Not less than three months prior to consideration of ballot questions by Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Area Coordinators, the Democratic Central Committee shall, by resolution, establish a committee to report to the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Area Coordinators on the ballot question and shall give notice of the committee to interested Democrats. Applications for positions on the committee shall be sought, and the Democratic Central Committee shall name the committee not less than two months prior to consideration of ballot questions by Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Area Coordinators. Any Democrat registered in the county may serve on the committee, but a majority of the members shall be from the membership of the precinct organization. In selecting the committee, the Democratic Central Committee shall strive for a geographic and ideological balance. The report of the committee shall include a detailed, objective description of each question and arguments for, against, and for no position on each question made by members of the committee or by people generally known to the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Area Coordinators. The committee's report shall be mailed so as to reach the Precinct Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Area Coordinators not less than two weeks prior to the meeting at which the ballot questions appear on the agenda.

Rules Governing Qualifications, Elections and Meetings of Democratic Precinct Officials of Montgomery County, Maryland, § E(2)(d)(i)-(ii)

First, the Chairman of the Ballot Questions Advisory Committee will provide a very brief summary of the ballot question and will state whether the Advisory Committee supported or opposed the question (and by what vote).

Second, a Co-Chairman of the Precinct Organization Committee will indicate the vote of the Precinct Organization.

Third, any member of the public present will be invited to speak on the question for two minutes per person.

Fourth, the Chairman [of the Central Committee] will go around the table, and invite any member of the Central Committee to speak on the question for two minutes per person.

Fifth, the Chairman will go around the table a second time and invite Central Committee members again to speak on the question for two minutes per person. The Chairman will then request a motion to endorse the position taken by the Precinct Organization on the question. If that motion fails (or if no one will offer such a motion) the Chairman will entertain other motions related to the ballot question. The ballot questions will be taken up in the same order that they were taken up at the . . . meeting of the Precinct Organization In accordance with Article VII, Section 8 of the By-Laws [of the Central Committee], a two-thirds vote of those voting yes or no is required for the Party to take a position on a ballot question and to mark the Democratic Sample Ballots.

Adopted by the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, October 6, 1994