

Resolution to amend the Democrats Abroad Charter by adopting a mandatory one-person-one-vote allocation system

Proposed by Quaide Williams (Chair, Germany)

INTRODUCTION:

WHEREAS this proposal would allow, but does not require, Country Committees to elect more than the minimum number of Voting Representatives needed to cast all allocated votes;

WHEREAS this would enable large Country Committees to continue to elect members of the DPCA who hold individually as of right (without counting proxies) 2, 3, or 4 votes;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad should move expeditiously to adopt a mandatory one-person one-vote system of vote allocation, and Country Committees will require significant time to plan for this new rule;

WHEREAS it is not the intention of this proposal to change the DA proxy system, which enables a representative to authorize another to act in his or her place;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Democrats Abroad Charter shall be amended as follows:

1) AMEND the title of Section 3.6 of the Charter as follows:

Section 3.6 (Representation and Voting)

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: We wish to make clear that this section is not merely about allocating "votes" to Country Committees. This is about allocating representation. Representation is more than votes. It consists of people who have the right to be heard and to vote.]

2) ADDITIONALLY AMEND the beginning of Section 3.6(a) of the Charter as follows:

(a) Representation and votes ~~Votes~~ shall be allocated to Country Committees biennially in the first quarter of each odd numbered year ~~annually~~ ...

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: In moving to a mandatory one-person one-vote system, it is important that all Voting Representatives maintain a degree of confidence that once they are elected they will serve a full term of office. If it is possible to reduce the number of Representatives allocated to a Country Committee mid-term, this produces a

serious constitutional problem of determining which Voting Representative(s) will lose their seats mid-term. Such a result clearly conflicts with the principle already stated in the Charter that Voting Representatives shall serve terms that are co-extensive with the terms of Country Committee Officers.]

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: The allocation process is also administratively time consuming and cumbersome. By moving to a biennial process, we shift this task so that it is accomplished in the immediate aftermath of Federal elections when we have more time available for such housekeeping matters.]

3) ADDITIONALLY AMEND the beginning of Section 3.6(c) of the Charter as follows:

- (c) Each member of the Country Committee Voting Delegation (as defined below) of each Country Committee in compliance with Section 5.4 and represented at the meeting by attending in person, by proxy, or in accordance with Section 3.7 shall have the right to vote.

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: This is mainly a stylistic change to work more clearly with new language adopted below.]

4) ADDITIONALLY AMEND Section 3.6(f) of the Charter as follows:

- (f) Each Country Committee shall have the option to elect one (1) Non-voting Representative, and shall be required to elect at least the minimum number of Voting Representatives necessary to enable it to cast all its votes. Such election(s) shall be held at the same time as the election of a Country Committee's Chair and Vice Chair. If a Country Committee has more than one (1) Voting Representative, gender balance shall apply to that Country Committee's delegation of Voting Representatives. The term of each Voting Representative and Non-voting Representative shall be the same as for Officers of the Country Committee. All Voting Representatives and Non-voting Representative shall be entitled to attend all Democrats Abroad meetings during the same two (2)-year term as for the Country Committee Chair and Vice Chair offices. If a Country Committee is entitled to less than five (5) votes, the Each Non-voting Representative, if any, shall have the right to speak at DPCA meetings but not to vote, except under Section 3.7 below. If a Country Committee is entitled to five (5) or more votes, The distribution of votes among the Chair, Vice Chair and Voting Representative(s) (if any) shall be determined by the Country Committee at the time of election, failing which by the Country Committee Chair; provided, however, that a Voting Representative shall have no less than one vote nor more votes than the Country Committee Chair or Vice Chair; and further provided that such allocation shall be subject to the rules set out in Section 3.6(j), below.

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: The effect of the proposed amendment to 3.6(f) immediately enables (but does not require) any Country Committee with three or more votes to elect Voting Representatives. This element of the amendment remains unchanged.]

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: The final sentence of this subsection concerning allocation of votes within a Country Committee Voting Delegation will be overtaken by the new one-person one-vote rule with effect from 2019.]

5) ADDITIONALLY INSERT the following new Subsections (g) and (h) at the end of Section 3.6 of the Charter:

- (g) A "Country Committee Voting Delegation" consists of those persons who have been selected to represent the members of a Country Committee within the DPCA and who hold the right to vote in the DPCA, and these persons are the Country Committee's Chair, Principal Vice Chair, and Voting Representative(s).
- (h) With effect from the time of each Country Committee's 2019 leadership election, or March 31, 2019, whichever occurs first, and continuing thereafter:
 - (i) the total number of positions in the Country Committee Voting Delegation shall be equal to the number of votes allocated to that Country Committee pursuant to this Section (with the sole exception of a Country Committee allocated one vote, in which case the size of the delegation shall be two persons being the Chair and Vice Chair);
 - (ii) each member of the Country Committee Voting Delegation shall be allocated one (1) such vote (with the sole exception of a Country Committee that is allocated one vote, in which case this one vote is allocated as one half-vote each to the two members of the delegation);
 - (iii) each vote allocated to a member of the Country Committee Voting Delegation may be cast only by that person or that person's valid proxy holder; and
 - (iv) during the period of any vacancy in the Country Committee Voting Delegation, the vote (or half-vote) that would otherwise be allocated to the vacant position may not be the subject of any proxy, or otherwise re-allocated or cast by any other person.

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: These are the main body of the rules that will take Democrats Abroad to a one-person one-vote system of representation. Country Committees will be required (from the effective date) to elect enough Voting Representatives so that each and every person is allocated only one vote in their own name. The effective date will be 2019 leadership elections, as many Country Committees will need time to prepare for the greatly expanded elections that must be held. Some may be

required to amend their Country Committee Bylaws to accommodate this change.]

- 6) **ADDITIONALLY AMEND the Schedule to the Charter by adding a new column entitled “Step 6-Revised”, which shall state the number of Voting Representatives for each Country Committee with effect from 2019.**

[Commentary that does not form part of the amendment: The Changes to "Step 6" are technical corrections, and indicate the number of Voting Representatives that can be elected with immediate effect. The New "Step 6-revised" is intended to show the number of Voting Representatives that must be elected under the new one-person one-vote rule with effect from 2019.]

Proposed: March 10, 2017