

## **THE VIRGINIA DELEGATE SELECTION PROCESS**

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON THE RULES**

This document provides information regarding Virginia's Democratic National Convention Delegate Selection Process in a question and answer format. For additional information, including the Virginia Delegate Selection Plan and other materials, contact the Democratic Party of Virginia at 804-644-1966 (or go to: [www.vademocrats.org](http://www.vademocrats.org))

#### **A. THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**1. What does the Democratic National Convention do?**

It nominates the Democratic Party's candidates for President and Vice President of the United States and adopts the Party's Platform.

**2. When and where is the Democratic National Convention?**

The Convention will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 25-28, 2016.

**3. How many people will attend?**

The National Convention will have approximately 4,513 Delegates and 319 Alternates.

**4. How can I attend the convention?**

You can be elected as a Delegate or Alternate, be selected to serve on a standing committee, or volunteer with the Democratic National Committee, the city Host Committee, a campaign, or another group.

**5. How do I volunteer to work at the Convention?**

The Philadelphia 2016 Convention Host Committee is seeking volunteers; you can contact them through <http://www.phldnc.com/help-make-history/>.

**6. How does the Nomination Process work?**

Rather than voters directly nominating a presidential candidate, votes are translated into delegates that are distributed according to the level of support the candidates receive. Each state receives a certain number of delegates according to a formula determined in advance of the convention. Those delegates are selected by rules formulated at the state level in keeping with national guidelines.

More than 85% of the delegates already “pledged” to candidates based on the voting in state primaries and caucuses, so the nominee could be known in advance. Once a candidate locks up a majority of the delegates, that candidate can receive the party nomination.

## **7. What is the National Platform?**

The National Platform is an official statement of the Party’s position on a wide variety of issues. A new platform is adopted every four years by the Democratic National Convention. The Platform Committee is responsible for drafting and recommending a proposed National Platform for approval at the Convention. Any person may submit a written statement concerning the Platform to the Platform Committee at any time prior to the Committee’s meeting.

### **A. THE VIRGINIA DELEGATE SELECTION PROCESS**

#### **1. How is the Virginia Delegation to the National Convention selected?**

Virginia has a two part process:

First, the Democratic Party of Virginia (“DPVA”) called for a primary to be held on March 1, 2016. Candidates wishing to appear on the ballot must file required forms and petitions containing the names of at least 5,000 qualified voters (at least 200 from each Congressional District) by December 10, 2015, with the Virginia State Board of Elections (“SBE”).

Second, cities and counties across the Commonwealth will hold caucuses that will select 2,000 “State Delegates” to Congressional District Conventions and a State Convention. The State Delegates at the CD and State Conventions will then elect the National Delegates.

#### **2. How many National Delegates does Virginia get?**

Virginia will elect 95 National Delegates and 8 Alternates. Each of Virginia’s 11 Congressional Districts will elect between 3 and 8 National Delegates and six will elect an Alternate. The State Convention will then elect 21 at large Delegates and 2 Alternates, and 12 pledged Party Leaders and Elected Officials (“PLEOs”). Another 14 National Delegates are Party Leader and Elected Officials who are “automatic” delegates by virtue of their offices (e.g., Governor, Democratic National Committee member).

**3. Is the Virginia Delegate Selection Process open?**

Yes, the process is open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or physical disability. The Party also has an active affirmative action and outreach program to encourage full participation by all Democrats in the process.

**4. How do I become a delegate?**

Read on.

**B. THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL DELEGATE SELECTION PROCESS**

**1. Who can be a National Delegate?**

The process is open to all voters who wish to participate as Democrats. The times, dates, places and rules for the conduct of delegate selection meetings will be publicized.

**2. How much does it cost?**

There is no mandatory cost or fee required to become a National Delegate.

**3. What are the types of delegates and how are they selected?**

Pledged delegates must openly commit to a candidate before the vote and are subject to review by that candidate. “Automatic” delegates (“unpledged” or “super” delegates must identify their presidential preference by June 2016.

District-Level Delegates – Virginia has 62 National Delegates that will be elected at the Congressional District Conventions to be held on May 7, 14 or 21, 2016. National Delegate candidates must file a statement of candidacy designating their presidential preference and a signed pledge of support the candidate five days prior to the District Convention. National Delegate candidates must run for election in the district in which they are registered to vote, and are subject to review by the candidate they support.

At-Large Delegates – Virginia has 21 National Delegates who will be selected At-Large at the State Convention on June 18, 2016. Candidates for At-Large National Delegate must also file a statement of candidacy designating the presidential preference and a signed pledge of support for the candidate five days in advance of the Convention.

Pledged Party Leaders and Elected Official (PLEO) Delegates – Virginia will elect 12 “Pledged PLEO” National Delegates at the State Convention. These positions

are considered according to the following priority: big city mayors and state-wide elected officials, state legislative leaders, state legislators, and other state, county and local elected officials and party leaders.

Unpledged PLEO National Convention Delegates – DNC Members, Democratic House and Senate members, Democratic governors, and former Democratic Party leaders are automatically confirmed to the state parties. Virginia currently has 14 such Delegates.

**4. What about National Convention Alternates?**

National Alternate Delegates are selected by same process as Delegates. State parties provide for the conditions under which alternates may “replace” a Delegate at the National Convention. Virginia will elect a total of six alternates at the Congressional District Conventions and two at the State Convention.

**5. What are the National Convention Standing Committees?**

The National Convention will have Platform, Rules, and Credentials Committees. Virginia will have four members on each committee. The Virginia Delegation will elect the committee members at the State Convention.

**6. What about Pages?**

Virginia will have three pages, selected by the State Democratic Party Chair.

**C. THE MARCH 1, 2016 PRIMARY**

**1. Did the Democratic Party call for a Democratic Primary?**

The DPVA will notify the SBE that it calls for a primary to be held on March 1, 2016. DPVA will provide the notice by December 2, 2015 (pursuant to the Virginia Code).

**2. Will the primary be held?**

If more than one candidate qualifies, yes. If only one candidate meets the filing requirements, as was with the case with President Barack Obama in 2012, the primary will be cancelled and all Delegates will be awarded to that candidate.

**3. Has the Virginia Republican Party also called for a presidential preference primary on March 1, 2016?**

Yes.

**4. Can I vote in both primaries?**

No. You have to pick one.

**D. ALLOCATION OF VIRGINIA'S NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES AMONG PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES**

**1. How are Virginia's National Convention Delegates allocated among Presidential candidates?**

The Presidential Primary result totals are used to allocate the National Delegates. If two candidates each get 50% of the statewide vote, for example, they will each get 50% of the statewide delegates. The congressional district vote percentage will allocate the congressional district percentage. To obtain any delegates at the State or CD level, however, a candidate must obtain at least 15% of the vote at that level.

**2. How was the primary used to allocate the State Convention delegates (who will elect the National Convention delegates)?**

The allocation process worked the same way – A city or county's state convention delegates will be allocated based on the percentages each of the candidates obtains in that locality (subject to a 15% minimum).

**E. THE VIRGINIA CITY AND COUNTY CAUCUSES**

**1. What do the Virginia caucuses do?**

The caucuses will elect 2,000 State Delegates and 500 Alternates who will attend their Congressional District Convention and the State Convention and elect the National Convention Delegates.

**2. When are the Caucuses held?**

They will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016 at 12:00 noon or Monday, April 18, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

**3. Who can participate in the Caucuses?**

Any registered voter may participate. The voter, however, must sign a certification that he or she is a registered voter in the jurisdiction, is a Democrat, believes in the principles of the Democratic Party, and does not intend to support a candidate opposed to the Democratic nominee in the next election.

**4. What are the different types of caucuses?**

Caucuses may be “assembled” (or mass meetings) where the doors are closed at the starting time and the elections proceed or “unassembled” (or “firehouse primaries”) where voters attend, cast ballots, and leave over a period of several hours.

**5. Are slates of State Delegate candidates allowed?**

Yes.

**6. How are State Alternates selected?**

It is up to the city or county committee calling the caucus. Alternates may be the next-highest-vote getters or may be separately elected.

**7. Is pre-filing required to be a State Delegate?**

Yes, the deadline is five days prior to the caucus: April 9 for April 16 caucuses and April 11 for April 18 caucuses.

**8. Can the caucus be cancelled if only the necessary number (or fewer) of State Delegates and Alternates pre-file?**

Yes.

**9. How are the State Convention Delegates apportioned among Virginia’s cities and counties?**

The State Delegates are apportioned among Virginia’s cities and counties using a formula based on population and Democratic vote in recent elections. The specific numbers of the allocation will be included in the DPVA Call to Convention.

**F. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONVENTIONS**

**1. What do the Congressional District Conventions do?**

These Conventions elect three to eight National Delegates and six CDs will each elect one National Alternate. The district conventions also elect one representative to the Electoral College.

**2. When are the Congressional District Conventions held?**

The Congressional District Conventions will be held on May 7, 14, or 21, 2016.

**3. Where will they be held?**

Each Congressional District Democratic Committee will determine the date and location and publicize that information.

**4. Who can attend District Conventions?**

The State Delegates and Alternates elected at the city and county caucuses will attend and cast votes for National Delegates. The Conventions are open to observers.

**5. How many National Convention Delegates will each Congressional District Convention elect?**

The number and gender of the National Delegates elected at the District Conventions is as follows:

District	Delegates			Alternates		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
#1	2	3	5	1	0	1
#2	3	2	5	0	1	1
#3	4	4	8	0	0	0
#4	3	3	6	0	0	0
#5	2	3	5	1	0	1
#6	2	2	4	1	0	1
#7	3	2	5	0	1	1
#8	4	4	8	0	0	0
#9	2	1	3	0	1	1
#10	3	3	6	0	0	0
#11	3	4	7	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

**6. Are there gender requirements for National Delegates elected at the District level?**

Yes, Virginia's National Delegates must be equally divided between men and women, and so the gender of the National Delegates to be elected at the Congressional District level is predetermined (as shown above).

**7. Do District Conventions adopt resolutions?**

Yes, as determined by the Congressional District Committee, the District Convention may have a Resolutions Committee and adopt resolutions.

**8. Do District Conventions have standing committees?**

The District Conventions have Rules and Credentials Committees and may have a Resolutions Committee.

**9. Can District Conventions nominate Congressional Candidates?**

The Congressional District Democratic Committee may chose to nominate its congressional candidate at the district convention, or may do so at a primary to be held on June 14, 2016. (The presidential candidates will be the only candidates on the March 1, 2016 primary ballot.)

**G. STATE CONVENTION**

**1. What does the State Convention do?**

It elects the At-Large and Pledged PLEO Delegates and Alternates. It also elects two representatives to the Electoral College, Virginia's four members of the Democratic National Committee, and adopts a Platform.

**2. When and where will the State Convention be held?**

June 18, 2016 in Richmond Virginia, at the Convention Center.

**3. How many National Convention Delegates will the State Convention elect?**

As discussed above, Virginia will elect 21 At-Large Delegates, 12 Pledged PLEOs, and 2 At-Large Alternates.

**4. Are there gender requirements for Virginia Delegation as a whole?**

Yes, the State Delegation must be equally divided between men and women – this includes the Automatic Unpledged Party Leader and Elected Official



Delegates. The elected at large delegates gender should be balanced to account for the gender of those automatic delegates..

**5. Will the State Convention adopt a platform?**

Traditionally, the State Convention does adopt a platform. A Platform Committee will be selected prior to the Convention and receive submissions.

**6. What are the State Convention Committees?**

There will be State Convention Credentials, Rules, and Platform Committees.

**H. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & OUTREACH**

**1. Does Virginia have an affirmative action and outreach plan?**

Yes, to ensure that the Democratic Party at all levels is an open Party that includes rather than excludes people from participation, Virginia has adopted a program of effective affirmative action

**2. What are the principles of the Virginia Democratic Party's Affirmative Action effort?**

We welcome all into our Democratic Party.

We conduct outreach to all communities.

We seek to increase participation of all constituencies.

We especially focus on outreach to Democratic constituencies including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, women, ethnics, youth, persons over 65 years of age, veterans, lesbians and gay men, workers, persons with a high school education or less, persons with disabilities, and persons of low and moderate income.

**3. Who implements this plan?**

A State Affirmative Action Committee was selected in 2015.

**4. How is the Affirmative Action Plan implemented?**

The Committee will publicize the primary and the delegate selection process to all media. It will focus special efforts on minority, student, constituency media, press and publications. The Committee will also Work with City, County, District Affirmative Action/Outreach Committees and contact and inform constituency organizations about the process.

**5. Will a Speaker's Bureau be set up to talk to my group about Virginia's delegate selection process?**

Yes; contact the State Democratic Party for additional information.

**6. Are there goals for representation of groups in Virginia's National Convention Delegation?**

Yes, as part of its Affirmative Action Plan, the Democratic Party has adopted the "Representation goals" of 38 African-American, 6 Hispanics, 6 Asian/Pacific Americans, 1 Native American, 6 Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, 6 persons with disabilities, and 15 Youth (age 35 and under), delegates. These goals constitute neither a ceiling nor a floor.

**I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**1. Where can I get additional information about the Virginia process?**

Contact: Democratic Party of Virginia, at its new office address in Richmond, VA, Telephone: 804-644-1966, Fax: 804-343-3642, Web Site: [www.vademocrats.org](http://www.vademocrats.org).

**2. What materials are available?**

Materials include the Delegate Selection Plan itself, this Q&A guide, a brochure, and a PowerPoint presentation.

**3. Where can I get information about the National process, including volunteering for the National Convention?**

See: <http://www.phldnc.com/help-make-history/> See also the Democratic National Committee website: <http://www.democrats.org/ourparty.html>

**4. Where can I get more information about the Presidential campaigns?**

Contact their websites.

**5. How can I register to vote?**

Contact the State Board of Election or your city or county registrar's office. You can contact the State Board at: **Virginia State Board of Elections**, 100 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, Telephone: 804-864-8901, Toll Free: 800-552-9745, Fax: 804-371-0194; <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov>.

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