



Code of Conduct
of the
HAMDEN DEMOCRATIC
TOWN COMMITTEE

Approved at the HDTC meeting February 9, 2021

HAMDEN DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct (incorporating both ethical and conduct standards) applies to all members of the Hamden Democratic Town Committee (HDTC). In the interest of fostering an open and welcoming environment, all members are expected to make participation in the HDTC a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, level of experience, ability, socioeconomic status, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion or lack thereof, or sexual identity and orientation. The HDTC is committed to these rules and when appropriate it will exercise its inherent rights as a deliberative assembly to punish serious or repeated violations of the HDTC Code of Conduct.

HDTC members understand and acknowledge that:

- Their work will be used by other people, and they in turn, will depend on the work of others.
- Decisions they make will affect others in the community.
- Disagreements happen but are not an excuse for poor behavior and bad manners.
- The HDTC convenes and collaborates in many physical and virtual spaces.
- Members must promote a culture of respect, inclusion and equity.
- Members should ensure their own safety and promote a safe environment for others.
- Members of the HDTC must support the platform of the HDTC in public discussions.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR:

- Members must conduct themselves at all times in ways that reflect favorably on themselves and the HDTC. Members should always remember to use welcoming and inclusive language and be welcoming, inclusive, friendly and patient.
- Members should assume good intent on the part of other speakers and participants.
- Members must be considerate, respectful, and professional by treating all individuals with a sense of dignity, respect and worth.
- Members must make a personal commitment to be nonjudgmental about cultural differences, living conditions and lifestyles.
- Members must not use profane, racist, or other prejudicial, exclusionary, abusive, or sexualized language in any context related to the HDTC.
- Members must not engage in disruptive behavior in any context related to the HDTC.

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- Members must never publish photos, videos, and audio of others if they object or ask to be excluded, though meetings may be live streamed or recorded to make them accessible to eligible attendees. Members must take steps to accommodate live streaming and recording of meetings by announcing to members that live streaming or recording will begin or take place prior to the commencement of any such live streaming or recording.
- Members must never escalate a disagreement by using loud, inflammatory, or derogatory language in any context related to the HDTC.
- Members must respect others' personal space and make physical contact with others only after receiving their consent.
- Members must understand that physical contact (sexual or otherwise) is not appropriate without clearly articulated consent. Consent can be instantly revoked and prior consent, intoxicated comments and/or actions, and incapacity are not consent.
- Members must respect others' property, and property of the organization to which the member belongs.
- Members must immediately cease any behavior that is reasonably perceived as harassing, abusive or violent, and respect others' feelings for what behavior qualifies as such.
- As political leaders in their communities, members are expected to make themselves aware of and reasonably anticipate the sensitivities of others.
- Administrators and contributors to online spaces which address the HDTC or its members, such as webpages and Facebook groups, must respect the reasonably assumed communal nature of such spaces.
- When alcohol is served at HDTC or any other Democratic Party events, members who consume it must do so responsibly, and only at events where alcohol consumption is approved by the HDTC Event Committee and appropriate. This includes but is not limited to not providing alcohol to any person underage and/or consuming alcohol while underage.
- When disagreements do happen, members must work together to solve them effectively and in a way that ensures that all parties have a reasonable opportunity to be heard and understood.

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- People may not understand jokes, sarcasm, and oblique references in the same way that you do. If you think your conversation is making or has made another community member uncomfortable, work conscientiously to make amends and move forward.
- Individuals expressing disagreement must be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard and understood.

FINANCIAL CONFLICTS: Any candidate or elected official or their staff members (local, state, federal) who serves on the HDTC shall recuse himself or herself from motion, debate, vote or any other discussions or proceedings related to the donation of funds to that candidate or official or the expenditure of funds on behalf of the candidate or official.

POSITIONAL CONFLICTS: Members must not take positions detrimental to the principles of the HDTC in public discussions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE: A member of the HDTC must disclose any actual or potential financial interest in the outcome while addressing a HDTC meeting, or through written disclosure prior to the meeting. The disclosure must include that said member or relative of the member has an actual or potential direct or indirect financial interest in advocating for or against a candidate or any initiative.

DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING OR HARASSMENT: Any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment is prohibited. To aid members in their understanding of what is deemed inappropriate behavior, the following definitions are established:

- Discrimination - the prejudicial treatment of an individual on the basis of their actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability.
- Bullying - an action or series of actions intended to demean, intimidate, or humiliate an individual. Bullying can be verbal, physical, or social. It includes but is not limited to: name-calling, threatening to cause physical or social harm, spreading rumors, embarrassing someone in public, or making any kind of unwanted physical contact.
- Harassment - verbal, physical, or sexual conduct intended to threaten, terrorize, or coerce an individual. These actions may be repeated to achieve the desired effect.

REPORTING:

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Any member of the HDTC (complainant) may report concerns about the conduct of another HDTC member (respondent). Complaints may not be submitted anonymously, but the complainant may ask their identity remain confidential to the extent possible.

Any alleged breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported in writing (delivered by mail, in person, or email) to the Chair of the HDTC within 180 days of the most recent offending incident. Any allegation made against the Chair may be referred to any member of the Executive Committee.

Physical battery, sexual assault or any other crime reported to law enforcement shall not be subject to any time limitation.

Any report of a violation of this Code of Conduct must be in writing and must include as much detail as is useful. If possible, specific citations from this policy should be included to help determine the scope and focus of an investigation. Verbal reports, voicemails, text messages, or any other means of message delivery shall not be considered sufficient reporting methods.

PROCEDURES:

When an ethical complaint is made to the Chair, the Chair has 48 hours after receipt to determine whether the complaint falls under the purview of this policy.

When an ethical complaint containing allegations about the Chair is made to another member of the Executive Committee, that member has 48 hours after receipt to consult with other members of the Executive Committee to determine whether the complaint falls under the purview of this policy.

In either case, if such a determination is made, an ad hoc committee, the “Conduct Violation Investigation Committee” (“CVIC”), will be appointed within 7 days, comprising one HDTC member chosen by the complainant(s), one HDTC member chosen by the respondent(s), and one HDTC member chosen by the chair of the HDTC, or if the Chair is the respondent, by the other members of the Executive Committee. A separate CVIC will be appointed for each complaint received. If the complainant or respondent prefer, the HDTC Chair may choose on their behalf. Should the HDTC Chair be the respondent, the complainant may choose another officer to report to and that person will fulfill the duties of the HDTC Chair under this policy.

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The CVIC has an additional 30 days to investigate and meet to render a decision. Upon receipt or initiation of a complaint, the CVIC shall promptly give the respondent a copy thereof. Within 15 days of the receipt of the copy of the complaint, the respondent may submit a written response to the CVIC. The CVIC may conduct an investigation and solicit additional evidence or testimony during their review.

If confidentiality is requested, the CVIC will make a good faith and reasonable effort to maintain it and all members of the CVIC will be duty bound to respect it. Confidentiality will be specifically reviewed and discussed with the complainant at each stage of the CVIC's review to reach an understanding concerning confidentiality for the ongoing process. The complainant will be advised that the CVIC has an equal duty to protect fairness and due process on behalf of the respondent and that the taking of formal action may require disclosure. The respondent will be instructed not to engage the complainant regarding the conduct complaint outside the purview of the CVIC's procedures.

Any HDTC member for whom a written complaint is filed (respondent) shall be given a copy of the complaint, and upon written request shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard and to present evidence to the CVIC.

The CVIC shall have sole discretion for determining the conduct of hearings. The CVIC shall seek to make sure that both the complainant and the respondent have an opportunity to be heard and to present evidence, but the CVIC may limit the testimony and evidence which is presented to it if in the opinion of the CVIC the testimony and evidence in question is irrelevant, unnecessary, redundant, or unreliable.

The CVIC may require, with sufficient written notice, any member of the HDTC to appear before it to provide testimony regarding pending complaints. The CVIC, for this purpose, may administer oaths and require the production of evidence such as documents.

The CVIC is strongly encouraged to find unanimity in their decision, but if not possible, the majority position will be determinative.

CONSEQUENCES:

By the end of 30 days since the CVIC was appointed, the CVIC may take any of the following actions:

- dismiss the complaint and take appropriate corrective action including censure to discourage unfounded or frivolous complaints,

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- offer mentoring to the respondent which will be disclosed to the complainant privately,
- recommend that the HDTC Chair (or the alternate officer if the allegation is by or against the HDTC Chair) remove the respondent from the Executive Committee,
- recommend that the HDTC Chair (or the alternate officer if the allegation is by or against the HDTC Chair) present the violation to the HDTC and request appropriate corrective action including censure and/or removal from the HDTC.