



INTRO TO YDA: ORGANIZATIONAL OUTLINE AND GUIDEBOOK

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Updated to reflect the major changes made to the YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention as proposed by the Ad-Hoc Committee Modernization of the Charter, Bylaws, and Standing Rules and subsequently adopted by the National Committee in December of 2022.

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Acknowledgments

This first edition of the guidebook was created by Quentin Wathum-Ocama (MN), President of the Young Democrats of America, with valuable feedback provided by Rebecca Pinn (MA), the Former Secretary of the Young Democrats of America, Genevieve Mina (AK), the Former President of the Alaska Young Democrats, Jen House (OH), the Former President of the Ohio Young Democrats and Chair of the Young Democrats of America Association of Chartered Unit Presidents, and the other National Officers of the Young Democrats of America.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to concisely explain the overall structure of the Young Democrats of America in a manner that is far more accessible and digestible for our members and the general public. This document may not be able to explain every facet or aspect of the structure and processes of the Young Democrats of America and we encourage readers to refer to the Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention (which are the organization's governing documents) for answers that require greater specificity. You can find a link to the Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention of the Young Democrats of America on our website (www.yda.org) in the footer of the page.

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Introduction, Organizational Background, and Mission & Vision

The Young Democrats of America (YDA) is the largest youth-led, partisan political organization in the nation. The Young Democrats of America mobilizes young people under the age of 36 to participate in the electoral process to elect Democrats, influence the ideals of the Democratic Party, advocate for progressive issues, and train the next generation of progressive leaders. The Young Democrats of America has been the official youth arm of the Democratic Party since its founding in 1932.

The YDA has over 25,000 members nation-wide in chapters in 49 states and U.S. territories – including high-school and college students, young workers, young professionals, and young families – Our membership reflects the broad diversity of our nation and the Democratic Party.

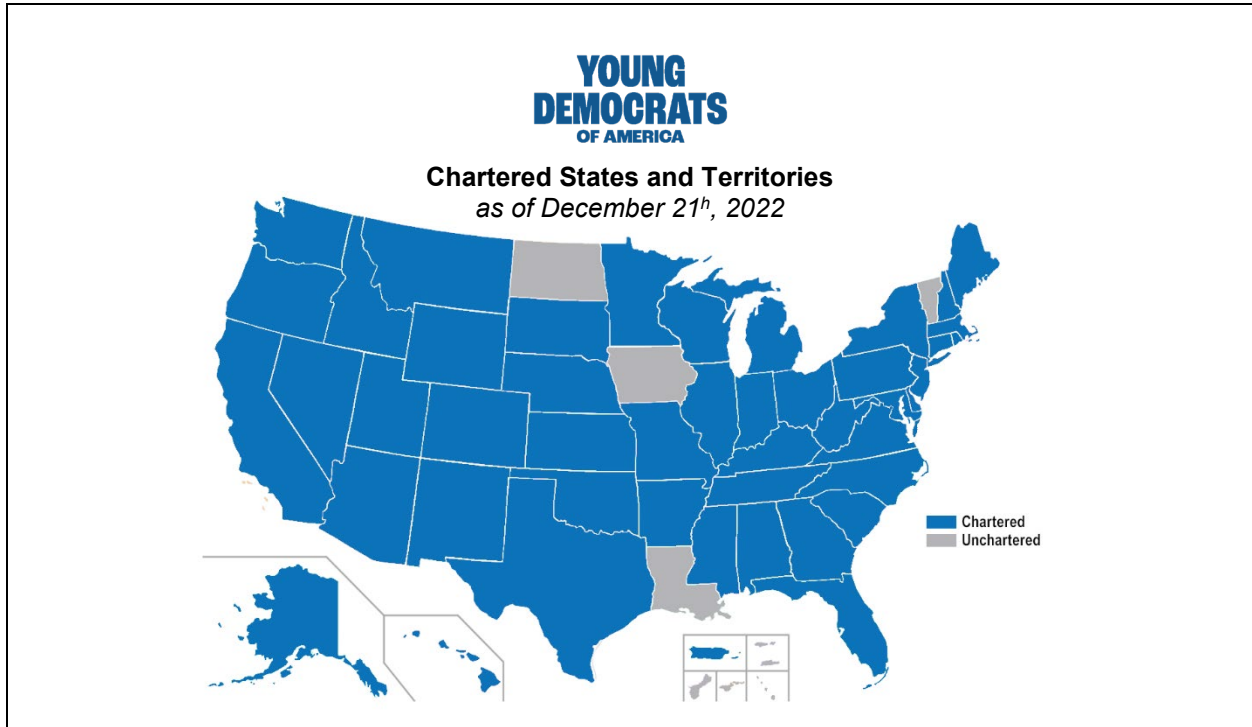
Since 2002, the YDA has operated independently of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) as a nonfederal 527 political organization, while maintaining voting representation on the DNC through the YDA President, and two elected Democratic National Committee-people. The President of YDA also serves on the DNC Executive Committee

The mission and vision of YDA is to “engage young people across the country to train the next generation of Democratic leaders, elect Democrats, and advocate for progressive issues. The vision of this organization is to be the hub for Democratic youth engagement that cultivates the party leaders of today and tomorrow”



Group Photo from the National Conference and National Committee Meeting in Boise, Idaho during the Spring of 2022

Map of Chartered Units



Chartered States and Territories

- | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Alabama | District of Columbia | Kentucky | Nevada | Rhode Island |
| Alaska | Florida | Louisiana | New Hampshire | South Dakota |
| Arizona | Guam | Maine | New Jersey | South Carolina |
| Arkansas | Georgia | Maryland | New Mexico | Tennessee |
| California | Hawaii | Massachusetts | New York | Texas |
| Colorado | Idaho | Michigan | North Carolina | Utah |
| Connecticut | Illinois | Minnesota | Ohio | Virginia |
| Democrats Abroad | Indiana | Mississippi | Oklahoma | Washington |
| Delaware | Kansas | Missouri | Oregon | West Virginia |
| | | Nebraska | Pennsylvania | Wisconsin |
| | | | Puerto Rico | Wyoming |

Unchartered States and Territories

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| American Samoa | Northern Mariana Islands |
| Iowa | U.S. Virgin Islands |
| Montana | Vermont |
| North Dakota | Northern Mariana Islands |

National Committee

National Committee is the governing body of the YDA between National Convention; the Committee has broad authority except for powers reserved to the National Convention (e.g., electing officers other than the National Committee Representatives and approving the Platform).



National Conference and National Committee Meeting in Buffalo New York during the Winter of 2022

Membership

The National Committee fluctuates in the size of its membership but typically is comprised from 150 to 160 individuals. Individuals who hold multiple voting positions are only entitled to one vote on the National Committee. The National Committee is comprised of the following individuals

- YDA National Officers
- Chairs of Constituency Caucuses
- Presidents of Chartered Units
- 2 National Committee Representatives (not of the same gender identity) from each Chartered Unit
- The President of the High School Democrats of America or their designee
- The president of the College Democrats of America or their designee

Additionally, administrative officers, committee chairs, committee vice chairs, and committee secretaries are non-voting members of the National Committee.

Meeting Notice and Requirements

The National Committee meets during National Conferences that are held at least twice per year. National Committee Meetings must alternate between each of the four regions during the two year biennium (although, if no chartered unit within a region wishes to host a meeting then the meeting may take place anywhere). Meetings are also allowed to take place completely virtual. National Committee Meetings must be announced by the YDA Secretary with at least 60-day notice to the YDA National Committee and the general public. Being a member of the National Committee does not prevent individuals from registering and participating in other events and activities at Meetings such as attending workshops & trainings, hearing speeches from elected prominent Democrats, and participating in social events and outings.

National Committee (Continued)

Proxies and Remote Participation

Members of the National Committee who cannot attend a meeting are able to send proxies to other Young Democrats to vote in their stead¹. Individuals who do not hold a voting position vote on the National Committee may only carry two proxies at one time (allowing two votes total). Individuals who already hold a voting position vote on the National Committee also may only carry two proxies at one time (allowing three votes total). Proxy Forms may be submitted electronically to the YDA Secretary. Since the COVID 19 Pandemic, YDA has also allowed members of the National Committee to participate and vote remotely.

Meetings

Some of the things that the YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention requires or allows the National Committee to do during meeting is as follows:

- Approve proxies of National Committee Members²
- Approve various resolutions³
- Amend and adopt Charter, Bylaws, and Standing Rules⁴
- Approve reports from Special Committees
- Elect 2 Democratic National Committee Representatives (before July in even-numbered years)
- Any other relevant business that comes before the body

A quorum of the National Committee consists of representatives from 25% of chartered units.

National Committee Update Calls

The National Committee may also meet via conference call. These conference calls usually include important updates from YDA Elected and Appointed Officers and can at times feature a guest speaker. National Committee conference calls happen usually on a semiregular basis (e.g. every other month).

¹ Proxies from YDA National Officers must be to other members of the National Committee

² Report from the Credentials Committee

³ Report from the Resolutions Committee

⁴ Report from the Rules Committee

National Committee (Continued)

Emergency Rescheduling, Cancellation, and Movement of Meetings

Meetings of the National Committee may be rescheduled, canceled, moved to either a new location, or switched to a videoconference through a:

- Receipt of a written request of the National Committee signed by at least 1/3 of the current membership of the National Committee to the Secretary.
- Vote of 4/5 of the Executive Committee

Meetings of the National Committee may only be moved if there is a serious situation in the host city (e.g. a natural disaster, a terrorist attack, an epidemic, or a declaration of a state of emergency) or in the event of the death of an YDA officer (30 days before the meeting).

Meetings that have been rescheduled or moved must be announced by the YDA Secretary to the YDA National Committee and the general public. Meetings moved to a videoconference must be announced by the YDA Secretary with at least 30-day notice to the YDA National Committee and the general public.

Electronic Voting

Sometimes an urgent matter or issue arises that requires the National Committee to take action in a more immediate fashion, usually in the time in between in-person meetings of the National Committee. An electronic vote may be called either by the President or by a petition which has been signed by at least 20% of the National Committee and filed with the Secretary

Petitions need to have the signatures⁵ of at least 20% of the National Committee for a vote by mail or internet to take place. Once the required number of signatures have been gathered, the petition is then turned into the YDA Secretary. Matters normally handled at meetings of the National Committee to the members of the National Committee through the mail, or by means of electronic voting, provided that:

- There is at least one opportunity for open, un-muted and un-censored debate must occur prior to the beginning of the voting period. Notice for debate on a petition shall be announced no less than 7 days to all members of the National Committee.
- Members have at least 7 days to return their ballot.
- The list of members voting, and their votes cast are distributed to the National Committee.

⁵ Can include electronic signatures or personal information captured via a online form

National Convention

The National Convention is highest authority within YDA. The National Convention is held biennially in June, July or August in odd numbered years. National Conventions must be announced by the YDA with at least 60-day notice to the YDA National Committee and the general public.

The National Convention is the highest attended YDA event as every state is allotted delegate spots based on a formula that factors in the size of their state, their involvement in YDA, and various other variables.

The National Convention is planned and ran by the Convention Management Committee who work closely with the Convention Chair, Secretary, Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms, and the various leaders of the Convention Committees. All these various positions are appointed by the President.



General Session of the 2019 YDA National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

Delegates

Delegates are individuals chosen to represent their state or territory at the YDA National Convention. Each state or territory is responsible for creating a process for delegate selection. Being a delegate means you participate in Convention business like General Session, Committees, and Voting but also allows an individual to attend workshops & trainings, hear speeches from elected prominent Democrats, and participate in social events and outings.

Since 2019, each delegate can receive at least 3 votes at minimum and a maximum of 7 votes for YDA National Officer elections based on their state or territory's distance to the convention site. The largest possible size of a state or territorial delegation is currently 34 (this is also dependent on a variety of factors); the vast majority states or territories would not need to bring this many people to cast all their allocated votes. Each state or territory chapter has the ability to submit a list of approved delegates to YDA but if those delegates do not show up then anyone who registers may be awarded delegate status. Additionally, chartered units may designate up to 25% of their delegate allotment, rounded to the nearest whole number, as virtual delegates

Delegate status does not prevent individuals from registering and participating in other events and activities at the National Convention.

National Convention (Continued)

Convention Committees

The National Convention has a Standing Committee on Platform, Rules, and Credentials. Each state or territory can send one delegate to these committees to be their voting representative; state or territorial leadership can designate who that representative is. All work of the Standing Committees is forwarded in the form of a “Report” to the delegates of the National Convention for approval.

Brief descriptions of the Standing Committees at Convention can be found below:

Credentials Committee	Platform Committee	Rules Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviews all the chartering applications and make recommendations to the Convention for which ones should be approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review platform changes and make recommendations to the Convention for which ones should be approved ▶ Create, receive and review resolutions and make recommendations to the committee for which ones should be submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review rules changes and make recommendations to the Convention for which ones should be approved ▶ Reviews the charters of YDA Constituency & Issues Caucuses

General Session

The YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention requires that the National Convention do the following during its general session:

- Have candidates’ speeches and debate and elect YDA National Officers
- Approve two-year charters of States and Territories⁶
- Amend and adopt a two-year national platform⁷
- Approve various resolutions⁸
- Amend and adopt the Standing Rules for National Convention⁹
- Amend and adopt the YDA Charter, Bylaws, and Standing Rules¹⁰
- Reauthorize or approve the charters of YDA Constituency & Issues Caucuses¹¹

⁶ Report from the credentials Committee

⁷ Part of the report from the Platform Committee

⁸ Part of the report from the Platform Committee

⁹Part of the report from the Rules Committee

¹⁰ Part of the report from the Rules Committee

¹¹ Additionally, the Officers of YDA Constituency & Issues Caucuses are elected outside of general session.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the principle coordinating body within YDA in between meetings of the National Committee. The Executive Committee discuss, plan, and coordinate activities of YDA with most decisions being non-binding in nature. Additionally, the Executive Committee schedules National Committee meetings, distribute funds, hire staff, outside vendors, and contractors.

Membership

The Executive Committee is comprised of the following individuals

- YDA National Officers
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Association of Chartered Unit Presidents
- Chair of the Council of Caucus Chairs.

YDA Officers

YDA is led by the President along with 9 other directly elected officers and two ex-officio officers. The following Officers are elected at each National Conventions in odd-numbered years:

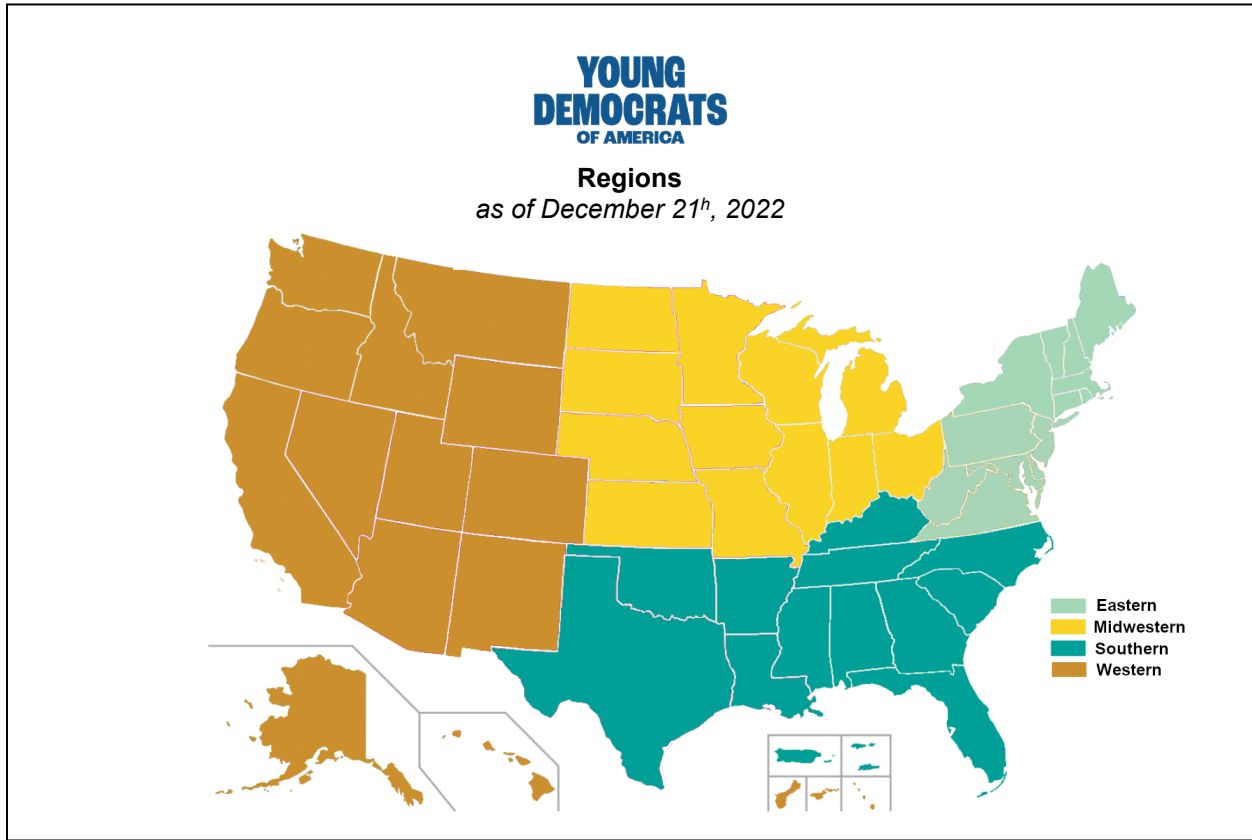
- President
- Executive Vice President (not of the same gender identity the President))
- 4 Regional Vice Presidents
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- 2 Democratic National Committee Representatives (not of the same gender identity)

Regions and Regional Vice Presidents

YDA has 4 regions that serve to organize and advocate in their various geographies across the country. Each is led by a Regional Vice President elected by the members of the region at the National Convention. Each of the 4 Regional Vice Presidents act as the liaison to their region and engage chartered units within that region. Regional Vice Presidents coordinate Days of Action within their region and make regional appointments to committees after consulting with each chartered unit president within the region.

Region Map

A map and list of the Regional Caucuses can be found below:



Eastern

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Democrats Abroad
- District of Columbia
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New York
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia

Midwestern

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin

Southern

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- North Carolina
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- U.S. Virgin Islands

Western

- Alaska
- American Samoa
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Nevada
- California
- Guam
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Montana
- New Mexico
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Oregon
- Utah
- Washington
- Wyoming

Constituency Caucuses

YDA has Constituency Caucuses that serve to organize and advocate for a unique community or issue within the national organization. The charters of all YDA Constituency Caucuses are preliminary reauthorize or approve by the delegates of the National Convention. The National Committee, at its first meeting after a National Convention, will issue and renew caucus charters upon recommendation from the National Convention, provided that the caucus complies with all rules related to chartering. A caucus charter that has not been renewed by the end of the first National Committee meeting after the National Convention terminates at that time. Additionally, the Officers of YDA Constituency & Issues Caucuses are elected outside of general session at National Convention. The Chair of each Constituency and Issues Caucuses serves as a voting member of the National Committee.

As of 2019, YDA has the following 15 Constituency Caucuses:

College Caucus
Women's Caucus
Black Caucus
Disability Issues Caucus
Jewish Caucus

Muslim Caucus
High School
Rural Caucus
Labor Caucus
LGBTQA Caucus

Hispanic Caucus
Veterans Issues Caucus
AAPI Caucus
Native American Issues
Environmental Caucus



2016 Black Caucus of the Young Democrats of America Progressive Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.



Labor Caucus of the Young Democrats meeting and elections during the 2019 YDA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

Auxiliary Organizations

YDA has two auxiliary bodies: The Council of Caucus Chairs (CCC) and the Association of Chartered Unit Presidents (ACUP). Auxiliary bodies often meet via conference call throughout the biennium and in conjunction with the meetings of the National Committee.

Association of Chartered Unit Presidents

ACUP is comprised of the all the Presidents of states and territories that are chartered with YDA. ACUP elects a Chair, a Vice Chair, and Secretary and at a meeting of the YDA National Committee that takes place after September 1st in odd-numbered years. The Chair of ACUP shall serve as an ex-officio Officer of YDA.



State and territorial Presidents at the conclusion of the January 2018 Association of Chartered Unit Presidents Meeting in New York City, New York

Committees

The National Committee has a Committee on Rules, Resolutions, Meeting & Site Selection, Diversity & Outreach Committee. Each chartered unit can send one delegate to Rules and Resolutions Committee to be their voting representative; each of the 4 Regional Vice Presidents select two members of different gender identities from different chartered units to be the voting representatives to the Meeting & Site Selection and the Diversity & Outreach Committees. The National Committee may establish a special committee to carry out any duty deemed necessary

All work of the Committee is forwarded in the form of a “Report” to the representatives of the National Committee for approval. A quorum of a Committee consists of representatives from 25% of chartered units.

You can find the example of the duties of the Committees below:

Rules Committee	Resolutions Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Receive and review rules changes and make recommendations to the committee for which ones should be approved ▶ Provide a Rules report at each National Committee meeting, submitting a copy to the Secretary for the minutes and to update any necessary sections of the YDA charter and bylaws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create, receive and review resolutions and make recommendations to the committee for which ones should be submitted ▶ Provide a Resolutions report at each National Committee meeting, submitting a copy to the Secretary for the minutes
Diversity & Outreach Committee	Meetings & Site Selection Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work with the regional and constituency caucuses to ensure inclusion in all aspects of YDA ▶ Work to establish recommended guidelines to encourage participation by groups underrepresented in Democratic politics and YDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create criteria for and receive and review bids for National Committee meetings and make recommendations to the committee and Executive Board for which city should be chosen ▶ Create criteria for and receive and review bids for National Convention and make recommendations to the National Committee for which city should be chosen ▶ Provide guidance to bidding cities for how to be successful in their bid

Judicial Council

The Judicial Council resolves complaints and disputes and pursues, when appropriate, a disciplinary recommendation to the National Committee.

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction over intraunit disputes and complaints that have exhausted all other remediating options provided for in the unit's governing documents, interunit disputes and complaints, and national level disputes and complaints, including, but not limited to hearing cases that may result in removal or expulsion of an elected officer, appointed officer, member of the National Committee, or member of any committee.

The Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of each The Judicial Council is appointed by the President with conformation by the National Committee. The membership of the Judicial Council is comprised of two members of different gender identities from each region appointed by the regional vice president who are not voting members of the National Committee. The General Counsel serves in an advisory capacity as ex-officio, non-voting member of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council or its Chair can invite the Parliamentarian to provide limited guidance on parliamentary procedure.

Any member of the National Committee appointed officer, or member of a committee may initiate a complaint on behalf of themselves or any other member. Any complaint is sent to the Judicial Council Chair and General Counsel.

Amendments

The YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention can be amended by electronic vote, at any National Committee Meeting or at a National Convention.

Submissions for National Committee Meetings

For amendments to the YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention be considered at National Convention they must be submitted at least 30 days in advance to the Chair of the Convention Committee on Rules and the YDA Secretary. All proposed amendments will be made publicly available by the YDA Secretary at 7 days before the start of any National Committee meeting. The YDA Charter states that only members of the National Committee may submit amendments at National Committee meetings.

Submissions for Convention

For amendments to the YDA Charter, Standing Rules, and Call to Convention be considered at National Committee Meetings they must be submitted at least 30 days in advance to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and the YDA Secretary. All proposed amendments will be made publicly available by the YDA Secretary at 7 days before the start National Committee Meeting.

Charter

The YDA Charter may be amended by a:

- 2/3 vote of the registered Delegates to the National Convention voting and present
- 2/3 vote of the National Committee voting and present
-

Standing Rules and Call to Convention

The YDA Charter may be amended by a:

- Majority (50% + 1) vote of the registered Delegates to the National Convention voting and present
- Majority (50% + 1) vote of the National Committee voting and present

Resolutions Submissions

The Resolutions Committee reviews all resolutions and motions regarding public policy, the honoring of an individual, and any other subject matter that is not within the jurisdiction of any other standing committee that is filed with the National Committee. Any resolution or motion that is referred to the committee regarding public policy shall include a plan of action for the Young Democrats of America to support the public policy. Before any motion or resolution that contains a provision requiring any officer to act filed with the National Committee and referred to the Resolutions Committee is considered, the sponsor of the motion or resolution shall inform the officer that would be required to act that the motion or resolution has been filed and provide a copy of the resolution to the officer.

Electronic Methods

Meeting by Videoconference, Teleconference, or Online Conference.

Official meetings of the Executive Committee, the National Standing Committees, Select Committees, and Judicial Council may be held by videoconference, , provided that the following provisions apply:

1. Members shall be allowed full participation in un-muted and un-censored real-time discussion, and all members must be able to hear or see the communication from all other members.
2. Attendance by members participating can be accurately recorded.
3. An online balloting system shall be in place for any question or matter put before the body. If this is not feasible, then roll call votes shall be taken on any vote upon the request of one member.
4. No Officer or National Committee member may interfere with the procedures regarding notification or execution of a videoconference, teleconference or online conference without providing to the convening officer conclusive evidence that said meeting would cause direct financial or legal harm to YDA