CDP RULES PACKET
February 20, 2026

California Democratic Party Rules Committee Preliminary Agenda
Friday, February 20, 2026 at 2:00pm
Moscone Convention Center - West
Room L2 - 2004

FULL PACKET CAN BE FOUND HERE: https://cadem.org/standing-committee/rules-committee/

I. Roll Call

II. Meeting Called to Order

III. Adoption of Meeting Agenda p.2-3

IV. Subcommittee Reports p.4-13

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      Chair: King, Members: Alvarez, Bowler, Burkhard, Jaycox, LaCroix, Narayana, Torello and Woods

B. Caucuses Subcommittee p.5-6
   a. Report from Subcommittee on Caucuses
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C. County Bylaws Subcommittee p.7-11
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D. Chartered Organizations Subcommittee p.12-13
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E. Endorsements Subcommittee
   a. Oral Report from Subcommittee on Endorsements
      Chair: Bowler, Members: Alari, Griffin, Hernandez, King, Lee, Muñoz, Philips, Shay

F. Miscellaneous Items Subcommittee
   a. Oral Report from Subcommittee on Misc. Items
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V. Proposed Bylaw Amendments p.14-16
   A. Proposal by Glenn Glazer to amend Article VIII, Section 4.c

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   A. Appeals to Rules
      a. Jacqueline Lopez against Riverside County Democratic Party
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   B. Receive and File p.41-51
      a. Challenge to Objection to Sherman Automatic Consent - Samuel Garret
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   C. Compliance Review Commission - Recommendation to the Rules Committee to clarify the definition of valid signatures for purposes of the endorsement process at an appropriate time.

VII. New Business

VIII. Adjournment

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAUCUSES

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: California Democratic Party Rules Committee

FROM: Laurence Zakson, Chair, Subcommittee on Caucuses

RE: Activities of Subcommittee and Future Meetings

DATE: February 13, 2026

Caucus Statements of Purpose and Annual Reports

On September 11, 2025, and January 29, 2026, the Subcommittee held trainings for the Chairs and other leaders of the CDP's 19 Caucuses on how to submit the Caucus' annual report, including statements of purpose and intended activities.

On February 7, 2026, the reports were due and, as of the date of this report, all of the annual reports have been received and distributed to Subcommittee members for review.

Reports on the review of the annual reports will be sent to the Caucus Chairs on March 1.
Revisions to reports that require corrections will be due on March 9.
The Subcommittee anticipates all review and corrections will be completed by April 3.

Chicano Latino Caucus (CLC)

The CLC is the sole Caucus that remains provisionally recertified. A meeting with the Caucus should be scheduled for March or April.

The Subcommittee will need to resolve the following issue before that meeting: what is the maximum number of officers and vice-chairs a Caucus can have?

The current bylaws provide for some Caucus officers to both represent, and be elected by, members of certain geographic areas. The Subcommittee does not intend to change that for the current term, but the question for the next certification cycle is whether this should be allowed going forward and, if so, if there should be parameters on how those geographic areas are defined.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COUNTY BYLAWS

MEMORANDUM

To: Coby King and Valeria Hernandez, Lead Chairs of the CDP Rules Committee

From: Robin Torello, Chair of the Subcommittee on County Bylaws

Date: February 20, 2026 Convention – Rules Committee

Re: Status Report of the Subcommittee on County Bylaws

The California Democratic Party (CDP) Bylaws, state that a Democratic candidate for nonpartisan office who have been endorsed by their County Central Committee shall also be considered to be the endorsed candidate of the California Democratic Party provided that the endorsing provisions of the relevant County Central Committee Bylaws have been reviewed and approved by CADEM as consistent with its own Bylaws and with the fundamental rules of fairness.

The County Bylaws subcommittee met on Monday, February 2, 2026 and this is a record of the actions agreed upon in preparation for the February 20-22, 2026 CADEM Convention:

Prior to this Convention the County Bylaws subcommittee received the following request from counties wishing attestations, review or re-review from previous rejections along with our subcommittee actions from the evaluation process:

Amador County:	Not Approved
Butte County	Not Approved
Imperial County	Approved
Lake County	Approved
Los Angeles County	Approved
Marin County	Incomplete
Mendocino County	Not Approved
Mono County	Not Approved
Napa County	Missed Deadline
Nevada County	Not approved
Riverside County	Approved
Sacramento County	Approved
San Bernardino County	Not Approved
San Diego County	Incomplete
San Joaquin County	Approved
San Mateo County	Not Approved
Santa Barbara County	Approved
Sierra County	Incomplete
Stanislaus County	Approved
Sonoma County	Approved
Ventura County	Not Approved

We reviewed the various counties who submitted materials. Due to the results of this review, we are putting forward Imperial, Lake, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, and Sonoma for approval during the Rules Committee meeting at the February 20-22, 2026 Convention. No other County Committee materials were received by the due date for approval consideration during this period.

Sonoma and Stanislaus County sent in attestations that their bylaws were not amended since last reviewed and approved. Both are put forward for approval for 2026. Marin County asked for an attestation as well. However, since the Marin County bylaws have not been reviewed since 2020, Marin has to go through the full process by submitting a completed checklist and governing documents. Thus, Marin County's request for attestation was not approved.

The remainder of the County Committees were either rejected outright requiring further amendment of their documents to comply; or materials were not received in time for consideration during this Convention period.

Napa County's submitted material will be reviewed for the Summer Executive Board since it was received past the due date. Sierra and San Diego Counties were not reviewed because not all the material was received to complete the process.

For those County Central Committees submissions that were not approved, here is a summary as to why. We will be notifying Amador, Butte, Mendocino, Mono, Nevada, San Bernardino, San Mateo, and Ventura Counties in writing as to why to their governing documents require further amending.

Amador County

1. Checklist E – doesn't include provisions for the removal of DSCC delegates from the committee and filling the vacancies.
2. Checklist H1 – mentions the process for electing DSCC members, but is missing mention of the formula "four members as base representation, plus 1 per 10,000 registered Democrats or fraction thereof".
3. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the "equal division rule" per the CADEM bylaws.
4. Checklist I –Code of Conduct and outcome steps for violations were not included.

Butte County

1. Checklist B – missing provision to prohibit secret ballots used in the endorsement process.
2. Checklist D 3, 5, 6, 7 – method of notifications and timelines required for the endorsement process with more amplification.
3. Checklist F – requires mention of prohibiting the endorsement of candidates for county committees.

4. Checklist G – needs to include a definition of who is eligible to vote for endorsements and should be from members in good standing.
5. Checklist H1 – missing mention of the formula “four members as base representation, plus 1 per 10,000 registered Democrats or fraction thereof”.
6. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the “equal division rule” for DSCC per the CADEM bylaws.
7. Checklist I – Code of Conduct and compliance steps for violations were not included.

Mendocino County

1. Checklist F – The Mendocino DCCC's bylaws do not clearly state that the County Central Committee is prohibited from endorsing candidates for the County Central Committee. This prohibition must be explicit.
2. Checklist G – needs to include a definition of who is eligible to vote for endorsements and should be from members in good standing. The endorsement procedures reference club representatives but do not clearly define who is eligible to vote for endorsements. There is no clear statement limiting voting to regular members in good standing.
3. Checklist H2 – The bylaws lack clear Equal Division language. The bylaws do not include explicit language requiring adherence to the Equal Division rule in DSCC appointments. The required equity language is not clearly stated.

Mono County

1. Checklist E – doesn’t include provisions for the removal of DSCC delegates from the committee and filling the vacancies.
2. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the “equal division rule” for DSCC per the CADEM bylaws.
3. Checklist I – Just copied the CADEM Code of Conduct and lacked compliance steps for violations.

Nevada County

1. Checklist E – doesn’t include provisions for the removal of DSCC delegates from the committee and filling the vacancies.
2. Checklist G – needs to include a definition of who is eligible to vote for endorsements and should be from members in good standing.
3. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the “equal division rule” for DSCC per the CADEM bylaws.
4. Checklist I – Code of Conduct and compliance steps for violations were not included.

San Bernardino County

1. Checklist F – need to add a provision to prohibit the Central Committee from endorsing candidates running for Central Committee.
2. Checklist H1 – missing mention of the formula “four members as base representation, plus 1 per 10,000 registered Democrats or fraction thereof”.

San Mateo County

1. Checklist B – missing provision to prohibit secret ballots used in the endorsement process.
2. Checklist E – doesn’t include provisions for the removal of DSCC delegates from the committee and filling the vacancies.
3. Checklist F – need to add a provision to prohibit the Central Committee from endorsing candidates running for County Committee.
4. Checklist H1 – missing mention of the formula “four members as base representation, plus 1 per 10,000 registered Democrats or fraction thereof”.
5. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the “equal division rule” for DSCC per the CADEM bylaws.

Ventura County

1. Checklist F – need to add a provision to prohibit the Central Committee from endorsing candidates running for County Committee.
2. Checklist H1 – missing mention of the formula “four members as base representation, plus 1 per 10,000 registered Democrats or fraction thereof”.
3. Checklist H2 – does not include wording to define the “equal division rule” for DSCC per the CADEM bylaws.

Once the Rules Committee meets and the DSCC members accept our submitted report during the February 20-22, 2026 Convention, we will reach out in writing to inform all the counties of the final decisions.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Torello, Chair
Glenn Glazer, Vice-Chair
subcommittee on County Bylaws

Note: The following are a list of counties whose bylaws were approved in 2025 to date:

Contra Costa County
El Dorado County
Orange County
San Benito County
Solano County

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATEWIDE CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS

MEMORANDUM

To: Coby King and Valeria Hernandez, Lead Chairs of the CDP Rules Committee
From: Glenn Glazer, Chair of the Subcommittee on Chartered Organizations
Date: February 16, 2026
Re: Status Report of the Subcommittee on Chartered Organizations

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Per Article X and Appendix C of the Bylaws of the California Democratic Party, Chartered Organizations may be granted by the Rules Committee through an application process set forth therein. As part of that application process, persons wishing to create such an organization must agree to submit a yearly report as a condition of their being renewed each year.

The Chartered Organizations Subcommittee met on Friday, February 6th with the deadline for submission of the yearly reports being the following day. Reports were allocated for review by individual subcommittee members.

Appendix C, section 3.j states, "The above subsections a-i shall constitute the annual report, as referred to in Section 4.B.9, and;" and those sections form the checklist for the review of each report. Section 4.B.9 discusses rules for revocation of charters and thus includes deficient reports as cause for revocation.

The following chartered organizations were reviewed and the subcommittee approves of their report and recommends that their charter be renewed:

- AD 12 Assembly District Democrats Club
- Brownie Mary Democrats
- California Armenian American Democrats
- California Democratic Renters Council
- California Democrats for Justice in Palestine
- California Jewish Democrats
- Iranian American Democrats of California

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Glazer, Chair
Subcommittee on Chartered Organizations

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS

VIII.4

Amend subsection c. as follows:

Change:

"In order for the endorsement of the County Central Committees to become the official endorsements of the California Democratic Party, the following must be found to have been met by the Rules Committee as part of its recommendation:"

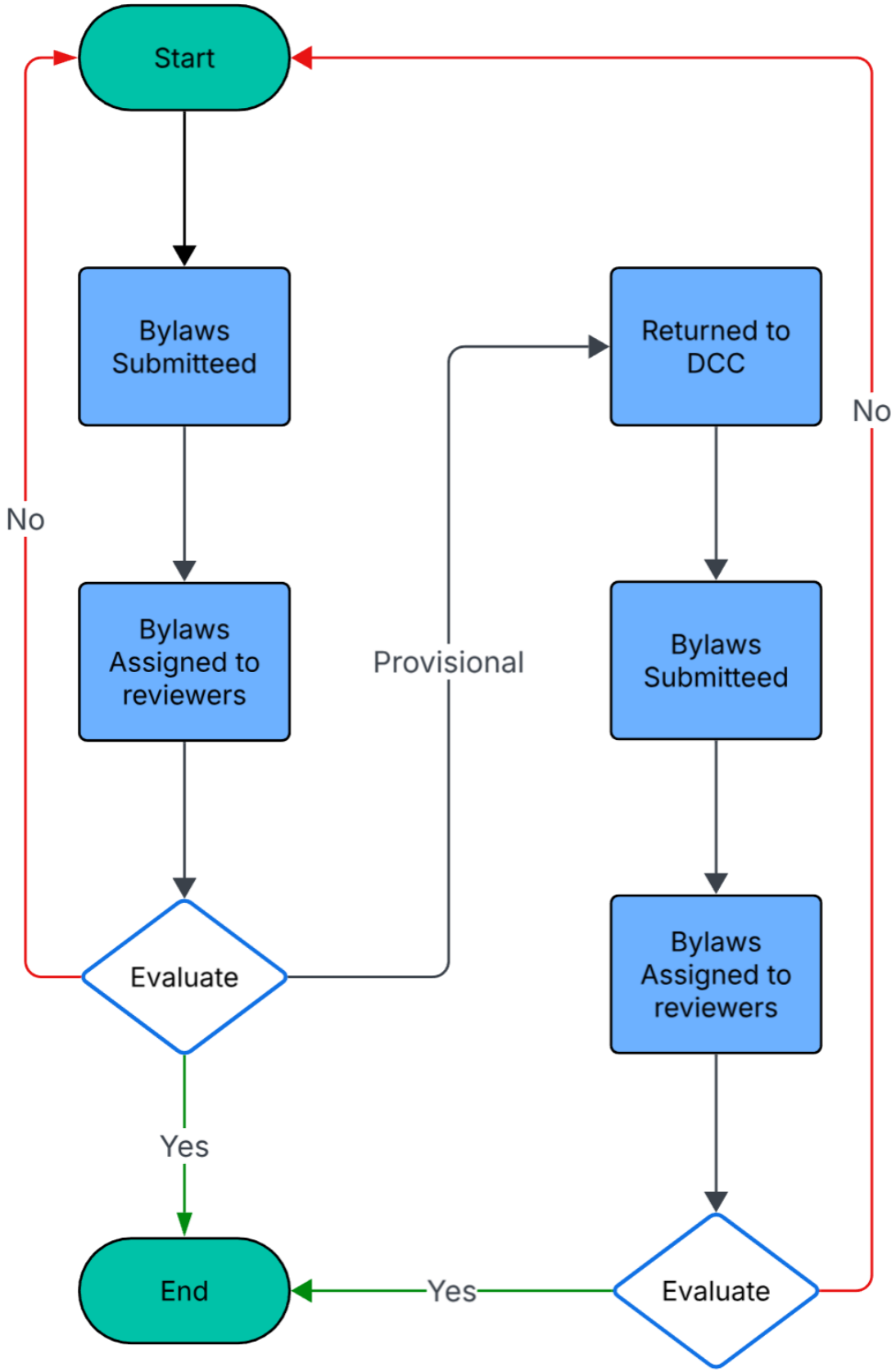
To:

"In order for the endorsement of the County Central Committees to become the official endorsements of the California Democratic Party, the Rules Committee must have reviewed the bylaws and made a recommendation including, but not limited to the following factors. The recommendation shall be one of approve, disapprove, or provisional."

Add subsection d. and renumber:

d. The Rules Committee, at its discretion, may issue a recommendation of provisional approval along with a list of those things that did not pass its review. Said provisional status will permit the Central Committee to consider their endorsements as official endorsements of the California Democratic Party. A County Committee receiving a provisional approval must, at the earliest opportunity according to their own bylaws, pass amendment(s) to remedy each and every item mentioned in the recommendation. Failure to due so shall convert the provisional approval to a rejection. After these remedy amendments are passed, the County Committee bylaws shall be resubmitted to the Rules Committee for re-evaluation. This re-evaluation, as before, may result in approval, rejection or a renewed provisional status. A provisional status that has been renewed once will be rejected and not considered for provisional status if fails re-evaluation.
==========

Here's a quick flowchart that represents how I think this should go:


Start
Bylaws Submitteed
Bylaws Assigned to reviewers
Evaluate
No
Yes
End
Provisional
Returned to DCC
Bylaws Submitteed
Bylaws Assigned to reviewers
Evaluate
Yes
No

COMPLIANCE REVIEW COMMISSION (CRC)

APPEALS TO RULES

APPEAL

Appeal of CRC Decision

Lopez v. Riverside County Democratic Party
Date of CRC Decision: February 12, 2026
Filed Pursuant to CDP Bylaws Article XII, Section 2(e)

I. Introduction

I respectfully appeal the February 12, 2026, decision of the Compliance Review Commission dismissing my challenge for lack of jurisdiction.

This challenge was filed in my individual capacity as a registered Democrat in Riverside County and not on behalf of any organization.

The Decision describes me as "a member of the Democrats of the Desert Club (DOD)" (Decision at p. 1). While I am affiliated with local Democratic clubs, my filing did not assert organizational standing and was not brought on behalf of any club entity. This distinction is relevant because jurisdiction turns on whether CDP-level processes were affected, not on internal club status.

The CRC did not reach the merits of my claims. Instead, it concluded that the issues raised concerned internal county governance and therefore fell outside its authority (Decision at p. 5).

This appeal concerns whether CRC jurisdiction exists where county-level charter enforcement directly affects participation in a CDP pre-endorsement conference.

II. The CRC's Jurisdictional Standard

The CRC states:

"The CRC will not intervene in the business of a county committee unless the actions being complained about directly affect the county committee's representation on the CDP State Central Committee or Executive Board or… directly affect the endorsement process."
(Decision at p. 4)

That is the governing standard.

This appeal turns on whether the challenged conduct directly affected the endorsement process.

III. Direct Impact on the Endorsement Process

The challenged actions included:

• Vacating a December 13, 2025 pre-endorsement vote;
• Requiring a new vote prior to the January 17, 2026 CADEM Pre-Endorsing Conference;
• Suspending charter status effective January 7, 2026;
• Barring participation as a Democratic club during the active pre-endorsement cycle;
• Notifying CADEM of the suspension.

These actions altered participation in a CDP pre-endorsement conference.

Under the CRC's own articulation of its jurisdictional threshold (Decision at p. 4), conduct that directly affects the endorsement process falls within its authority.

The Decision did not analyze whether endorsement participation was affected. Instead, it dismissed the matter categorically as internal governance.

Because the challenged conduct altered participation in a CDP endorsement process, the jurisdictional exception identified by the CRC applies.

IV. Enforcement Authority and CDP Oversight

At the time enforcement actions were taken, the January 2025 RCDP bylaw amendments had not been formally certified by CADEM. I had requested documentation of certification prior to enforcement.

While County Central Committees are independent entities under state law, the exercise of charter enforcement authority in a manner that alters participation in a CDP pre-endorsement process presents a question of CDP-level oversight under the CRC's jurisdictional standard.

The CRC did not analyze whether reliance on bylaw provisions that had not yet been formally certified could affect participation in a CDP endorsement conference because it dismissed the matter for lack of jurisdiction.

That question therefore remains unresolved.

V. Deference Does Not Eliminate Jurisdiction

The Decision emphasizes that County Central Committees are independent entities entitled to deference in interpreting their own bylaws (Decision at p. 4).

I do not dispute that principle.

However, the CRC expressly recognizes that deference yields where actions "directly affect the endorsement process." (Decision at p. 4)

The suspension of a chartered club and vacatur of a pre-endorsement vote during the active CADEM cycle directly affected participation in that process.

Accordingly, the CRC's summary dismissal for lack of jurisdiction was premature.

VI. Requested Relief

I respectfully request that the Rules Committee:

1. Reverse the CRC's dismissal for lack of jurisdiction.
2. Remand the matter to the CRC for consideration on the merits.
3. Clarify that county charter enforcement affecting participation in a CDP endorsement process falls within CRC jurisdiction.

This appeal does not ask the Rules Committee to determine the merits of the underlying dispute. It asks only that the CRC be permitted to evaluate whether CDP endorsement processes were improperly affected.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Lopez
Registered Democrat, Riverside County
Desert Stonewall Democrat

RESPONSE

February 19, 2026

California Democratic Party

Attn: Diana Love, Secretary

Response to Appeal of Jacqueline Lopez to Compliance Review Commission Decision

This is the response of the Riverside County Democratic Party (RCDP) to the appeal filed by Jacqueline Lopez (Appellant) of the decision dated February 12, 2026 (Decision), of the Compliance Review Commission (CRC) to dismiss Appellant's challenge (Challenge) to certain actions of the RCDP related to the chartered status of a Democratic Club based upon lack of jurisdiction.

At the outset we note that the CRC determined that it lacks jurisdiction, and did not address the merits of the Challenge. The appeal attacks only the CRC's finding that the CRC lacks jurisdiction. As a result, although we believe the RCDP's actions were fair and regular, given the fact that the appeal related only to jurisdiction, we confine our comments to jurisdiction.

I. The CRC Correctly Determined that It Lacks Jurisdiction Because Chartering-Related Decisions by County Central Committees Are Generally Not Subject to CDP or CRC Review

The starting point for any Challenge submitted to the CRC is whether the CRC has jurisdiction. When it comes to actions of County Central Committees, the answer is generally "no."

As the CRC has explained in many previous decisions, the CRC is ***not a general appellate body for actions involving county central committees***, which, under state and federal law, are separate legal entities from the CDP. Furthermore, the CRC's Procedural Rules state:

"County Central Committees are ***not subordinate units of the CDP***; they are ***independent organizations established under separate legal authority***, and the CRC's ability to penalize County Central Committees for violations is generally limited to denial of representation at meetings of This Committee, its Executive Board, and its subordinate bodies."

(Decision at p. 4 [emphasis added]).

This is especially true with respect to chartering decisions, which the CDP has recognized to be a function best left to County Central Committees. Section 3.D.1. of the CDP's Guidelines re: Chartering of Organizations (Adopted Jan 28, 2006 by the Rules Committee and Amended June 9, 2022) also provides that: "This Committee shall refrain from chartering organizations whose primary purpose is to function as a 'traditional Democratic Club,' ***leaving such responsibility to County Central Committees.***" (Emphasis added). Further, this conclusion is also somewhat bolstered by the fact that when County Central Committee Bylaws are reviewed by the Rules Committee for the purpose of determining whether the endorsements of County Central Committees are eligible to become the endorsement of the CDP, under CDP Bylaws Article VIII, Section 4, the chartering provisions of the County Central Committee's Bylaws are not even considered.

Neither the Challenge nor the appeal provides any basis for deviating from this strong presumption against jurisdiction. As stated in the Decision, the Challenge alleges the following:

> The Challenge alleges that RCDP leadership repeatedly refused to provide governance and financial records requested by members, including bylaws, approval documentation, and financial reports necessary for informed participation and oversight. The challenge claims that the RCDP proceeded to convene emergency meetings, issue orders, and circulate communications asserting ***unauthorized enforcement authority over Democrats of the Desert (DOD) including their suspension, and questioning its legitimacy without providing the requested documentation or affording due process***. (Emphasis added.)

In other words, the Challenge concerns the procedural regularity of the suspension of the charter of a now-former local Democratic Club (the DOD) by the RCDP, and nothing in the Challenge raises any issues that overcome the strong presumption against assertion of jurisdiction over County Central Committee decisions. See Section 5.F of the CRC's Procedural Rules:

> County Central Committees are not subordinate units of the CDP; they are independent organizations established under separate legal authority ... The separate existence of County Central Committees and the limited authority of the CRC strongly mitigates in favor of ***deference to decisions of County Central Committees***, including their interpretations of their own bylaws, even where the CRC does not agree with such decisions … (Emphasis added).

Indeed, the CRC correctly concluded that there was a lack of jurisdiction regarding the Challenge. Chartering authority is legally vested in County Central Committees under Elections Code section 20201, and CDP policy recognizes the chartering of traditional Democratic Clubs as a local/county concern.

II. No Merit to Appellant's Argument that Narrow Exception Applies to CDP's General Rule

There is no merit to Appellant's argument that the Challenge falls within a narrow exception to the CDP's general rule where there is conduct that "***directly*** affect(s) the endorsement process." (Emphasis added). The Appellant contends that the alleged chartering decision of the RCDP involving the DOD touches upon the "the endorsement process" because the RCDP's chartering decisions affected the DOD's ability to have its representatives participate in the pre-endorsement conference. In other words, Appellant argues that because chartered Clubs are allowed to have one or more representatives participate at the pre-endorsement conference, the general rule and policy of the CDP that it shall not intervene in chartering decisions of Clubs by County Central Committees should not apply here.

However, if the Appellant's argument was correct (it is not), then that would mean that

every single decision by a County Central Committee to charter, suspend the charter or de-charter every single Club throughout the state would be reviewable by the CDP (through the CRC). This result would eviscerate the CDP's longstanding deference to local County Central Committee decisions and flies in the face of CDP policy leaving the chartering of traditional Democratic Clubs to County Central Committees. It also ignores the fact that there is an alternative remedy for an unreasonable decision not to afford a traditional Democratic Club chartered status. That remedy is seeking chartering directly from the CDP under Section 3.D.1 of the Guidelines re: Chartering of Organizations (Adopted Jan 28, 2006 by the Rules Committee and Amended June 9, 2022), which provides:

> D. Democratic Clubs
>
> 1. This Committee shall refrain from chartering organizations whose primary purpose is to function as a "traditional Democratic Club," leaving such responsibility to County Central Committees, unless the local County Central Committee either does not charter organizations, or does not exist. However, in the event a local County Central Committee has declined to charter an organization, or delayed such charter for an unreasonable period of time, This Committee shall consider such application for charter. Such application Must include a clear explanation and/or documentation of the extraordinary circumstances justifying the intervention of This Committee in what is generally considered a local County Central Committee function.

Moreover, the RCDP submits that just because every chartered Club may have a representative at the pre-endorsement conference does not mean that all chartering-related decisions have such a "direct" impact on the CDP endorsement that the CRC and CDP should step in and second-guess the chartering decision of a County Central Committee.

III. Conclusion

As the discussion above demonstrates, the CRC got it right and the RCDP respectfully submits that the appeal by Appellant should be denied, and that the CRC's Decision should be affirmed.

Very truly yours,

Joy Silver, Chair of the Riverside County Democratic Party

P.O. Box 588
Wildomar, CA 92595
Telephone: 760.844.5577 .
Email: chair.rcdp@gmail.com
Assembly District 47

cc: Rusty Hicks, Chair
Members of Compliance Review Commission
Jacqueline Lopez, Appellant
Rules Committee, Chair(s)

CRC DECISION

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Compliance Review Commission (CRC)

DATE: February 12, 2026

RE: **COMPLIANCE REVIEW COMMISSION (CRC) DECISION RELATING TO A CHALLENGE FILED BY JACQUELINE LOPEZ**

INTRODUCTION:

On February 3, 2026, Jacqueline Lopez, a member of the Democrats of the Desert Club (DOD), formerly chartered through Riverside County Democratic Party (RCDP), filed a challenge relating to the actions of Riverside County Democratic Party. The Challenge alleges that RCDP leadership repeatedly refused to provide governance and financial records requested by members, including bylaws, approval documentation, and financial reports necessary for informed participation and oversight. The challenge claims that the RCDP proceeded to convene emergency meetings, issue orders, and circulate communications asserting unauthorized enforcement authority over Democrats of the Desert (DOD) including their suspension, and questioning its legitimacy without providing the requested documentation or affording due process.

The challenge claims the following:

1. Violation of CADEM Bylaws Article XIII (specifically related to Charters and Chartered Organizations)
2. Violation of CADEM Bylaws Article XIV (Electronic Notice)
3. Violation of CADEM Bylaws Article I, Article II (Member Participation/transparency)

The challenge is requesting the CRC to assume jurisdiction and:

1. Determine that RCDP acted inconsistently with CDP Bylaws and applicable due-process requirements.
2. Direct RCDP to cease enforcement or threatened enforcement actions based on uncertified or unapproved bylaws.
3. Require RCDP to produce governance and financial records to members as required by CDP rules.
4. Issue interim or remedial orders necessary to prevent ongoing harm, preserve evidence, and maintain the status quo pending final resolution.
5. Grant such other relief as the CRC deems fair, just, and in the best interests of the Democratic Party.

DOCUMENTS INITIALLY RECEIVED AND REVIEWED:

Documents received and reviewed by the CRC associated with the challenge included the following:

1. Challenge submitted by Jacqueline Lopez, Member for the Democrats of the Desert Club (DOD) and 19 supporting documents.

    a. Exhibit A - Evidence Timeline
    b. Exhibit B - Signed Letter declaring notice of the challenge was sent to the required parties
    c. Exhibit C - RCDP Email notice of Special Meeting on December 29, 2025
    d. Exhibit D - RCDP Email notice of the order of DOD Adjudication on December 31, 2025
    e. Exhibit E - DOD Board of Directors Email Note
    f. Exhibit F - RCDP Email Notice of DOD Suspension Order
    g. Exhibit G - RCDP Email Notice of DOD Charter & RCDP Actions
    h. Exhibit H - DOD Email Formal Request for Records — RCDP Bylaws on November 29, 2025
    i. Exhibit I - DOD Email Formal Challenge and Request to Suspend Enforcement of RCDP on November 25, 2025
    j. Exhibit J - DOD Email Request for Records Related to January 2025 Bylaw Amendments, November 25, 2025
    k. Exhibit K - RCDP Email Response to Request for records on November 29, 2025
    l. Exhibit L - DOD Response to RCDP Response for Request for records on November 29, 2025
    m. Exhibit M - DOD Email Escalation – RCDP Failure to Produce Required Records Related to January 2025 Bylaw Amendments December 10, 2025
    n. Exhibit N - RCDP Response Email to Escalation – RCDP Failure to Produce Required Records Related to January 2025 Bylaw Amendments December 10, 2025
    o. Exhibit O - DOD Response to RCDP Response to Escalation – RCDP Failure to Produce Required Records Related to January 2025 Bylaw Amendments on December 11, 2025
    p. Exhibit P - DOD Email Formal Escalation - RCDP Non Compliance with Records & Misapplication of CADEM Standards on December 11, 2025
    q. Exhibit Q - DOD Email Formal Demand for Financial Records — Pursuant to RCDP Bylaws, CADEM Rules, FPPC Regulations,and Robert's Rules of Order on December 10, 2025
    r. Exhibit R - RCDP Email response Formal Demand for Financial Records — Pursuant to RCDP Bylaws, CADEM Rules, FPPC Regulations, and Robert's Rules of Order on December 14, 2025
    s. Exhibit S - DOD Email to CADEM Notice of FPPC Filing Related to RCDP Financial Records Refusal # COM -12312025-04248

TIMELINESS:

According to CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2:.

> "All challenges must be commenced by the filing of a written challenge with the Secretary of This Committee, with copies served on the Chair of This Committee, as well as the appointing person, and the chair of the relevant organization, where applicable no later than seven (7) calendar days after the alleged violation occurred. Upon a showing of good cause, sustained by unanimous vote, the Compliance Review Commission may waive this requirement."
>
> (All By-Law references are to the California Democratic Party Bylaws, as amended through August 25, unless otherwise indicated.)

Given the findings below, the CRC does not need to determine timeliness and declines to do so.

STANDING:

According to Article XII, Section 3:

> "Any party to a challenge must be adversely affected to bring the challenge."

Given the findings below, the CRC does not need to determine standing and declines to do so.

JURISDICTION:

Article XII, Section 2.a(1) of the CDP Bylaws states:

> "The Compliance Review Commission shall have initial jurisdiction over all challenges and/or appeals arising under these Bylaws."

Further, the CRC Procedural Rules, Section 2, B. state in pertinent part that a challenge must,

> "Explain[] the basis of CRC's jurisdiction… If the CRC cannot discern the section of the CDP Bylaws alleged to have been violated or which grants jurisdiction to the CRC, it may dismiss the challenge."

The challenge submitted by Ms. Lopez alleges that RCDP violated several provisions of the CDP Bylaws in Articles I, II, XIII, and XIV, by refusing to provide governance and financial records, including bylaws, documentation and financial reports for the purposes of participation and oversight in the Riverside County Democratic Party. Ms. Lopez does not identify any specific provision that applies to county committees or establishes CRC jurisdiction under the CDP Bylaws.

As the CRC has explained in many previous decisions, the CRC is not a general appellate body for actions involving county central committees, which, under state and federal law, are separate legal entities from the CDP. Furthermore, the CRC's Procedural Rules state;

> "County Central Committees are not subordinate units of the CDP; they are independent organizations established under separate legal authority, and the CRC's ability to penalize County Central Committees for violations is generally limited to denial of representation at meetings of This Committee, its Executive Board, and its subordinate bodies. The separate existence of County Central Committees and the limited authority of the CRC strongly mitigates in favor of deference to decisions of County Central Committees, including their interpretations of their own bylaws, even where the CRC does not agree with such decisions and, thus, any finding of a violation must be firmly based on:
>
> 1. A Bylaw or other rule of This Committee that is binding on the County Central Committee, or,
>
> 2. Conduct by the County Central Committee that cannot be justified under its own reasonable construction of its Bylaws or other duly promulgated and noticed internal rules."

While there are exceptions to this rule, in general, the CDP (through the CRC) will not intervene in the business of a county committee unless the actions being complained about directly affect the county committee's representation on the CDP State Central Committee or Executive Board or, in the case of a county committee whose endorsements are deemed to be the CDP's endorsements, directly affect the endorsement process.

This means that claims of violations of Roberts Rules of Order and/or the county committee's bylaws will not establish jurisdiction except where they impact the representation or endorsement processes as described in the previous paragraph.

The Challenger asserts that the CRC has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Article V and Article XIII of the CDP Bylaws. Under the CDP Bylaws, Article V covers the make up and procedures for Standing Committees and Special Committees of the CDP which do not apply to county committees and does not establish jurisdiction.

Article XIII of the CDP Bylaws details General Procedures relating to meetings, being public, tests and oaths as well as notices. As noted above, this claim does not impact the county committee's representation on the CDP State Central Committee or Executive Board or directly affect the endorsement process with the CDP, thus does not establish jurisdiction under Article XIII.

The Challenger also alleges implications to Articles XIII, Article XIV, Article I and Article II. To the extent the Challenger intended to refer to the provision in Article X dealing with Charters, that section details the authority of chartered organizations, granting, denial and revocation of statewide charters as well as application requirements.

The provisions in Article X of the CDP bylaws apply specifically to organizations chartered directly with the CDP and do not apply to clubs chartered through their local County Central Committee. In this case the DOD is not chartered statewide but rather locally by their Chartering Authority (RCDP), and thus does not establish a basis for jurisdiction.

Article XIV: Electronic Notice, detailing requirements for use of emails, posting, and notices for meetings of the CDP. In general, the notice provisions in Article XIV of the CDP Bylaws do not apply to county committees and thus do not establish jurisdiction.

Article I and Article II of the CDP Bylaws detailing Purpose and Membership also do not apply to county committees and do not establish jurisdiction.

As mentioned above and in the CRC's Procedural Rules, the CRC does not have plenary jurisdiction over actions of County Central Committees as they are not subordinate units of the CDP, they are independent organizations established under separate legal authority, and the CRC's ability to penalize County Central Committees for violations is generally limited.

Accordingly, because the actions alleged concern internal county committee governance, the CRC lacks jurisdiction in this challenge.

FINDINGS, ORDER AND COMMENTS:

Based upon the above facts and the Bylaws of the CDP, the CRC makes the following Order:

> Based on the information presented, the CRC voted to dismiss this challenge as the CRC lacks jurisdiction and it is subject to summary denial under Section 5.D.5 of the CRC Procedural Rules.

Appeal of this order, if any, must be filed with the CDP Secretary, with copies to the Chair of the CDP State Central Committee, within twelve days of the date of this decision. Thus,

any appeal must be filed on or before February 24, 2026 with the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party, and shall be an appeal to the next meeting of CDP Rules Committee upon conclusion of the response period.

Please note that per CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2e, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any decision of the CRC. Parties may additionally respond in person or virtually, depending on how the meeting is being conducted, if so desired, provided there has been a timely filing of an appeal and notice of intent to testify is provided in writing to the Lead Chair of the Rules Committee by 5 PM on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party. The Rules Committee may accept such additional testimony, written or oral, considering the nature and import thereof, as well as the time available for its proper consideration, as it deems appropriate, in its discretion.

Accordingly, this decision is so ordered, and is in effect, unless, and until, a successful appeal is made, decided, and contrary orders made whether by the CRC, or by the Rules Committee. CRC shall retain jurisdiction up until the time of an appeal, if any, is heard by the Rules Committee.

Respectfully submitted by a 5-0 vote of the members of the CRC,

Tim Allison, Co-Chair, Credentials Committee
Nicole Fernandez, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee
Valeria Hernandez, Co- Chair, Rules Committee
Jane Wishon, Co-Chair, Credentials Committee
Paul Seo, Credentials Committee Member

Laurence Zakson, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee, recused himself and did not participate in the deliberations on this matter.

ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

COVER LETTER / COVER STATEMENT

CRC Challenge – Riverside County Democratic Party
Filed: February 2, 2026

Filed with:
Secretary of the California Democratic Party

This packet is submitted as a **Formal Written Challenge** pursuant to the California Democratic Party (CDP) Bylaws and the Compliance Review Commission (CRC) Procedural Rules.

This filing is submitted to the Secretary of the California Democratic Party for referral to the Compliance Review Commission and includes **supplemental information reflecting continuing and escalating actions** taken by the Riverside County Democratic Party (RCDP) after December 11, 2025, when guidance regarding CRC jurisdiction and filing requirements was provided by CDP staff.

The enclosed materials document, among other issues, repeated refusals to provide required governance and financial records, enforcement, and threatened enforcement of uncertified bylaws, and continued adjudicatory and coercive actions directed at a Democratic club during the pendency of state-level escalation and review.

Included Materials:

1. Formal Written Challenge (with supplemental statement of facts)
2. Updated Evidence Timeline (through January 25, 2026)
3. Exhibit A – Records Requests and Responses
4. Exhibit B – Written Refusal to Provide Financial Records
5. Exhibit C – Charter Threat and Enforcement Communications
6. Additional Exhibits – Orders, notices, and mass communications issued after notice of state-level escalation

Respectfully submitted,

jacqueline lopez

Jacqueline Lopez
Registered Democrat, Riverside County
lopez4indio@gmail.com
7609893899
Assembly District 36th

FORMAL WRITTEN CHALLENGE
Riverside County Democratic Party (RCDP)
Date: February 2, 2026
Filed with: Secretary of the California Democratic Party
For Referral To: Compliance Review Commission (CRC)

I. INTRODUCTION AND JURISDICTION

Pursuant to the California Democratic Party (CDP) Bylaws and the Compliance Review Commission (CRC) Procedural Rules, I hereby submit this Formal Written Challenge regarding actions taken by the Riverside County Democratic Party (RCDP).

This filing includes supplemental facts reflecting continuing and escalating conduct by RCDP occurring after December 11, 2025, when CDP staff provided guidance confirming CRC jurisdiction and filing requirements. The challenged actions involve governance transparency, enforcement authority, due process, and ongoing coercive conduct affecting a chartered Democratic club and its members.

The Compliance Review Commission has initial jurisdiction over this challenge pursuant to CDP Bylaws Article V and Article XIII.

II. STATEMENT OF FACTS (SUMMARY)

The violations challenged herein began on or about November 25, 2025, and have continued through at least January 25, 2026. Beginning in November 2025, RCDP leadership repeatedly refused to provide governance and financial records requested by members, including bylaws, approval documentation, and financial reports necessary for informed participation and oversight.

Despite notice that these matters had been escalated to the California Democratic Party for review, RCDP proceeded to convene emergency adjudicatory meetings, issue orders, and circulate mass communications asserting enforcement authority over Democrats of the Desert (DOD). These actions were taken without producing documentation demonstrating CADEM approval of the bylaws relied upon and without affording meaningful due process.

Following these actions, RCDP issued suspension and enforcement orders, publicly questioned the legitimacy of DOD, asserted restrictions on the use of the word “Democratic,” and continued to characterize contested actions as voluntary despite pending state-level review.

A detailed chronology of events is set forth in the attached Evidence Timeline and supporting exhibits.

III. BYLAWS IMPLICATED
(CRC Rule §2(B)(1))

This challenge arises under, and alleges violations of, the California Democratic Party (CDP) Bylaws, including but not limited to the following:

- Article XIII (Charters and Chartered Organizations), including provisions governing the authority, suspension, revocation, and oversight of chartered Democratic clubs.
- Article XIV (Electronic Notice), as applied to notice, service, and communications affecting members and chartered organizations.

- Article I and Article II, governing member participation, transparency, and democratic governance within the Party.
- Provisions of the CDP Bylaws require that county party actions affecting chartered organizations be exercised consistent with CDP rules, due-process principles, and delegated authority.

Violations of subordinate organizational bylaws, including those of the Riverside County Democratic Party, fall under CDP Bylaws Article XIII and related provisions and therefore properly invoke CRC jurisdiction.

While County Central Committees possess independent authority, actions affecting chartered organizations must comply with binding CDP Bylaws and are subject to CRC review where those bylaws are implicated.

IV. STANDING AND HARM
(CRC Rules §2(B)(3) and §3(A)–(B))

Proponent is a registered Democrat in Riverside County and a member of chartered Democratic clubs directly affected by the actions challenged herein.

Proponent has suffered concrete and ongoing harm, including but not limited to:

- Denial of access to governance and financial records required for informed participation and oversight.
- Enforcement and threatened enforcement of uncertified rules affecting club autonomy and member rights.
- Coercive communications and adjudicatory actions that chilled participation and undermined democratic processes.
- Ongoing uncertainty and reputational harm resulting from public assertions of authority and enforcement during pending state-level review.

These harms are direct, substantial, and attributable to the actions of RCDP.

V. EXHAUSTION OF LOCAL REMEDIES / FUTILITY
(CRC Rule §3(C))

Proponent sought local remedies by submitting written requests to RCDP leadership for governance records, financial records, and clarification regarding authority and bylaws relied upon for enforcement. These requests were expressly denied in writing.

RCDP proceeded with adjudicatory actions, orders, and enforcement measures without producing requested documentation and while the matter had been escalated to the California Democratic Party.

Under these circumstances, further local remedies were unavailable, futile, unduly burdensome, and would have caused additional prejudice and delay. Exhaustion should therefore be excused pursuant to CRC Rule §3(C)(1)–(2).

VI. REQUESTED REMEDIES
(CRC Rule §4(B))

Proponent respectfully requests that the Compliance Review Commission:

1. Assume jurisdiction over this challenge.
2. Determine that RCDP acted inconsistently with CDP Bylaws and applicable due-process requirements.
3. Direct RCDP to cease enforcement or threatened enforcement actions based on uncertified or unapproved bylaws.
4. Require RCDP to produce governance and financial records to members as required by CDP rules.
5. Issue interim or remedial orders necessary to prevent ongoing harm, preserve evidence, and maintain the status quo pending final resolution.
6. Grant such other relief as the CRC deems fair, just, and in the best interests of the Democratic Party.

VII. TIMELINESS AND CONTINUING VIOLATIONS
(CRC Rules §2(F) and §4(J))

This challenge was timely filed on December 30, 2025. The actions described herein constitute continuing and escalating violations arising from a timely filed challenge.

Good cause exists for consideration of post-filing events, including newly discovered evidence and ongoing enforcement actions, in the interests of justice, party integrity, and effective remedial review.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The actions challenged herein raise serious concerns regarding transparency, due process, and delegated authority within the California Democratic Party. State-level review and intervention are warranted to prevent ongoing harm and ensure compliance with CDP governance requirements.

Respectfully submitted,
jacqueline lopez

Jacqueline Lopez
Registered Democrat, Riverside County
lopez4indio@gmail.com
7609893899
Assembly District 36th

RECEIVE AND FILE

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Compliance Review Commission (CRC)

DATE: January 17, 2026

RE: **COMPLIANCE REVIEW COMMISSION (CRC) DECISION RELATING TO A CHALLENGE FILED BY SAMUEL GARRETT**

INTRODUCTION:

EMERGENCY MEETING & USE OF AN EXPEDITED PROCESS

On January 13, 2026, the Compliance Review Commission (CRC) convened an emergency meeting to consider a challenge submitted by Samuel Garrett. The challenge objected to the validity of 6 Incumbent Candidate Letter of Objection forms submitted in support of an effort to remove Representative Brad Sherman from the Consent Calendar in the California Democratic Party Endorsement process for California's 32nd Congressional District.

The CRC convened an emergency meeting due to imminent ballot preparation deadlines, which required immediate resolution to provide effective relief and preserve jurisdiction without upsetting the endorsement calendar.

The 2026 Pre-Endorsing Conferences for U.S. House, State Assembly, and even-numbered State Senate districts are scheduled to be held in-person on January 17, 2026. While incumbents seeking endorsement are typically automatically placed on the State Convention consent calendar, an objection filed by 20% of eligible voters in the 10 days prior to the published deadline moves the incumbent into the full endorsement process.

On January 7, 2026, CDP Staff confirmed that a sufficient number of Letters of Objection were submitted to remove Representative Brad Sherman from the Consent Calendar for Congressional District 32. As a result of these Objections, the endorsement for this race will now be considered through the Pre-Endorsement Conference process.

On the date of the hearing, the CRC determined that this case met the definition of an emergent circumstance (aka emergency) as defined under the Open Meetings Guidelines incorporated by reference in Procedural Rule 6A, which allows the CRC to waive standard notice requirements under the Open Meeting Rule and to proceed based on the notice that was provided. The CRC cited the imminent need for ballots to be finalized to prevent a delay in voting – which was scheduled to commence at 12 Noon on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

Although the CRC has the authority in exigent circumstances, such as those here, to shorten time-frames, to hold emergency meetings and otherwise to expedite the review process, the CRC further recognizes that this authority does not excuse the CRC from the requirement to

provide interested parties with due process. And the CRC recognizes that this authority should be exercised sparingly.

The CRC found that interested parties were afforded notice and, in fact, responded promptly and sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow for a full and fair hearing consistent with due process requirements.

THE CHALLENGE

On January 7, 2026, CDP staff acknowledged that Letters of Objection had been submitted to remove U.S. Congress Representative Brad Sherman from the Consent Calendar for Congressional District 32. Staff received 25 petitions, of which 24 were deemed valid and 1 invalid. The Congressional District 32 Pre-Endorsing Conference has 112 voting members; therefore, 23 valid petitions were required to meet the 20% threshold.

On January 9, 2026, Samuel Garrett, Consultant with Sherman for Congress, filed a challenge contesting 6 of the 24 valid petitions and requesting that all 6 be invalidated. The challenge alleged that:

- Two signatures were dated January 2025 instead of January 2026
- Two signatures listed incorrect delegate (DSCC) ID numbers
- Two signatures used electronic (non-wet) signatures

DOCUMENTS INITIALLY RECEIVED AND REVIEWED:

Documents received and reviewed by the CRC associated with the challenge included the following:

1. Challenge submitted by Samuel Garrett, Consultant with Sherman for Congress, on January 9, 2026

2. Testimony submitted by Anna Wilding, Congressional District 32 Candidate in opposition

TIMELINESS:

According to CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2:

> "All challenges must be commenced by the filing of a written challenge with the Secretary of This Committee, with copies served on the Chair of This Committee, as well as the appointing person, and the chair of the relevant organization, where applicable no later than seven (7) calendar days after the alleged violation occurred. Upon a showing of good cause, sustained by unanimous vote, the Compliance Review Commission may waive this requirement."

(All By-Law references are to the California Democratic Party Bylaws, as amended through August 25, unless otherwise indicated.)

The Challenger submitted a challenge on January 9, 2026 for an incident that took place on January 7, 2026. The submission was within 7 days of the incident, and, thus, the challenge was timely.

STANDING:

According to Article XII, Section 3:

> "Any party to a challenge must be adversely affected to bring the challenge."

The Challenger, Mr. Samuel Garrett is the Consultant of the Sherman campaign. Mr Garrett was found to be an agent of Congressman Sherman, the candidate whose name was pulled from the consent calendar. The removal from the consent calendar adversely affected Congressman Sherman inasmuch as it required him to need to obtain an endorsement recommendation through the Pre-Endorsement process in order to secure a place on the Consent Calendar at the Convention – a place to which he would have been entitled in the absence of sufficient timely Objections. Given this, the challenging party was adversely affected and, thus the CRC finds the Challenger has standing.

JURISDICTION:

Article XII, Section 2.a(1) of the CDP Bylaws states:

> "The Compliance Review Commission shall have initial jurisdiction over all challenges and/or appeals arising under these Bylaws."

Further, the CRC Procedural Rules, Section 2, B. state in pertinent part that a challenge must,

> "Explain[] the basis of CRC's jurisdiction… If the CRC cannot discern the section of the CDP Bylaws alleged to have been violated or which grants jurisdiction to the CRC, it may dismiss the challenge."

The CRC finds jurisdiction under Article VIII of the CADEM Bylaws, as the challenge was filed timely and per CRC Rules Section 2.G. challenges arising under this article will be heard by the CRC as long as the Convention is not in session.

FINDINGS:

1. The Challenger claims that 2 petitions were signed prior to the voter being eligible to participate signing. The CRC found that the use of the year "2025" instead of "2026" constituted a clerical error common during the early weeks of a new calendar year. The Commission further found that the petition forms did not exist in January 2025 and that the intent of the signatories was clear.

2. The Challenger objects to 2 petition forms with incorrect listing of their DSCC/VOTERID numbers. The CRC found that any error in the VOTERID numbers was harmless inasmuch as such numbers are used to help verify the voter's eligibility and are not essential to establishing voter identification. Moreover, there were roster updates and vacancy appointments causing changes to some VOTERIDs, and members should not be penalized for not keeping track of such changes.

3. Lastly, the Challenger claims the 2 petition forms were not submitted with a wet signature. The CRC finds that the guidelines and applicable paperwork provide for an original signature. However, the guidelines lacked definitions, included inconsistencies, and are not sufficiently clear to put a signatory on notice that only a "wet" signature is appropriate, especially inasmuch as the Credentials Committee allows the use as original signatures of stylus or finger to screen signatures like those at issue. Accordingly, a preponderance of evidence does not establish that these signatures were invalid.

ORDER:

Based upon the above facts and the Bylaws of the CDP, the CRC makes the following Order:

1. Based on the information presented, the CRC found that the challenger failed to establish that any of the six (6) challenged petition forms were invalid. Accordingly, the challenge is denied.
2. As a result, the endorsement process for Congressional District 32 will proceed as noticed in the original staff objection notice.

Given that this decision and order are based on the absence of clear and definitive guidance on what constitutes a valid signature, the CRC is respectfully recommending that the Rules Committee at an appropriate time clarify the definition of valid signatures for purposes of the endorsement process.

Appeal of this order, if any, must be filed with the CDP Secretary, with copies to the Chair of the CDP State Central Committee, within twelve days of the date of this decision. Thus, any appeal must be filed on or before January 29, 2026 with the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party, and shall be an appeal to the next meeting of CDP Rules Committee upon conclusion of the response period.

Please note that per CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2e, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any decision of the CRC. Parties may additionally respond in person or virtually, depending on how the meeting is being conducted, if so desired, provided there has been a timely filing of an appeal and notice of intent to testify is provided in writing to the Lead

Chair of the Rules Committee by 5 PM on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party. The Rules Committee may accept such additional testimony, written or oral, considering the nature and import thereof, as well as the time available for its proper consideration, as it deems appropriate, in its discretion.

Accordingly, this decision is so ordered, and is in effect, unless, and until, a successful appeal is made, decided, and contrary orders made whether by the CRC, or by the Rules Committee. CRC shall retain jurisdiction up until the time of an appeal, if any, is heard by the Rules Committee.

Respectfully submitted by a 5-0 vote of the members of the CRC,

Tim Allison, Vice-Chair, Credentials Committee
Nicole Fernandez, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee
Valeria Hernandez, Co- Chair, Rules Committee
Jane Wishon, Co-Chair, Credentials Committee
Laurence Zakson, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee

Paul Seo, Credentials Committee Member, recused himself and did not participate in the deliberations on this matter.

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Compliance Review Commission (CRC)

DATE: January 22, 2026

RE: **COMPLIANCE REVIEW COMMISSION (CRC) DECISION RELATING TO A CHALLENGE FILED BY MICHAEL SAUNDERS**

INTRODUCTION:

On January 18, 2026, Michael Saunders, Acting Secretary for the El Dorado County Democratic Central Committee (EDCDCC), filed a challenge relating to the rejection of the incomplete and untimely County Committee Roster the EDCDCC submitted. Mr. Saunders contends that the version of the roster submitted on November 26, 2025, was rejected by CADEM staff on December 2, 2025 due to the California Democratic Party (CADEM) administrative processing deficiencies and communication failures, resulting in their duly seated County Committee members being excluded from the Pre-Endorsing Conference voting roster in violation of CADEM Party Bylaws governing voting eligibility.

The challenge claims the following:

1. On October 31, 2025, members of the EDCDCC joined a call with CADEM staff to address Pre-Endorsing Conference delegate issues, including missing club delegates, and explained that the EDCDCC lacked a Secretary and that the Chair was not receiving CADEM emails, which Mr. Saunders contends alerted CADEM staff that the EDCDEE was having communications issues.
2. EDCDCC submitted its updated roster prior to the December 12, 2025 deadline using the instructed CADEM Formsite but never received a confirmation receipt, correction request or a follow-up from CADEM Staff. Rather, Mr. Saunders contends the EDCDCC was first made aware of the failure to include its County Committee Members on January 14, 2026, at which point the County Committee promptly escalated the matter.
3. CADEM Staff failed to contact the Chair's correct email or the secondary officer listed on the formsite submission and was only informed of the issues when the roster was deemed rejected due to formatting issues, despite no formatting requirements being clearly stated and the Formsite system accepting the PDF without error.
4. Despite accurate contact information provided in the Formsite submission, ballots and eligibility communications were sent to an outdated third-party email address, resulting in the Chair not receiving her ballot. As a result, their eligible County Committee members were unable to participate in the 2026 January Pre-Endorsing Conference vote.

The challenge is requesting:

1. A finding that administrative and procedural errors affected the processing of EDCDCC's timely roster submission and resulted in the improper exclusion of their eligible County Committee members in violation of CRC Procedural Rule (5)(c) of the Party Bylaws.
2. Immediate remedial relief, including corrective action related to the affected Pre-Endorsing Conference vote and guidance to prevent recurrence, due to the timing deadline of the election.

In light of the foregoing, a majority of the Compliance Review Commission found that the Complaint adequately stated the claim, but, even if accepted as true, the allegations did not warrant further proceedings and so, the CRC did not request a response to the objection, as is authorized under Section 5, subsection D.5.a of the CRC Procedural Rules.

DOCUMENTS INITIALLY RECEIVED AND REVIEWED:

Documents received and reviewed by the CRC associated with the challenge included the following:

1. Challenge submitted by Michael Saunders, Acting Secretary for the El Dorado County Democratic Central Committee (EDCDCC) and 8 supporting documents.

    a. Exhibit A - Email Copy of Denial Request with Reasons from Party Chair
    b. Exhibit B - Email correspondence of Incomplete Roster Records Maintained by CADEM
    c. Exhibit C - Statement regarding Email on file with CADEM for El Dorado County Central Committee Chair
    d. Exhibit D - Submitted Formsite and Roster PDF
    e. Exhibit E - Email Inquiries and instructions given from the Regional Director and CADEM Staff
    f. Exhibit F - Emails after submitting the Roster via the Formsite
    g. Exhibit G - Email regarding Missing Information with Previous Attempts for DSCC Roster
    h. Exhibit H - Background email which led to the phone call with EDCDCC Officers and Staff regarding missing Clubs

TIMELINESS:

According to CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2:.

> "All challenges must be commenced by the filing of a written challenge with the Secretary of This Committee, with copies served on the Chair of This Committee, as well as the appointing person, and the chair of the relevant organization, where applicable no later than seven (7) calendar days after the alleged violation occurred.

> Upon a showing of good cause, sustained by unanimous vote, the Compliance Review Commission may waive this requirement."
>
> (All By-Law references are to the California Democratic Party Bylaws, as amended through August 25, unless otherwise indicated.)

The Challenger submitted a challenge on January 18, 2026 for a rejection that took place on December 2, 2025. The Challenger alleges that the relevant date for timeliness is when it actually became aware of the non-inclusion of its delegates on January 16, 2026, and, so, the submission was within 7 days of the incident, and, thus, the challenge was timely.

Given the findings below, the CRC does not need to determine timeliness and declines to do so.

STANDING:

According to Article XII, Section 3:

> "Any party to a challenge must be adversely affected to bring the challenge."

Michael Saunders is the Acting Secretary of the El Dorado County Democratic Central (EDCDCC). It is not clear whether Mr. Saunders was disqualified. However, inasmuch as the members of the EDCDCC were deprived their delegates due to the events at issue in this challenge, the CRC finds that Mr. Saunders has standing as he, as a member of the EDCDCC, was adversely affected.

JURISDICTION:

Article XII, Section 2.a(1) of the CDP Bylaws states:

> "The Compliance Review Commission shall have initial jurisdiction over all challenges and/or appeals arising under these Bylaws."

Further, the CRC Procedural Rules, Section 2, B. state in pertinent part that a challenge must,

> "Explain[] the basis of CRC's jurisdiction… If the CRC cannot discern the section of the CDP Bylaws alleged to have been violated or which grants jurisdiction to the CRC, it may dismiss the challenge."

Based on the contents of the challenge, this is a challenge to the eligibility of voters in the endorsement process under Article VIII and was filed while the CDP Convention is not in session. Accordingly, the CRC has jurisdiction.

FINDINGS:

The CRC takes seriously its responsibility whenever it examines the ability of otherwise eligible voters to cast a ballot, but finds that the evidence is clear that the EDCDCC did not submit a complete roster in a timely manner and in a usable format. Moreover, CDP staff provided notice of the deficiency to the EDCDCC via its chair at the address provided to the CDP by the EDCDCC. Finally, the EDCDCC still has not provided a complete roster with all required information in a usable format.

It is the responsibility of County Democratic Central Committees to timely submit complete data in a usable form and to verify its submission. None of the allegations in the challenge demonstrate that occurred and, in fact, as of the date of this decision and order, the EDCDCC has not made such a submission. Specifically,

1. Even if, as alleged, CADEM Staff met with EDCDCC leadership, the EDCDCC did not provide alternative contact information. Indeed, the contact information for the EDCDCC Chair – the EDCDCC's presumptive contact – is unchanged to this date.

2. The challenge claimed that the EDCDCC's roster was submitted prior to the December 12, 2025 deadline using the instructed CADEM Formsite but never received a confirmation receipt, correction request, or a follow-up from CADEM Staff.

   The CRC found that the EDCC Roster was submitted via a Formsite by Mr. Saunders on November 26, 2026, but staff sent notice of the deficiency to the correct email address provided by the EDCDCC. Indeed, following standard practice, staff emailed the Chair on record, Margaret Fortune, who was also the person listed as Chair in Michael Saunders' submission, at the email provided on the Formsite.

   In these circumstances, even if the facts contained in the challenge are credited, the challenge should be denied. In so determining, the CRC also notes:

   1. There is no allegation that anyone undertook any action to deliberately disenfranchise voters nor is there any evidence to suggest that took place.
   2. This is not a situation in which a filer missed a deadline and filed an appeal hot on the heels of the missed deadline and the deadline could be extended without materially altering the endorsement process deadlines or materially disadvantaging candidates who designed and implemented a campaign strategy designed around the Roster provided.
   3. A Roster with complete data and in a usable format still has not been provided.

ORDER:

Based upon the above facts and the Bylaws of the CDP, the CRC makes the following Order:

1. Based on the information presented, the CRC voted to dismiss this challenge as it lacks merit and is subject to summary denial under Section 5.D.5a of the CRC Procedural Rules.

Appeal of this order, if any, must be filed with the CDP Secretary, with copies to the Chair of the CDP State Central Committee, within twelve days of the date of this decision. Thus, any appeal must be filed on or before February 3, 2026 with the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party, and shall be an appeal to the next meeting of CDP Rules Committee upon conclusion of the response period.

Please note that per CDP Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2e, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any decision of the CRC. Parties may additionally respond in person or virtually, depending on how the meeting is being conducted, if so desired, provided there has been a timely filing of an appeal and notice of intent to testify is provided in writing to the Lead Chair of the Rules Committee by 5 PM on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at the Sacramento office of the California Democratic Party. The Rules Committee may accept such additional testimony, written or oral, considering the nature and import thereof, as well as the time available for its proper consideration, as it deems appropriate, in its discretion.

Accordingly, this decision is so ordered, and is in effect, unless, and until, a successful appeal is made, decided, and contrary orders made whether by the CRC, or by the Rules Committee. CRC shall retain jurisdiction up until the time of an appeal, if any, is heard by the Rules Committee.

Respectfully submitted by a 6-0 vote of the members of the CRC,

Tim Allison, Co-Chair, Credentials Committee
Nicole Fernandez, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee
Valeria Hernandez, Co- Chair, Rules Committee
Jane Wishon, Co-Chair, Credentials Committee
Laurence Zakson, Vice-Chair, Rules Committee
Paul Seo, Credentials Committee Member