

# The 1-2-3-4 Plan to Build a Party-like Structure

## Considering that...

NYC-DSA wants to build a party-like structure (a “proto-party” or “surrogate party”) that unites all our candidates around a single strategy and platform. We also want to build a base of people who believe in our project, identify with it, and fight for it...

NYC-DSA wants to present an alternative to the failed strategy and politics of the New York Democratic Party leadership...

It is not possible for us to form an independent political party with its own ballot line at this moment. But there are intermediate steps we can take to assert our independence from the politics of the New York Democratic Party leadership and build a party-like structure...

By developing a common brand identity across election cycles, running explicitly as “democratic socialists” (on social media, in literature distributed to people, and in conversations with people), running on common issues, and not identifying explicitly as a “Democrat for...” in our literature, we can increase people’s knowledge of NYC-DSA and sense that we are a separate and independent force opposed to the politics of the New York Democratic Party leadership...

Left-wing parties (and parties of other ideological traditions) everywhere else in the world run under a single brand identity to increase people’s identification with their collective project (see, for example, [MORENA](#) in Mexico, [Die Linke](#) in Germany, the [Partido dos Trabalhadores](#) and the [Partido Socialismo e Liberdade](#) in Brazil)...

We should build DSA’s name recognition and people’s identification with DSA and its strategy and platform, not just the personalities of our candidates. That way, even when we lose elections, we will be setting ourselves up for future elections in the same district to run as DSA candidates and build on people’s growing identification with our project...

If we are going to present an alternative to the Democratic Party in New York that people can recognize and support, we have to be united. And unity means that we need to make sure that there aren’t multiple democratic socialists running in the same race, that all our candidates endorse each other, and that, once elected, NYC-DSA politicians act and vote together as a bloc...

Although we cannot stop “democratic socialists” from running as spoilers against our candidates in races, we can ask them to take a pledge before NYC-DSA even considers endorsing them that they will not run if they are not endorsed by the chapter...

As a chapter we are better positioned to run unified campaigns for the state legislature than for city council...

### **Be it resolved that...**

NYC-DSA will only endorse candidates in state legislative races who commit in their candidate questionnaire to using:

1. One slate. After they receive the NYC-DSA endorsement, candidates will agree to be part of a DSA slate. There will be a coordinated and centralized comms and design team who will develop a strategy for a coordinated launch of the slate, coordinated press, and as much common branding as possible throughout the campaign.
2. Two words. All our candidates should all explicitly, publicly, and prominently identify as “democratic socialists,” including on their literature and mailings and in the scripts they encourage canvassers to use.
3. Three issues. All our candidates should run on at least a few common issues (we suggest three, but the exact number can be flexible) to be determined by the Citywide Leadership Committee ahead of each campaign cycle, so that the issues are tailored to the specific moment and can be tied to priority campaigns. This does not prevent candidates from also running on other issues that are specifically important to their district.

Furthermore, NYC-DSA will ask in the candidate questionnaire all potential candidates for state legislative offices to agree to the following four rules before being considered for an endorsement:

4. Four rules.
  - a. If they do *not* get the NYC-DSA endorsement, they will pledge not to run in the district if NYC-DSA endorses another candidate in that race.
  - b. If they do get the NYC-DSA endorsement, they will downplay their identification as a Democrat as much as possible. Campaigns should try to avoid writing “Democrat for...” on literature, for example. Instead, they might put on their campaign literature something like “Vote in the Democratic Primary on [insert date]” (so that it is clear they are running in the Democratic primary).

- c. If they do get the NYC-DSA endorsement, they will endorse all the other NYC-DSA-endorsed candidates at the same time as the rest of our slate.
- d. If elected, they will join the State Socialists in Office committee and vote as a bloc with the other socialist legislators.

If a candidate for the state legislature does not follow these instructions, the chapter will take this into consideration when they next come up for an endorsement.

This plan will go into effect after the 2022 elections.