

DEMOCRATS  
ABROAD



# Handbook

Guidelines  
&  
Resources

March 2007

[www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)



## Welcome!

We're pleased to present the latest Democrats Abroad Country Committee Handbook, years in the making and the product of many collaborators around the world.

**For Non-voting Committees**, you'll find pretty much everything you need to know to get your group up and running.

**For existing Country Committees and DPCA members**, this handbook should be a one-stop shop for DPCA documentation and an excellent resource to provide to new board members.

Like our organization, the handbook is a work in progress. As information is revised, we'll share updates for you to download.

We hope very much that you will use this handbook in the spirit in which it is offered: as a critical tool to ensure we are all in synch - and in compliance! - around the world. With that accomplished, we can focus our efforts and energy on our real goal: increasing our majority in the Congress and returning a Democrat to the White House.

If you have any questions or require additional materials, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director Lindsey Reynolds [[ED@democratsabroad.org](mailto:ED@democratsabroad.org)] or our International Secretary Robert Checkoway [[secretary@democratsabroad.org](mailto:secretary@democratsabroad.org)]. They will be able to help or redirect you.

Our sincere thanks go out to everyone who has worked so hard to write, compile, verify, edit and produce this current version and its precursors.

Sincerely,

Christine Schon Marques  
Switzerland

## Acknowledgements

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## I. About Democrats Abroad

Democrats Abroad is the official Democratic Party organization for the millions of Americans living outside the United States. We work to advance the principles of our Party by spreading the Democratic message to Americans abroad and encouraging them to vote for Democratic candidates back home.

Democrats Abroad has committees throughout Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Antipodes. These Country Committees keep Americans abroad informed of their rights and help them participate in the U.S. political process. A small support office is maintained in Washington, D.C.

Democrats Abroad is recognized as a “state” Party by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and is represented on the DNC by eight voting members, as well as at the quadrennial Democratic National Convention.

For the purposes of conducting business, Democrats Abroad is a non-profit association organized and operating under the Uniform Unincorporated Nonprofit Association Act of 2000, D.C. Code §§ 29-971.01 et seq. Democrats Abroad’s principal place of business is the District of Columbia.

**The DPCA:** The governing body of Democrats Abroad is the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA), which oversees Democrats Abroad’s activities. To avoid confusion between local committees and the international body, we refer to our international body as the DPCA, but are known collectively as Democrats Abroad by the general public and media.

The DPCA is comprised of the Chair and Vice Chair of each Country Committee, and the elected international officers of the DPCA (International Chair, International Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Counsel, Regional Vice Chairs), as well as the six representatives of Democrats Abroad to the DNC. (The remaining two members of the DNC from Democrats Abroad are the International Chair and International Vice Chair.)

Since our founding in 1964, Democrats Abroad has been very active on the national and international scene. Among its achievements, Democrats Abroad has been instrumental in:

- Securing voting rights for US citizens abroad through the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975.
- Obtaining passage of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act in 1986.
- Making sure every vote counts and is counted; furthering voting reform through the Emergency Committee to Reform Overseas Voting, created in November 2000 by Democrats Abroad. The Emergency Committee successfully lobbied Congress for improvements in the Help America Vote Act.

- Initiating the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, which allows voters to cast ballots when the absentee ballots have not arrived in time from their home states.
- Defending the rights of Americans living and working abroad by preventing the loss of their U.S. citizenship.
- Ensuring easier transmission of American citizenship to children born abroad.
- Fighting for Social Security and Medicare coverage for eligible Americans abroad.
- Fighting to avoid double taxation of Americans abroad by defending the foreign earned income tax exclusion (Section 911) and obtaining fairer treatment of U.S. taxpayers residing abroad.
- Creating firsthand contact with presidential candidates through conference calls with Democrats Abroad members living in Europe, the Americas and Asia.
- Helping to register voters by the thousand during the first worldwide Overseas Voter Weekend in 2004.
- Ensuring that voting forms were reprinted by the Federal Voting Assistance Program to meet the increased demand during the 2004 presidential election.
- Working to maximize the overseas vote; the result was a dramatic increase in overseas voter participation, especially thanks to the creation of [www.overseasvote2004.com](http://www.overseasvote2004.com), [www.overseasvote.com](http://www.overseasvote.com), and [www.tellanamericantovote.com](http://www.tellanamericantovote.com) in 2004.
- Successfully removing restrictions on access to the Federal Voting Assistance Program's website, [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), by overseas Internet providers.
- Tracking and refuting illegal voting requirements (such as the LA County imposition in 2004 of an ID requirement for overseas voters).
- Ensuring that accurate and helpful information is available to Voting Assistance Officers and embassies and consulates through a network of DPCA Consular Liaisons.
- Creating effective lines of communication with senior election offices in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia through a team of 51 volunteers, and developing a library of states and issues.

## II. A Brief History

American Democrats living and working abroad have contributed to the political life of the United States since its very beginning. The first famous Democrat, Thomas Jefferson, drafted the Bill of Rights while in Paris, France. Since then, many other Democrats resident in foreign countries have participated in U.S. politics. In the 1960s, Democrats living overseas began to organize themselves into a group, and Democrats Abroad was born.

### Creation of Democrats Abroad

In the 1960 Presidential campaign between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, Democrats in Paris and London started talking about ways they could help the Democratic Party. Four years later, they were ready.

Democrats Abroad first organized simultaneously in Paris and London in 1964, when Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater. Democrats in each of those cities formed committees and elected officers. Under the leadership of Toby Hyde (London) and Al Davidson (Paris), Democrats held parades and raised funds. The nascent committees also solicited votes, but few were cast from abroad because in 1964 U.S. citizens living overseas did not have a federal right to an absentee ballot.

The activities of Democrats Abroad in 1964 were the first U.S.-style political campaigns ever mounted in foreign countries; they aroused considerable local interest and generated wide publicity in France and England.

Democrats Abroad also attracted interest in the United States. John Bailey, the Chairman of the Democratic Party, on behalf of the Democratic National Committee, recognized the Paris and London committees, and the White House appointed James Rowe, a well-known political figure in Washington, as the liaison with President Johnson.

After the 1964 victory, Democrats Abroad continued to grow. In 1968, they campaigned for the Humphrey-Muskie ticket against Nixon and Agnew. Between the two elections, the leaders of Democrats Abroad started another campaign, one that would last twenty years and have a significant impact on all U.S. citizens living overseas: the campaign for full voting rights for U.S. citizens overseas.

### The Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975 & The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA)

In the 1960s, Democrats Abroad were able to raise funds and generate publicity. Getting out the vote was another matter, since U.S. citizens overseas did not have the right to an absentee ballot. The issue was complicated by the state-based nature of voting regulations, even for voting in federal elections. Providing a federal right to vote required modifying all state voting systems.

The first demands for the right to vote by absentee ballot had been made more than 100 years earlier, in the 1860s, when Union soldiers fighting in the Civil War who wanted to vote had to return to their States for the election. In World War II, the issue of absentee ballots was raised again.

A century later, U.S. voters in the United States could vote by absentee ballot if they were unable to get to the polls on election day. It was not so easy for U.S. voters living overseas. To remedy the injustice, leaders of Democrats Abroad formed the Committee for Absentee Voting, a bi-partisan group with the Republicans, and began a ten-year struggle to expand the franchise to overseas U.S. citizens.

Hubert Humphrey and Bob Strauss were early supporters. In the Congress, Senator Claiborne Pell and Representative Thompson were formidable leaders in the campaign to end the disenfranchisement of U.S. citizens living and working all over the world.

During the final days of the 94th Congress, House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill engineered the passage of "The Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975" through a crowded calendar. President Ford signed the Act into law in January 1976. Many Americans, however, refrained from voting while overseas because they feared tax consequences. In 1977-78, Dean Ferrier and Peter Alegi led the efforts to resolve this problem. In November 1978 Congress modified the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act to make clear that exercising a vote in a federal election would not by itself cause any state, local or federal tax consequences. With this solid base, Democrats Abroad then helped convince Congress to pass the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986, which laid the legal basis for a vast expansion of access to voting by Americans residing abroad. Each year more local barriers are removed as the federal legislation is enforced at the state



and local level. This breakthrough legislation has swept away almost all important legal obstacles to absentee voting by Americans abroad.

In 2001, following major election irregularities in Florida, Democrats Abroad began a campaign to amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to remove further obstacles to overseas voting. Chairman Smallhoover and Executive Director Fina hired a Republican lobbyist to help gain access to members of the majority. Many, but not all, of our proposals were embodied in the Help America Vote Act of 2002. These included permanent registration for two full federal election cycles (rather than one previously) and the collection of statistics on overseas absentee voting never before available.

Democrats Abroad also began to play a major role in the inclusion of overseas Americans in the decennial census. Chairman Smallhoover and Executive Director Fina, with the support of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, won the agreement of the Bureau of the Census to begin a series of trial counts after the completion of the 2000 Census to determine whether the inclusion of overseas Americans would be feasible for the 2010 Decennial Census. This trial period was begun in 2004.

### Milestones

The Democratic Party was far ahead of its Republican rivals in understanding and recognizing the potential political power of political rights of U.S. citizens overseas. Chairpersons of the Democratic Party since 1964 have granted increasing recognition to Democrats Abroad. John Bailey, Larry O'Brien, Bob Strauss, Chuck Manatt, Ron Brown, David Wilhelm, and Steve Grossman have all shown support for Democrats Abroad.

As a result of the view taken by the Democratic Party and its successive chairpersons, Democrats Abroad has made steady progress achieving official status within the organizational framework of the Democratic Party. Each year brought new advances:

1972: Chairman O'Brien grants nine non-voting delegates to Democrats Abroad for the National Convention in Miami. Nine Democrats Abroad from four countries attend.

1973: Chairman Strauss gives Democrats Abroad representation on the Democratic Charter Commission, a group of 160 leading Democrats from all States in the Union.

1976: Eight Country Committees form the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (the DPCA) and the DPCA's by-laws are filed with the DNC in Washington, D.C.

The Party Call to the 1976 National Convention gives Democrats Abroad voting delegates,

enabling us to participate directly for the first time in the selection of the Party's presidential nominee.

Committees in Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Switzerland and the United Kingdom hold an election for delegates to the National Convention New York City. A delegation of nine Democrats Abroad attends. International Chair Toby Hyde casts the final votes in the roll call to nominate Jimmy Carter.

Democrats Abroad begins its campaign with members of the Democratic National Committee (the DNC) for an amendment to the Charter of the Democratic Party in order to give Democrats Abroad membership on the DNC.

1977: Bob Strauss, the Chairman of the Democratic Party, grants time to the DPCA Chair, Toby Hyde, to persuade the full DNC to grant DNC membership to Democrats Abroad. The DNC amends the Charter of the Democratic Party and gives the DPCA four members on the DNC, having one aggregate vote.

FEC Advisory Opinion (AO 1976-112) finds that Democrats Abroad is a party committee and that transfers of funds between party committees are not subject to contribution limits. But, the FEC also found that Democrats Abroad cannot be granted the status of a state party committee but must be a subordinate of the national party committee. (See also 13 July 1990 opinion of Patton, Boggs.)

1978: Democrats Abroad is given six voting delegates to the National Party Conference, and the DPCA holds its third international election to choose delegates.

**In the 1980s**, Democrats Abroad continued the progress of the 1970s and expanded the activities of Democrats Abroad within the organization of the Democratic Party, particularly in the Association of State Democratic Chairs:

1980: More than 1900 Democrats participate in the Democrats Abroad Worldwide Postal Primary and elect 4 delegates and alternates to the National Convention in New York City. The delegation's T-shirts and political songs are a big hit and generate publicity.

1981: Washington Liaison position created by DPCA Chair Andy Sundberg; Martha Hartman was first appointee.

1982: A Democrats Abroad delegation of 12 (consisting of the DPCA Chair and Vice-Chair, the DNC members-at-large, and eight voting delegates and

- alternates) attend the Party Conference in Philadelphia.
- DPCA sponsors the first overseas political seminar in Brussels for Democrats Abroad, covering fundraising and public relations.
- 1983: Democrats Abroad is granted one voting representative on each of the four regional caucuses of the DNC.
- 1984: More than 2500 Democrats participate in the Democrats Abroad Worldwide Postal Primary, a 20% increase. The primary receives broad press coverage because its unique timing provides results ahead of the primaries occurring on the same day in the United States.
- A Democrats Abroad delegation of 20 attends the National Convention in San Francisco. DPCA Chair Andrew Sundberg casts the delegation's five votes in the roll call on behalf of the "more than 2,000,000 U.S. citizens living and working outside the United States."
- 1985: Democrats Abroad absorbs the Latin American Democratic Party (LADP), thus becoming the only entity at the DNC representing Americans residing outside the U.S. and its territories.
- 1985: Eugene Theroux appointed Exec Director and Thomas Fina Deputy Exec Director by DPCA Chair Dean Ferrier.
- 1986: Membership on the DNC and the number of delegates to the Democratic National Convention allocated to Democrats Abroad are doubled as a result of the merger with LADP.
- 1985: Thomas Fina appointed volunteer Executive Director.
- 1986: Monthly "Letter from Washington" begun by Executive Director Fina.
- 1986: First direct mail fund raising campaign run by the Executive Director, with DNC.
- DPCA Chair Dean Ferrier testifies before the House Subcommittee on Elections on behalf of amending the Voting Rights Bill to provide for the Write-in Ballot.
- 1987: The Democrats Abroad by-laws are amended to provide for increasing the numbers of electors eligible for electing members to the Democratic National Committee.
- 1987: DPCA registers with the Federal Elections Commission.
- 1988: After an energetic effort, the Democrats Abroad primary is recognized as a state primary. As a result, all U.S. consular posts are ordered to distribute primary ballots to those Democrats residing overseas who wish to participate in the overseas primary.
- 1988: First international meeting held outside Europe. 55 overseas Democrats from 12 countries attend a DPCA meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, before the Democratic National Convention.
- 1989: The number of country committees reaches 20.
- In the 1990s**, Democrats Abroad reached out even more to Democrats around the world, and made its voice heard on a number of important issues in Washington:
- 1990: Democrats Abroad discusses plans for changing the method of selecting delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Chair Sam Garst, a native Iowan, creates a caucus system used in all subsequent elections.
- Patton, Boggs & Blow memorandum of 13 July, 1990, advises DPCA and DNC of the legal status of Democrats and Republicans Abroad and explained that both must register with the FEC. Basis for our later forcing Republicans Abroad to register.
- 1991: Democrats Abroad adopts caucus system to elect Convention delegates.
- 1992: Democrats Abroad launches first international coordinated campaign. First ad campaign in major international newspapers supporting Democratic candidates cost \$26,000.
- Democrats Abroad successfully carries out a caucus system for the selection of our presidential preference and our delegates to the New York Convention. Members gather in local, regional, and global caucuses to cast their votes in an outstanding example of global democracy.
- 1993: Representatives from fifteen country committees attend President Clinton's inauguration.
- November: Chairman Peter Alegi launches campaign to include overseas Americans in President Clinton's universal health care system. On advice of the Executive Director, the DPCA hires former Republican Chief of Staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to lobby for inclusion of overseas Americans. Country committees around the world contribute to funding.

- Democrats Abroad begins quarterly electronic publication in Paris of the *Overseas Democrat* under the editorship of Lois Grjebine and with technical support from Tom Fina. This is the first DPCA newsletter designed to provide country committees with ready-made text for local mailings.
- By unanimous vote, Democrats Abroad revises its bylaws in accordance with the changed political and administrative needs of a truly global organization. An Executive Committee is created to streamline management.
- DNC membership positions reserved for election by each of major world regions: Europe and Middle East, Asia, the Americas.
- 1994: Clinton Health Care legislation defeated in October, but our efforts had gotten overseas Americans included in drafts before the debacle.
- 1994: Democrats Abroad testifies on reform of citizenship legislation, suggesting "one-stop shopping," i.e., allowing applications to be filed abroad. The House sub-committee immediately accepts this idea and incorporates it into the bill, which becomes effective March 1, 1995.
- 1995: Executive Director arranges first time visit by delegation of Democrats Abroad to Oval Office led by Chair Peter Alegi to meet individually with President Clinton.
- 1995: Alice Lauthers succeeds deceased husband to be volunteer Assistant Treasurer in US.
- Incoming Chair Sally McNulty arranges successful European tour of Democrats Abroad by immediate past DNC Chair, David Wilhelm, who visits London, Paris, and Heidelberg.
- 1996: First non-European officer elected to DPCA—Carolyn Hansen from Taiwan.
- 1996: First non-European DNC member elected—Maureen Keating Tsuchiya from Japan.
- 1996: Executive Director negotiates procedure with Clinton White House to include Democrats Abroad in Presidential visits abroad.
- Creation of first Democrats Abroad website by Executive Director ([www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)) in Washington overseen by Vice Chair Joe Smallhoover with webmaster in US; the site includes links to country committee websites.
- In order to make distribution of *Overseas Democrat* more rapid and less costly, operation shifted to Ruth McCreery in Yokohama who prepares page layouts that are transmitted as pdf files to web master who up-loads them to Democrats Abroad website for instant downloading and printing by country committees.
- DPCA Secretary takes over keeping of records of DPCA and Country Committee officer directory.
- DPCA convention in Toronto adopts resolution asking for inclusion of overseas Americans in census.
- E-mail begins to supplant fax as predominant communications medium with significant reduction in communications cost despite increased volume of communication.
- 1997: Sally McNulty leads Democrats Abroad in successful effort to maintain Section 911 of the tax code, the \$70,000 exclusion of earned income from U.S. federal income tax.
- Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Richard C. Holbrooke attends gala Democrats Abroad fundraiser in Paris.
- 1998: US funds transferred from Citibank, NY, to Burke & Herbert Bank & Trust, Alexandria, VA for better and more economical service as volume of income increased.
- 1999: June: Chairman Smallhoover testified before House Committee on Census in support of inclusion of overseas Americans in 2010 Decennial Census.
- 2000: DPCA spends \$115,000 for 2000 campaign advertising in Israel, Mexico, Canada, *Stars & Stripes*, *USA Today* and the *International Herald Tribune*.
- Executive Director creates Emergency Committee to Reform Overseas Voting (ECROV) to provide proposals to reform Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Act (UOCAVA) in light of 2000 election irregularities.
- January: Andrew Goldberg appointed Deputy Executive Director. First paid DPCA employee.
- 2001: DPCA hires lobbyist to help win changes in overseas absentee voting legislation.
- Executive Director testifies before House Committee on Census in support of inclusion of overseas Americans in decennial census of 2010.
- Help America Vote Act (HAVA) becomes law in October; it embodies important proposals made by ECROV.

Andrew Goldberg becomes Executive Director upon the retirement of Thomas Fina, who becomes Executive Director Emeritus.

The following have served as Chair of the DPCA since it was first granted membership in the DNC in 1977:

<b>Anthony Hyde</b>	<b>1976-81</b>
<b>Andrew Sundberg</b>	<b>1981-85</b>
<b>Dean Ferrier</b>	<b>1985-89</b>
<b>Sam Garst</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Judi Rosenthal</b>	<b>1990-91</b>
<b>Peter C. Alegi</b>	<b>1991-95</b>
<b>Sally McNulty</b>	<b>1995-99</b>
<b>Joseph Smallhoover</b>	<b>1999-03</b>
<b>Rachelle Valladares</b>	<b>2003-05</b>
<b>Michael Ceurvorst</b>	<b>2005-07</b>

### III. Forming a Country Committee: Step-by-Step Guidelines

- Step One:** Refer to the “Jump-Start A Committee” document in the Annex, an excellent resource for new groups. Your first step will be to hold a meeting with some core supporters to discuss how to find like-minded Americans. At this meeting, draft a schedule of what you hope to achieve over the next six months. Notify the DPCA Executive Director so that the lead organizer can be added to the DPCAMembers e-mail discussion group. You will need to complete the Contact Information Form (see Forms). The core organizers may also be added to the DPCA-Leadership e-mail discussion group. All are welcome to join the general Democrats Abroad group, [DemsAbroad@yahoogroups.com](mailto:DemsAbroad@yahoogroups.com), by sending a message to [DemsAbroad-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:DemsAbroad-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).
- Step Two:** There are two different types of committees: full committees (50 or more members) and non-voting committees (less than 50 members). Full committees have met their election, publicity, and membership requirements, and have adopted bylaws. See Section 5 of the DPCA bylaws for the details of those requirements. All membership lists must be maintained in the DPCA database; once the non-voting membership has reached 25, you may have access to the database for your country.
- Step Three:** Draw up your bylaws. The model bylaws approved by the DPCA Executive Committee can be found in the Annex, Section 13.
- Step Four:** Schedule a general meeting to vote on bylaws and to elect officers. Publicize this event. Request via the International Chair that details of this meeting be posted on the Democrats Abroad international website ([www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)). Copies of print and other publicity must also be sent to the International Chair.
- Step Five:** Elect Officers. Remember that there must be gender balance in accordance with the bylaws of the Democratic National Committee: the Chair and Vice Chair must be of the opposite sex. All voting within the Democratic Party must be public; this means voting by show of hands, voice vote or *signed* ballot. (These are party rules!) Report the results of the election to the International Chair. You must submit signed minutes. A copy of the approved bylaws must also be forwarded to the International Chair. The DPCA will then have to vote to approve admission of the local committee based on the documents submitted by it.

**Step Six:** Build momentum by scheduling regular meetings, communicating with one another, and holding voter registration and informational events and forums of various kinds.

**Step Seven:** Make sure you meet certain requirements, such as certifying membership as of December 31 each year to the International Chair. (See “V. Maintaining Country Committee Compliance,” below.)

**Step Eight:** Come join us at an international meeting—it will give you a lot more impetus to keep going knowing that you are not alone.

**Step Nine:** Ensure your committee is always in compliance with party rules and not conducting activity that would require it to register with the US Federal Election Commission (FEC) or violate US or local law.

And, of course, let the DPCA officers or executive director know if there is anything we can do to help make all of this any easier. That, after all, is what we are here for.

*See also Appendix B1: Jump-Start a Committee.*



## IV. Playing by the Rules: Permitted and Non-Permitted Activities

DATE: June 21, 2004  
TO: Democrats Abroad Country Committees  
FROM: Karl J. Sandstrom  
RE: **Permitted and Non-permitted Activities**

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Democrats Abroad is a subordinate committee of the Democratic National Committee. As such it is subject to the same legal restrictions on its activities that govern the DNC. Anyone purporting to act for Democrats Abroad must abide by these restrictions. Below is a summary of some of the more important rules.

This summary is intended to provide a basic outline on the rules governing the activities of Democrats Abroad. It is not intended to provide detailed guidance on all the activities that a Country Committee may desire to engage.

**1. No contributions or donations from foreign nationals.** No one acting on behalf of Democrats Abroad may solicit or accept anything of value from a foreign national. This prohibition applies to in-kind donations including discounted food or rental space not available to the general public. Even reimbursed personal spending by a foreign national is prohibited. Any contribution from an U.S. citizen with a foreign spouse must come from the funds of the U.S. citizen.

**2. Volunteer activity by foreign nationals.** A foreign national may volunteer his or her uncompensated services (for example, stuffing envelopes) to a Country Committee. If the services result in the production of an item of value for example, a piece of art, the Country Committee may not accept that item.

**3. No corporate or labor union contributions.** No one acting on behalf of Democrats Abroad may solicit or accept anything of value from a corporation or labor union regardless of where the organization is domiciled.

**4. No public communications promoting a Federal candidate.** Only Democrats Abroad International may pay for public communications including newspapers, television, radio, direct mail of over 500 pieces, and phone banks making over 500 similar calls that promote, support, attack, or oppose a Federal candidate or political party. (See point 10.) Country committees may not purchase public political advertising that mentions a Federal candidate or promotes the Democratic Party. One very limited exception would be advertising directed exclusively at the recruitment of new members.

**5. E-mail and postings on the Internet are not public communications.** Individuals and groups, including Country Committees, may freely use the Internet and e-mail to organize and to promote Federal candidates. The one restriction on use of the Internet is that any solicitation or acceptance of contributions via the Internet must fully comply with Federal law.

***\*Editor's note: Paid Internet activity now falls within the definition of public communications and requires FEC compliance.***

**6. Country committees may freely communicate to their members.** There is no restriction on Country Committees communicating to their own members. The communication must be restricted to members and may include telephone calls, newsletters, mail, and e-mail. The communication may advertise a candidate, party or other political organization's event. This is an exception to the rule set forth in point 4 above.

**7. Distribution of literature at Country Committee meetings.** Country committees may freely distribute candidate-specific materials at Country Committee meetings.

**8. Non-partisan voter registration and absentee ballot campaigns.** Country committees are free to engage in non-partisan voter registration and absentee ballot campaigns. The committee must provide these services without regard to the party or candidate preference of the person who is being assisted. The committee can pay the costs of such activities without incurring any FEC reporting obligation. The committee may conduct these activities with other organizations but should pay for its own expenses related to the joint program. For example, the Country Committee may be reimbursed by another organization for a share of the costs.

**9. No contributions to Federal candidates.** Country committees may not contribute directly to Federal candidates, political party committee or any other political committee. The Country Committee may collect contributions for a Federal candidate provided that the contributions are *promptly* (within ten days) forwarded to the candidate with the requisite information including the name, address, occupation, and employer of the contributor. Some candidates prefer or require anyone accepting contributions on their behalf to receive authorization from their committee to do so.

**10. Registration with the Federal Election Commission.** Unless a Country Committee is prepared to comply with all the record-keeping and reporting requirements of Federal law, it should avoid engaging in activities that would require it to register and report to the FEC. To avoid having to report, a Country Committee should not 1) contribute to any Federal candidate, political party or any other political committee; 2) expend more than one thousand dollars in a calendar year expressly advocating the election or defeat of any Federal candidate; 3) spend more than one thousand dollars in a calendar year for public communications promoting, supporting, attacking or opposing a Federal candidate; or 4) engage in any combination of these activities that exceed one thousand dollars in a calendar year.

**11. Registered committees.** A Country Committee that chooses to register with the FEC must be willing to coordinate all its financial activity with Democrats Abroad International and subject those activities to the supervision and control of that committee including all record-keeping and fund-raising.

**12. No Transfers.** Unless a Country Committee is registered with the FEC, it may not transfer funds to Democrats Abroad International. Democrats Abroad International will no longer accept such transfers.

**13. Penalties.** The penalty for a knowing and willful violation of federal campaign finance law is up to five years imprisonment for each violation.





## **V. Maintaining Country Committee Compliance**

In accordance with the Democratic Party Committee Abroad Bylaws Sections 5.4, 5.5, 9.1, and 9.2, the following documents must be provided to maintain compliance by each Country Committee:

Every January, Country Committees must submit copies of any amendments to Bylaws adopted and minutes of election meetings (including complete contact information for officers) for the previous year, attested to by the Country Committee Secretary.

Further, the Country Committee Chair will forward to the International Chair, by January 31 of every year, a complete membership list that includes the names and addresses in order to certify that committee's membership. This certification must be countersigned by the Committee's Secretary or Treasurer.

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Country Committees and committees-in-formation, the lead organizers of start-up committees, DNC members, Regional Vice-Chairs, and the international officers and staff of the DPCA are invited to the meetings of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad. Any committee that does not attend three consecutive meetings loses its right to a proxy vote. In addition, non-compliance can mean the loss of a committee's supplemental votes, if any.

## VI. Campaign Finance Limits

### FEC ANNOUNCES UPDATED CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

January 23, 2007

WASHINGTON – The Federal Election Commission today announced revised contribution limits which have been indexed for inflation and are effective for the 2007-2008 elections for President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives.

During the current election cycle, individuals may contribute up to \$2,300 per election to Federal candidates, up to \$28,500 per year to national party committees, and a combined total of up to \$108,200 during the two year period to all Federal campaigns, parties, and other political committees. The following table lists the contribution limits for 2007-2008.

	To each candidate or candidate committee per election	To national party committee per calendar year	To state, district & local party committee per calendar year	To any other political committee per calendar year	Special Limits
Individual may contribute	\$2,300*	\$28,500*	\$10,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	\$108,200* overall biennial limit: \$42,700* to all candidates \$65,500* to all PACs and parties \$39,900* to Senate candidate per campaign
National Party Committee may contribute	\$5,000	No limit	No limit	\$5,000	
State, District & Local Party Committee may contribute	\$5,000 (combined limit)	No limit	No limit	\$5,000 (combined limit)	No limit
PAC (multicandidate) may contribute	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$5,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	No limit
PAC (not multicandidate) may contribute	\$2,300*	\$28,500*	\$10,000 (combined limit)	\$5,000	No limit
Candidate Committee may contribute	\$2,000	No limit	No limit	\$5,000	No limit

\* These contribution limits are increased for inflation in odd-numbered years.

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) included provisions that indexed some contribution limits for inflation. The limit for individuals' contributions to candidates, for example, was set at \$2,000 per election in BCRA and is adjusted at the start of each new election cycle. Adjustments are announced after the Department of Labor determines the inflation rate (i.e., the change in the price index for the relevant period) for the previous election year (in this case 2006). The new limit on contributions from individuals to candidates was effective retroactively to the day after the last general election ended (e.g. November 8, 2006). Other new limits were retroactively effective January 1, 2007.

*See also Appendix C3: Campaign Finance: The Basics.*

## VII. The Handling of Funds

### A. Treasurer's Responsibilities

With the stringent regulations and heavy penalties placed on political parties under campaign finance reform, all committees (full, in-information, and start-up) must follow strict guidelines. Under a standing resolution of the DPCA Executive Committee, Country Committees should not be conducting any activities that would require them to register with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Our policy is that activities requiring registration with the FEC be carried out only by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA). (See Section IV: "Playing by the Rules: Permitted and Non-Permitted Activities.") The DPCA is responsible for the timely and correct filing of our FEC reports. Country committees may act in coordination with and as agents for the DPCA.

A few Country Committees are currently FEC-registered. Over time these committees must wind down their FEC-registrable activities. Nevertheless, a brief summary of the additional responsibilities of the Treasurers of these committees has been included in Section C.

As it is the DPCA Treasurer who is responsible in the eyes of the FEC, the first point of contact for any questions or problems should be the DPCA Treasurer. The Country Committee Treasurer should cc the Executive Director and International Counsel on all such correspondence.

Specific responsibilities of the Country Committee Treasurer include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining clear, complete and accurate financial records
- Depositing cash and checks in the Country Committee bank account in a timely manner
- Forwarding checks for donations written by individuals in favor of the DPCA to the Executive Director immediately. (They must be deposited within 10 days.)
- Obtaining compliance forms from donors when appropriate (refer to Annex, Contribution Forms)
- Making approved expenditures and maintaining related invoices
- Keeping records, including copies of any contribution checks, for a seven-year period
- Signing all reports and statements
- Filing any required financial reports on time
- Maintaining local bank accounts in accordance with local laws

Campaign finance law prohibits Democrats Abroad from accepting donations in cash in amounts over \$100 (per year, per donor) or from accepting any funds from non-U.S. citizens other than bona fide "green card" holders. Donations over the \$100 limit must be made by check or credit card.

### B. Fundraising and other events

A main source of revenue for Democrats Abroad is the Victory Fund mailings. These requests are sent out to all members of Democrats Abroad a few times year and include a

letter from the International Chair and/or other Democratic Party leaders. We rely on these mailings to fund most of the administrative costs of our organization and do not charge Country Committees any dues. Treasurers and Committee Chairs must ensure that the Country Committee members are aware of the importance of this ongoing fundraising campaign.

For local events on behalf of the DPCA, request that attendees pay using the on-line payment form at [www.democratsabroad.org/payment](http://www.democratsabroad.org/payment) (Visa and MasterCard only). This is not only a way to make sure all your reserved attendees have paid, but makes the compliance paperwork substantially easier. This on-line payment page is separate from the regular contribution page, since it includes event and country for tracking purposes.

As the event payments come in, our Executive Director will e-mail you a list including date, contributor, and amount paid. Please contact the ED directly at [info@democratsabroad.org](mailto:info@democratsabroad.org) so that you can coordinate. You can easily use this list at the registration tables.

Any persons who cannot pay on-line must complete a compliance form (*see Appendix A2: Contribution Form*)

- To pay by credit card (Visa and MasterCard only)
- To include with a U.S. dollar check made out to **Democrats Abroad**. We cannot accept wire transfers or checks from Country Committees.

Because contributions must be deposited within 10 days of their making, credit card forms, checks, and compliance forms must then promptly be:

Mailed to:	Executive Director, Democrats Abroad PO Box 15130, Washington, DC 20003-0130 USA
Or couriered to:	Executive Director, Democrats Abroad 430 South Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 USA

***Please remember! Cash contributions are limited to \$100 per year per donor! And, it is illegal to accept any funds from corporate bodies or non-U.S. citizens other than bona fide “green card” holders.***

All contributions should go directly to Democrats Abroad. For certain shared fundraising events, the Executive Director will then reimburse the local committee—by check or wire transfer, checks preferred—for 50 percent of the net proceeds received.

The Executive Director can also make some pre-payments related to the event, with proper documentation.

If necessary, the Executive Director can also advance a Country Committee some funds to cover their expenses provided that the committee sends a detailed estimate and promptly follows up with receipts. In no instance will the DPCA cover losses generated by an event. The DPCA is also unable to pay to advertise a local event.

For other on-line contributions, donors can click on “Contribute” on the main index at [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org) or go directly to [www.democratsabroad.org/contribute.php](http://www.democratsabroad.org/contribute.php)

### **C. Committees Currently Registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC)**

All Country Committees must wind down their FEC-reportable activities. Until activities which require FEC registration are wound down by the few committees which are currently registered with the FEC, such groups are responsible for filing their own FEC reports and for being in full compliance with FEC regulations, including the maintenance of a U.S. bank account and the deposit of all funds exclusively in this account. They are not permitted to maintain a non-U.S. account. Country Treasurers must inform not only their Country Chairs of filing, but also the International Treasurer, Counsel, Executive Director, and Chair.

The Treasurer must also file Form 3X "Report of Receipts and Disbursements for Other than an Authorized Committee." The FEC sends committee treasurers a monthly newsletter, including reporting notices, deadlines, and forms.

Treasurers must be aware that once the committee has reached the reporting threshold, they must continue to file for a number of periods, even if there is nothing to report subsequent to the initial filing.

Please note that committees may be fined for filing late reports, and that both the Country Committee AND its *current* Treasurer may be held responsible.

The FEC's brochure for Committee Treasurers is available at [www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/treas.htm](http://www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/treas.htm) and our *Campaign Finance: A Basic Guide for Country Committees* is available in the Annex.

## VIII. Absentee Voting in Federal Elections

Most American citizens and dual-national Americans residing permanently or sojourning temporarily abroad may vote as absentee voters in federal elections. But to do so, you must act well before election day. The simplest means of complying with all the requirements below is to use Democrats Abroad's voter registration website: [www.VotefromAbroad.org](http://www.VotefromAbroad.org).

### The procedure

Send a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register and/or request an absentee ballot from the voting registrar in the location where you last physically resided in the United States. You cannot "pick" where you last resided; there are legal tests of residency in every state and that is what determines where you are permitted to vote. Attempting to register or vote where you did not last have residency is a punishable offense.

If you then do not receive your absentee ballot in time to return it on or before your state deadline, you may use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). To use the FWAB, you must have submitted a FPCA so that it was received by the state 30 days before the election. Some states will accept the FWAB even if the FPCA was received after that deadline. If you receive your official ballot after voting the FWAB, you should *also* vote the official state ballot. The FWAB will then be discarded by the local voting official. On-line FPCAs and FWABs may also be downloaded, printed out, filled in, and submitted in the same way.

### Supplies

Bulk supplies of printed Federal Post Card Applications, FWABs, and *Voting Assistance Guides* are available through the Executive Director or, in some cases, through the nearest US Consulate. We plan to provide for the on-line completion of FPCAs and FWABs, which can then be printed out for mailing by individual voters.

### Voter Registration Events

Many Country Committees hold several voter registration events during election years, and sufficient supplies (Voter Assistance Guides, Federal Post Card Applications, and Federal Write-In Ballots) need to be ordered early from the Executive Director. As some states still require notarials, it's a good idea to have a Consular Agent present if possible. Detailed information concerning state requirements will be provided as soon as it is available for the current election cycle.

### On-line training courses for Voting Assistance Officers

Available from the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Go to [www.fvap.gov/vao/training/vaotrng.html](http://www.fvap.gov/vao/training/vaotrng.html).

### When to send in the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) – IDEALLY

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) **should reach** the local election official no later than 30 days before the election. A full list of state deadlines will be included in the update to Appendix F4 below as soon as it is available for the current cycle. If the deadline is rapidly approaching, send the form by fax and then mail it. If you are from a state that does not accept faxes, send your ballot request by FedEx, DHL or other express service.

## **How to confirm that your absentee ballot request has been received**

Send a message to [vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov) asking for confirmation; include your name, last U.S. residence address, birth date, and the last 4 digits of your social security number in the message. Alternatively, contact your local election official through [www.fvap.gov/links/statelinks.html](http://www.fvap.gov/links/statelinks.html). Contact details for your local voting authority are also available at [www.vote-smart.org/voter\\_county\\_election\\_offices.php](http://www.vote-smart.org/voter_county_election_offices.php).

## **When can the back-up write-in ballot (FWAB) be used?**

You have the right to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) if the official state ballot doesn't arrive in time, provided that you sent in your FPCA in time to reach the election official 30 days before the general election, that the write-in ballot is mailed from outside the United States (from a foreign or APO/FPO address), and that it meets the state deadline for receipt of ballots. Some states will accept the FWAB even if the FPCA is late.

## **The official on-line write-in ballot**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has made available an official On-line Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (OFWAB). The OFWAB, like the paper version, has been prescribed by FVAP to serve as an emergency ballot for those overseas citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) who do not receive their requested state absentee ballot. The OFWAB is an alternative to the multipart paper version.

You may electronically fill in the form before it is printed, or print it and manually fill in the form. In either case, you must sign and date the form. Specific instructions to be followed when submitting the OFWAB may be found at :

[www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html](http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html).

If you are mailing the OFWAB form within the APO/FPO (U.S.) postal system, a postage-paid indicia may be printed onto your mailing envelope from the FVAP web site at [www.fvap.gov/pubs/returnenvelope.html](http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/returnenvelope.html). If you are mailing it through the normal postal service in another country, it will require adequate stamps. The ballot should be mailed from outside the U.S.; some states have invalidated ballots that were couriered to them or mailed within the U.S.

If you receive your official ballot after submitting either version of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, please vote and submit your official ballot any time up to and including election day. Do note on the official ballot envelope that you had already submitted a FWAB. The election official will decide which one to count, and will not count both. Note that many states send ballots out just before the 30 day deadline for mailing ballots to voters.

## **Witness Requirements—and who to write in**

If you use the write-in ballot, please make sure that you meet the state deadlines and that the envelope is witnessed as necessary. Some states recommend a witness to help ensure that the ballot will be counted in case it lacks the required postmark. Some states that do not require witnesses for the FPCA do require a witness, or even two, on the write-in ballot envelope. A full list of state witness requirements will be available in Appendix F4.

To find out more about who the candidates are to write in when using the write-in ballot for federal elections, check the Democrats Abroad website ([www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)). The complete list of Democratic candidates for U.S. House and Senate will be available through the main page of that site, under "Voting."

### **Tracking the receipt of your ballot**

To help make sure ballots are received and counted, an on-line Ballot Status Request Form is available at [www.topica.com/f/v.html?900073386.900026337](http://www.topica.com/f/v.html?900073386.900026337). This service will create a county-by-county and state-by-state overseas voting list to check on the status of overseas absentee ballots.

### **Tracking Overseas Voter Problems**

A web form for reporting voting irregularities was created in 2004 and will again be available in 2006. All voters who encounter problems should be encouraged to report them here, as well as reporting them to their local DA chapter. Providing information on such problems will allow us to compile and analyze data during the current election cycle.

The International Counsel of Democrats Abroad, Joe Smallhoover, is coordinating a legal team to advise on problems identified through the above process and mount legal challenges where necessary.

*See also Appendices F1-F4.*



## **IX. Meetings and Conventions**

### **A. Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA) Meetings**

A DPCA meeting must be held in the first quarter of each year to conduct business, and in odd-numbered years, elect officers. Traditionally, the DPCA has held a second meeting in the second half of the year. The meetings are conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Notice of the meeting and a tentative agenda are sent out 45 days or more before the date of the meeting to DPCA members. DPCA members can request that the International Chair add items to the agenda and provide text of resolutions proposed for adoption, up to 30 days before the meeting. A final agenda and the proposed resolutions are sent to DPCA members 15 days before the meeting.

Members of the DPCA can participate in this meeting in person or by telephone. Those who are unable to participate in person, either physically or telephonically, can submit a written proxy, provided they have attended one of the previous three meetings. In all cases, participation by telephone or other means such as Skype is made available. Members of Democrats Abroad – i.e. non-members of the DPCA – are welcome to attend, space permitting.

The venue for the next meeting is voted on at the DPCA meeting. (Bid forms are available in the Annex.) Preparing for a DPCA meeting is no easy task but a wonderful opportunity to welcome DPCA members from around the world to your city. All members of the DPCA pay their own expenses related to travel, hotel, and meals; the host committee always tries to identify several options to minimize costs per person. The DPCA does not and cannot charge a fee for participating; members who wish to attend the meeting but opt out of meals and beverages are entitled to attend the meeting free of charge.

### **B. Delegates to the Convention and the Delegate Selection Process**

Democrats Abroad sends a delegation of 28 people from around the world to the Democratic National Convention. The delegation includes 22 delegates, 2 alternates, a page, and one member each to the convention Platform Committee, the Credentials Committee, and the Rules Committee. DNC members are included in the delegation.

The delegation is selected according to a Delegate Selection Plan and Affirmation Action Plan adopted by the DPCA after a public comment period and the plan's approval by the DNC. Almost a year and a half before the Convention, the Affirmative Action Committee members are appointed.

In recent years, Democrats Abroad has used a “caucus” system similar to that used in Iowa and the other so-called “caucus states.” Following a very strict timetable, a number of Country Committee delegates and alternates are elected at local and country caucuses. These delegates and alternates then go on to the regional caucuses and the global convention, at which delegates to the National Convention are elected.

The 2004 Delegate Selection Plan can be found at [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org).

Links to the 2008 Delegate Selection Plan will be added to the site when the plan comes under consideration.

## **C. Platforms**

### **i. Democrats Abroad Platform 2004**

Traditionally, Democrats Abroad adopts a platform every four years as part of the process leading up to the National Convention. Democrats Abroad is rare amongst the State Parties in doing so. The platform serves not only as a basis for political action by Democrats Abroad over the following four years but is sent to the Democratic National Convention for consideration as part of the national platform.

Provisions for the Democrats Abroad Platform are drafted at the local and country-level caucuses. Each provision passed by a caucus is then forwarded to the Platform Committee for consideration in the worldwide platform. The Platform is then discussed and voted on at the DPCA meeting and global convention.

The 2004 Democrats Abroad Platform can be found in Appendix G1.

### **ii. Democratic Party Platform 2004**

Every four years, the Democratic Party lays out the challenges of our time and the Party’s vision for meeting those challenges in the official Democratic Platform.

The 2004 Democratic Platform is a commitment to move our country back in the right direction. Keeping America secure and rebuilding our alliances. Creating jobs and promoting strong economic growth. Health care for every American. Keeping our promises to the next generation. The Democratic Party has a strong, positive vision for our country’s future.

To read the full 2004 Democratic Platform, go to [www.democrats.org/platform](http://www.democrats.org/platform).



## X. Resources

### A. Website – [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)

The Democrats Abroad International Website is a communications and outreach tool of Democrats Abroad, meant to reach Americans, and especially Democrats, living outside the USA.

It is served by an editorial board made up of the web editor, the counsel, the editor of the *Overseas Democrat*, the DA executive director, and a DA member active in a consultative capacity. The international website aims to expand membership and encourage participation in the organization. It is the primary communications channel to educate, inform and assist Americans in the civic process. Through continuous improvement of the site, its content provides support for the creation and maintenance of a community.

With up-to-date information on voting issues, candidates, requirements, and tools for registering to vote, political action, and important contacts, the site is instrumental for accomplishing the overall mission of Democrats Abroad: to represent the interests of US citizens living abroad and to elect Democrats to Congress, the White House, and where permitted, state offices.

The current editorial board includes: Web Editor Rhoda Green, OD Editor Ruth McCreery, Regional Vice Chair EMEA Meredith Gowan Le Goff (counsel), and consultant Mary McCall.

Each full and in-information Country Committee can have its own web pages accessible through its own URL and the Democrats Abroad site. In addition, the international site has a section for all start-up groups, including a list of all such groups, a calendar of events, and a home page that includes information about the start-ups in addition to a regular focus on one committee.

Full and in-information committees are responsible for the maintenance and update of their own web pages. For simplicity, our webmaster can create the pages for you, using the template set up on the international site, which has been designed to be easy to use and update. Quick Guides are available at [www.democratsabroad.org/help/pages](http://www.democratsabroad.org/help/pages). The Executive Director can provide your committee with a password, once our webmaster has created the pages for you. Information for start-up committees is updated for them.

A committee may also have its own website, and a link can be provided through the Democrats Abroad site. However, your events should still be updated on the Democrats Abroad Country Committee website so that they can appear in the worldwide calendar.

### **There are four specific sections for each committee:**

**Static Home Page:** Events appear at the top of the page, followed by information about your committee. You might wish to include current information such as text about the Democrats Abroad Platform, caucus system, overseas voting specifics, an editorial from one of your members...

**Contacts:** Include e-mail addresses for your Chair and Vice Chair, and for other officers (Membership, Treasurer) if you wish. Never include bank account information. Instead, include contact information for your Treasurer. (We strongly recommend that the local officers use a standard e-mail address, such as chair-[countrycode]@democratsabroad.org. This will ease the transition of officers over the years, and will protect private e-mail addresses. Contact the DA webmaster for details.) For security purposes, you might not want to include any other address information. Make sure this page is updated whenever necessary as your officers change or have a new address. If your committee has a blog, you might include its URL in this section.

**Events** (dated and undated): Event information, which also goes into the worldwide events list in the main calendar. Dated events automatically expire. If you are concerned about security issues in your country, provide a contact e-mail address for more information rather than full location information.

**Static Welcome Page:** An opportunity to include other information about your committee and Democrats Abroad.

## **B. The Membership Database**

We must exercise great care in handling the names, addresses, and other information associated with both our members and any others who may seek information through our organization. It is our longstanding policy that our membership list is not for distribution or sale, and cannot be shared with individuals (even other members of Democrats Abroad) or outside organizations.

All members of Democrats Abroad must be entered in the DPCA on-line database. It is our primary resource for reaching members, whether on a worldwide basis or by country, chapter, U.S. voting state,

The database has facilities for sending e-mail messages to members and, of course, for printing out mailing labels.

It is the responsibility of each Country Committee to maintain accurate and updated records of its membership, and to comply with the following data protection policy.

### **Data Protection Policy**

All persons having access to membership data must be very cautious and observe the policy indicated below. Questions in the first instance may be directed to the International Counsel, International Chair, International Vice-chair, Regional Vice-chairs, or Executive Director. The safest way to ensure compliance is not to transfer data to non-officers.

**Access:** With respect to data access, DA's firm, longstanding policy is that no one other than officers of DPCA, the Executive Director, and local DA officers may have access to membership data in any form. We do not permit data transfer to anyone, not to the Democratic National Committee, not to Democratic candidates, not to anyone!

Sometimes a Country Committee has been asked to send out a mailing for another entity. That may create other issues, such as FEC compliance, but those aside, cooperation is only permissible if DA maintains full control of the data. That is to say, do not give mailing lists or even mailing labels to outside entities, ever!. Any such mailing must be done entirely by DA without giving any third party access to the names or data of recipients. If mailings are handled by a mailing house, it is permissible to give access to address data but only when there is a signed confidentiality and non-use agreement in hand that has been approved by the International Counsel and International Chair.

**Usage:** As a corollary, no one with access to the data may make any use of it for any reason other than our own organic official business. One may not make personal or commercial use of or reveal data to third parties for any cause.

Less obviously but still true, one may not download data for the purposes of making political pitches or running for office, even within DA. Mechanisms other than privately accessing official rolls exist to help DA candidates to get out their message, e.g., through nominating committees that disseminate candidate messages equally to all.

**Identity:** Importantly as well, we do not allow Country Committees to confirm or deny to outsiders (e.g., the press) whether a certain person is or is not a member, as even that information is protected. This confidentiality protection is very important to all of us.

Together, let us ensure our members' privacy and safety and that only legitimate usage occurs.

**Technical Footnote with practical consequences:** Membership in Democrats Abroad is essentially international, not local in nature. Since the database is maintained on servers in the U.S., Country Committees everywhere should encourage new members to join directly through our web-based membership page. Ideally, this information is immediately accessible for the respective Country Committee of residence. We are working toward refining capacities and policies.

As long as members sign up locally, all membership forms must include the same disclaimer and waiver as exist on our website. We need to ensure that our members have opted in to the transfer of their data to the US, given the 72-odd countries in which we operate and the ensuing plethora of laws, on, for example, data deletion, holding sensitive information on political stances, ethnicity, individual access rights, transfer privacy guarantees, even the use of cookies and secure Internet transfer methods. Hard copies or digitized membership forms must be maintained for inspection.

**Confidentiality agreement:** To ensure the confidentiality of database information, all persons having access will be required to sign a confidentiality undertaking.

## C. Overseas Democrat Newsletter

The *Overseas Democrat* is the international newsletter of Democrats Abroad, published quarterly, with extra issues during presidential election years. Its goal is to help keep all Democrats around the world connected to the political process and to events in Democrats Abroad. The newsletter includes information on the activities of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, such as meetings, campaigns, and legislative initiatives. It also is the place for Country Committees to share news about their programs and achievements, since a good way to attract new members in, say, Thailand may also work in Latvia. The newsletter also includes the Letter from Washington and other articles (usually by members or former members of Democrats Abroad) on political issues and events.

The *Overseas Democrat* is available at [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org) in two forms: an Acrobat PDF file with the articles and graphics laid out in A4 format and individual text files for each article. Country committees are encouraged to use all or as much of the content as they wish in communicating with their members by, for example, downloading the PDF and printing or e-mailing all of it or only the pages of interest, downloading the text files and using them in a local printed or electronic newsletter, or including links to each of the articles of interest in an e-mail message.

To submit an article, a report on Country Committee activities, a photograph, or a suggestion, please contact [editor@democratsabroad.org](mailto:editor@democratsabroad.org).

See *Appendix E1* for a sample.

## D. News From Democrats Abroad E-Newsletter

**News from Democrats Abroad** is a newsletter e-mailed to all members of Democrats Abroad, monthly during the quieter parts of the election cycle, ramping up to weekly e-mailings as election deadlines near.

It is designed to give all members, and especially those who do not attend meetings, news they can use about Democratic politics, issues, and voting, in a brief, readable format.

Each issue provides news about what Democrats Abroad is doing and actions that members can take, to sustain their interest and empower them. It also informs members of the results of our leadership's hard work on resolutions growing out of our members' concerns and election law changes, for example. In election years, the focus is necessarily on voting abroad, to encourage people to use the [VoteFromAbroad.org](http://VoteFromAbroad.org) (VFA) website and to spread the word about it, which the e-mail format makes easy. The e-newsletter also includes links to the OpEd articles and other valuable content on the [www.DemocratsAbroad.org](http://www.DemocratsAbroad.org) website, including the Wednesday Wire and Letter from Washington, and to other Democratic Party websites.

The results from the ten issues e-mailed out before 2006 election were quite positive, with spikes in VFA usage after each issue and a rise in hits on the DA website and contributions to its Letters to the WebEditor section. The newsletter also proved to serve the additional function of giving members a new place to bring suggestions or questions, which are then forwarded to the appropriate country committee or officer. While members may opt out of the e-newsletter mailings, the opt-out rate has been very low. Thus, DA will continue to refine the e-newsletter as an effective tool, used in conjunction with the VFA and DA websites, for reaching our members, building the organization, and getting out the vote.

## E. Letter from Washington

The Letter from Washington is a monthly feature, written by Tom Fina, Executive Director Emeritus, sent to our donor base and DPCA members, and posted on the website.

*See Appendix E2 for a sample.*

## F. Wednesday Wire

The Wednesday Wire is a weekly update, written by John McQueen, sent to DPCA members, and posted on the website.

*See Appendix E3 for a sample.*

## G. E-mail discussion groups (“listservs”)

### INTERNATIONAL YAHOO GROUPS

**1) The DPCA-Leadership** Yahoo Group includes DPCA members plus Chapter Chairs, Country Committee Board Members, Committee Chairs, Appointed Officers and past DPCA members. Discussion is strictly limited to DPCA business. Discussion is moderated and membership is by invitation only.

**2) The DemsAbroad** Yahoo Group is a general interest discussion forum for any overseas Democrats. Discussion is moderated and membership is open to all.

**3) The DPCAMembers** Yahoo Group is restricted to voting members of the DPCA (Country Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, International Officers, and DNC Members). It is not in daily use. It remains dormant in the event that we need to go into closed-door discussions online. Discussion is moderated and membership is by invitation only.

### LOCAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

In addition to joining these discussion groups, a Country Committee can form its own. One recommendation is to create two: `Announce@[domainname]` a straightforward read-only list for important announcements only, and `Talk@[domainname]`, for posting a greater variety of messages, such as press articles, as well as discussion among members. Members should be encouraged to choose one of the two, since all announcements would be sent out to the discussion group as well as the announcements list.

**(1) Talk@** - This e-mail group might receive several postings per day, mainly about interesting articles people have read. Postings should be appropriate, clear, and readable—for example, no forwards of forwards of forwards. All members of the group may post on it.

**(2) Announce@** - This group receives no more than one posting per week: invitations to events and important announcements only. It is read-only; only the moderator can post messages.

You may wish to send a reminder of the following suggested posting guidelines for Talk@ to the group occasionally:

**1. Readability** – Please make sure that all text in your posting is clean, clear, and readable, i.e., no carets, no random line breaks, no extraneous headers, no forwards of forwards of forwards.

**2. Reference** – Do not reproduce copyrighted material in full. Provide a summary and/or extract and a clickable URL to the original source, as well as information on author and date of publication.

**3. Introduction** – If you wish to share a summary or extract of an article with the list, please write a short personal introduction to it. Do not assume that everyone will understand why you are passing it along. We are a diverse group. People will attribute attitudes and opinions to you based on the content you post. Be clear and state your position up front. Please take the time to explain why you think this article should be read: what's new about it, how it is relevant, what your opinion of it is.

**4. Tone** – Consider your audience. Don't assume we all share your views. Blowing off steam will turn off readers who hold other opinions. Venting your emotions is not a substitute for convincing argumentation.

**5. Courtesy** – There is a wide spectrum of opinion in our group, but we are still DEMOCRATS Abroad. Please keep discussions focused on the issues and avoid personal references. In the coming year we must remain focused on a single goal: electing Democrats. We refuse to be divided and conquered.

**6. Humor** – Sorry, no jokes. There is a time and place for them. This isn't it. Besides, once you post one humor piece, where do you stop?

**7. No E-Mail Petitions** – You can, however, forward a link to a web-based petition.

**8. To Unsubscribe** – Do not set your e-mail group up so that people can automatically unsubscribe. Instead, have members e-mail the moderator. Members may wish to change from one of your groups to the other rather than unsubscribe entirely. If they are moving, you will want to capture up-to-date information on them for the database.

## H. Blogs: Guidelines for Country Committees

Readers have to take the initiative to go to a blog and read its content. Like magazines, blogs thrive or wither depending on their success in attracting and holding an audience. A well-designed blog will, like a good magazine, have a clear sense of its intended audience and provide a continuing stream of *new* material to attract repeat visits.

Don't post anything that isn't evidently interesting, useful, or entertaining. People visit blogs for informed opinion, humor, information that's hard to find elsewhere, or pointers they'll want to use. Web users simply won't revisit sites that don't reward them for their time.

So:



- Make it relevant
- Make it short (provide an URL rather than placing the whole text in your note)
- Use plain, powerful language
- If you have an opinion, make it clear
- . . . or make it funny.

Note, too, that the same basic rules should apply as when dealing with the press: bloggers must be very clear that they are speaking for themselves and not for the Democratic Party or the U.S. government.

One interesting way to use blogs is to combine the blog with e-mail alerts to subscribers—the sort of thing big news sites do. A message might therefore alert subscribers to an upcoming Democrats Abroad event and contain the URL to the blog, where details are available.

Don't forget to include your blog address on the website pages for your Country Committee, and to let your members know about it.

## **I. Democrats Abroad at Home**

A number of Democrats Abroad returning to the United States can still maintain ties with our organization by joining Democrats Abroad at Home.

## **J. Campaign Manager**

During election years, the Democrats Abroad Campaign Manager sends regular updates on key races throughout the country. A sample campaign update is included in the Appendices.

## **K. International Press Secretary**

The International Press Secretary is the primary media contact for Democrats Abroad. The Press Secretary schedules interviews with members of Democrats Abroad, keeps members informed of updates and talking points, writes press releases, and provides media guidelines. Local committees should keep the International Press Secretary informed of any coverage by providing hard copies or links to articles or television coverage. For additional media support, see Section D of the Appendices.