

# ***MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION***

## ***Article 1 – Candidate Selection***

### **Section 1 – Purpose and Objectives – Empowerment of Committee Members**

The purpose of this constitution is to establish and maintain fundamental participatory democracy as the foundation for a strong Middlesex County Democratic Organization and, specifically, to empower the duly elected committee members by endowing each with an equal vote in selecting candidates for endorsement for elective office.

### **Section 2 – Vote of Elected Committee Members**

#### **A) Offices Having County-Wide Jurisdiction**

The Middlesex County Democratic Organization, by vote of the elected committee members, shall select the appropriate number of candidates to run for election with the organization's endorsement for the office of County Freeholder whenever said office shall be up for election in any given year, and one candidate each to run for election with the organization's endorsement for the office of Sheriff, County Clerk and Surrogate, whenever said office shall be up for election in any given year, all in the manner set forth below.

#### **B) Offices With Districts Wholly or Partially Within Middlesex County**

The Middlesex County Democratic Organization, by vote of the elected committee members, shall select one candidate to run for election with the Organization's endorsement for the office of U.S. Representative and one for State Senator, and two candidates for the office of Assembly Representative in each legislative district wholly or partially within the county, in the manner set forth below when said offices shall be up for election.

### **Section 3 – Procedure for Selection**

#### **A) Candidates**

1) At least 120 days prior to the Primary Election for the General Election in each year an office specified above shall be up for election, the Secretary of the Organization shall place a notice or press release in a newspaper of general circulation in the county which shall solicit for consideration any person wishing to seek the endorsement by the Middlesex County Democratic Organization for election to office.

2) Any person wishing to place his or her name before the organization for consideration for said office shall, at least 90 days prior to the Primary Election:

a) Submit 1,200 copies of his or her resume setting forth the person's qualifications for elective office in general and for the office specifically desired. (The resume shall include the prospective candidate's name, home address, home phone number, occupation, business address and business phone number and shall not exceed two pages – front and back on each).

b) A non-refundable application fee to cover the organization's expenses in mailing copies of the resumes to each Committee Member, Municipal Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The amount of the fee shall be established each year and set forth in the notice or press release prescribed in Section 3 (A) (1) above. In no event may the fee exceed mailing costs.

c) A petition signed by 200 registered Democrats of Middlesex County in support of said person running for the office he or she is seeking. In the event that the candidate is seeking endorsement for office with a Legislative or Congressional district partially within Middlesex County, the number of signatures shall be reduced by the percentage of registered Democrats within the district who are not residents of Middlesex County.

3) After receipt of the requisite resumes, certified checks, and petitions and at least 80 days before the Primary Election, the Organization's Secretary shall mail a copy of each qualifying prospective candidate's resume to every Committee Member, Municipal Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Each such prospective candidate, upon fulfilling the obligations, may communicate and/or meet directly with Committee Members, Municipal Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, and may appear at municipal committee meetings, held for the purpose of candidate review, in an effort to promote his or her candidacy.

#### B) Convention – Selection and Endorsement of Candidates

1) At least 60 days before the Primary Election, which date is not later than six days prior to the date established by law for the filing of petitions with the County Clerk for a person seeking elective office, the Organization shall hold a Convention.

a) Ten days prior to the Convention, a written notice shall be mailed to each Committee Member, Municipal Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and to each prospective candidate qualifying for consideration by the organization. The notice shall specify the date, time and place of the Convention as well as the candidates and offices under consideration.

b) The Convention shall be open to all registered Democrats of Middlesex County who wish to participate in the convention, with seating reserved for Committee

Members, Municipal Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons and the Organization's Executive Committee.

c) At the Convention, the Organization shall select the candidate(s) to be endorsed by the Organization in the Primary Election.

d) Prior to the selection itself, each prospective candidate for endorsement by the Organization shall be permitted five minutes to speak before those assembled at the Convention. No nominating or seconding speeches shall be permitted. After all the qualified candidates for each elective office have spoken, the Organization shall conduct a question and answer period at which time only Committee Members shall be permitted to ask questions of and receive responses from the qualified candidates. It shall be in the discretion of the Chairperson of the County Organization to determine the length of time for question and answer periods.

e) Following the speeches and question and answer periods, the selection shall be held by secret ballot using voting machines. Only Committee Members who display valid identification shall be permitted to vote. In the event of a selection of candidates for endorsement for the office of U.S. Representative, State Senator and/or Assembly Representatives, only those Committee Members living in the respective legislative district may vote for these candidates. If more than two candidates seek the endorsement by the Organization for a single office, a vote of fifty percent of those voters present at the Convention plus one shall be necessary to win the endorsement by the Organization. If after any such balloting no candidate shall receive the requisite number of votes, then the candidate(s) receiving less than twenty percent of the total vote shall be removed from the ballot and another balloting shall take place immediately. If, however, there are three candidates running for the Organization's endorsement for a single office and none receives the requisite number of votes to win, then the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from the ballot and another balloting shall take place immediately. In the event that there are more than three candidates and on the first ballot none of the candidates receive at least twenty percent of the vote, then all but the top three vote-getters shall be dropped and the balloting shall continue as prescribed herein. These procedures shall continue until a candidate receives the requisite number of votes. If only one person seeks endorsement by the Organization for a single office, the selection may be by acclamation at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Organization.

2) Each candidate achieving the endorsement of the Committee Members shall receive the Organization's support for the forthcoming primary election. Regardless of whether he or she has the endorsement of the Organization in the primary, the candidate who wins the primary election for each elective office shall have the endorsement and support of the County organization in the general election.

3) In the event of a special election for any of the aforementioned offices, a candidate selection process shall be established at the discretion of the Chairperson of the County Organization within the spirit of these bylaws.