**DPCA Resolution 2019: VFA Integrity and Sustainability**

### To ensure the long-term integrity, sustainability, stability, and security of VoteFromAbroad.org as the premier resource of Democrats Abroad for growing our membership and registering voters.

Submitted by:

Merrill Oates, Chair DA-Hungary

WHEREAS, the VoteFromAbroad.org (VFA) website is the single most important on-line asset Democrats Abroad (DA) has as a tool for both acquiring new members and registering voters – VFA is the “Crown Jewel” of Democrats Abroad;

WHEREAS, it is essential that this tool be developed and maintained with the highest standards of accurate information for voters, of technical security and best practice, and of compliance with appropriate laws and regulations;

WHEREAS, DA has proposed ending our existing hosting, maintenance, and support contract with the independent, non-partisan, Overseas Vote Foundation/US Vote Foundation, which has hosted VoteFromAbroad (VFA2) since 2014 and throughout the 2018 election cycle;

WHEREAS, DA has undertaken to custom develop our own fully in-house owned and maintained version of VFA (now referred to as VFA3);

WHEREAS, the new VFA3 offers many new innovations and capabilities that can improve the voter experience and potentially expand our voter outreach capabilities, in ways that may not otherwise be available;

WHEREAS, the responsibility to maintain, update, and support an in-house software platform now falls fully on the shoulders of DA volunteers, and as this obligation has proven to be a significant challenge, liability, and cost to the organization in the past;

WHEREAS, DA must ensure that we have appropriate and sustainable governance oversight structures and established management processes to sustain such technical operations and commitments beyond the office terms and volunteer efforts of any one person, or group of individuals;

WHEREAS, DPCA is the governing body of DA, it is essential for DPCA leadership to establish and maintain suitable governance structures and technical maintenance processes that ensure appropriate accountability, sustainability, compliance, transparency, and security for the long-term successful management of VFA – as well as for the body to remain reasonably informed of the costs and organizational implications of the policies and intended uses of VFA3,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

A *VFA Policy Steering Committee* of five (5) or more individuals shall be established with responsibility for reviewing, approving, and defining the high-level features, priorities, policies, and appropriate uses of VFA by Democrats Abroad. This Committee will be responsible for, or appropriately delegate responsibility for, maintaining up-to-date and accurate content within VoteFromAbroad.org.

The *VFA Policy Steering Committee* shall regularly report its activities and recommendations to the International Executive Committee. All budgetary-related recommendations shall receive approval from the International Executive Committee, prior to implementation. The International Executive Committee may, at any time, adopt rules and regulations on the governance of VFA, which shall be binding upon the *VFA Policy Steering Committee*.

A separate (non-overlapping) *VFA Technical Management Committee* of three (3) or more individuals shall be established to oversee and guide the technical implementation and maintenance of the VFA platform. This Committee shall be responsible for defining and guiding all technical configuration and development work done by external or internal software engineers. The *VFA Technical Management Committee* shall report directly to the *VFA Policy Steering Committee*.

The appointment of Committee members shall be made by the International Chair with the advice and consent of the International Executive Committee;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,

That the membership of these two committees shall be appointed within thirty (30) days of the adoption of this resolution.

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Preface:

In order for DA to assume the responsibility of fully managing and sustaining all technical aspects of a custom designed, non-supported, software platform, and to ensure trust in the integrity of the service, DA must define a structure and process by which it is accountable and transparent to our leadership as to how this service is being developed and maintained.

This resolution proposes the creation of a VFA Policy Steering Committee to define the policies and priorities for our VFA platform, and a VFA Technical Management Standing Committee to oversee the development work.