

KNOXVILLE-AREA DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA HARASSMENT AND GRIEVANCE OFFICERS: PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHMENT, APPOINTMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Preamble: Knoxville-area Democratic Socialists of America (Knoxville-area DSA) adopts all policy and procedural guidelines contained within the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA National) Harassment Policy, Resolution 33, passed during the 2017 DSA National Convention. Knoxville-area DSA further attaches the following specific policies and procedures:

Section 1: Procedures for HGO appointment and removal:

- A. **Procedure for Appointment of the Primary HGO:** Knoxville-area DSA Executive Committee (EC) appoints one primary Harassment/Grievance Officer (HGO) in accordance with chapter bylaws. The primary HGO will be selected from outside the Executive Committee. Any member of the Executive Committee may recommend a member for appointment as HGO, and the appointment will be approved by acclamation. A primary HGO will be reviewed for reappointment or removal after each Executive Committee (EC) election and established at the August meeting.
- B. **Secondary HGO:** Because DSA National mandates the appointment of two HGO's for chapters whose membership exceeds 100, the EC shall appoint a secondary HGO and select a member from outside the EC, pursuant to the same guidelines in Section 1, A. The secondary HGO will function: (1) when the primary HGO is unable to address complaints due to temporary unavailability; or (2) at the request of the primary HGO when the primary HGO believes a particular matter calls for the involvement of both officers; or (3) in cooperation with the primary HGO in any situation brought to the chapter's attention by DSA National. Otherwise, all grievances or complaints shall be initially addressed to the primary HGO at all times. Should Knoxville DSA's membership exceed 300 members, the Executive Committee will convene to appoint an additional HGO independent of the EC, and will revise these structures accordingly.
- C. **Term Limits:** The primary and secondary HGO will serve no more than two consecutive full terms. The term of office is one year.
- D. **Removal for Cause:** HGO is subject to removal for cause at any time.
- E. **Procedure for Removal for Cause:** HGO shall be removed for cause upon a finding by the members of the Executive Committee that the HGO has neglected or abused his/her/their authority. Upon removal for cause, the EC will designate a chapter member as succeeding HGO within thirty days of the previous HGO's removal.

Section 2: Actions justifying the initiation of a formal harassment and grievance process against chapter members:

- A. Harassment as defined in DSA Resolution 33 adopted August 4, 2017.
- B. Theft or misuse of chapter funds, equipment or property.
- C. Actions taken in violation of the Knoxville-area DSA Bylaws.

- D. A pattern of behavior and/or speech that clearly violates the letter and spirit of the National DSA Statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights.
- E. A pattern of behavior and/or speech clearly intended to undermine, discredit or subvert the Knoxville-area DSA's purpose and mission as stated in our Bylaws, and/or similarly and knowingly interfere with initiatives and actions approved by the chapter membership through customary democratic processes.
- F. Retaliation for the prior filing of a grievance.

Section 3: Standing for filing grievances:

Any Knoxville-area DSA member in good standing may file a grievance with the primary HGO at any time in accordance with the process outlined in Section 3. In accordance with DSA National guidelines, the Knoxville DSA will maintain a confidential hotline, via email, that is accessible only by the primary and secondary HGO. The hotline email address will be published on the Knoxville DSA web page.

Section 4: Grievance reporting, evaluation and resolution process:

- A. Complaining members will file a written report of their grievance via the email hotline or other means (See Appendix, Form A).
- B. The HGO will contact the accused member within seven days to notify them of the allegations in the complaint, and request a written answer either affirming or denying the allegation (See Appendix, Form B).
- C. The accused will submit their written response within seven days of being notified. If the accused does not meet this deadline, the HGO will recommend to the Executive Committee to move to take appropriate disciplinary action.
- D. If the accused denies the substance of the report, the HGO will have the option to investigate by any or all of the following means: interviewing members with direct knowledge of the allegations; requesting supporting documentation from the accuser and/or accused; other necessary means with utmost respect to the confidentiality of the parties, within a time not to exceed ten days.
- E. The HGO will determine whether a report is credible and make a recommendation to the EC of disciplinary action, if any, as soon as practicable but within thirty days of the filing of the report.
- F. Notice must be given to both the accuser and the accused of the recommendation prior to its submission to the EC. Any accused who is a chapter officer shall be recused from the evaluation process, and a chapter member with no interest in the case will be appointed as a proxy.
- G. The Executive Committee shall determine the ultimate disposition on the complaint and determine its credibility by 3/4 vote of the four-member EC, with an appointed proxy if the accused is on the EC. The finding will be stated as supported or dismissed.

Section 5: Remedies and Penalties:

- A. Upon a finding that the report of the allegation is credible/supported, the EC is authorized to recommend any of the following:
 - (1) Mediation of the dispute by either HGO, if both accuser and accused consent;

- (2) A formal discussion between the accused and the EC to develop a plan to change harassing behavior;
 - (3) Suspension from chapter meetings and/or events;
 - (4) Expulsion from the chapter;
 - (5) If a chapter officer, removal from office by unanimous vote of the remaining EC;
 - (6) Any and all other relief deemed necessary by chapter and/or national leadership.
- B. Either party may appeal the form of relief determined by the EC by filling out the appellate form (See Appendix, Form C) and submitting it to the EC within thirty days of receiving written notice of the EC's decision. Grounds for appeal are limited to:
- (1) Either party believes the subject matter of the complaint did not meet criteria specified in Section 1;
 - (2) Procedural errors, misconduct, or conflicts of interest;
 - (3) The penalty is grossly disproportionate to the violation committed.

If the original grievance alleges a violation of DSA Resolution 33 or the DSA Statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights, appeal from any final decision by the Executive Committee can be made to the DSA National Grievance Office at nationalgrievanceofficer@dsausa.org.

APPENDIX: Forms

Forms are posted as PDF files on the chapter website at www.knoxvilledsa.org.

Form A contains information for the filing of a complaint.

Form B contains information for the filing of a response.

Form C contains information for the filing of an appeal.