

Constitution

**of the
Party for Socialism and Liberation
(PSL)**

Fifth Edition – 2022

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www.PSLweb.org

A Constitution was adopted by the First Party Congress of the Party for Socialism and Liberation in February 2010, and amended by Party Congresses in 2013 and 2016. At the Fourth Party Congress in 2019, it was divided into two sections: the Constitution and Bylaws of the PSL. The Constitution was amended at the Fourth Party Congress in 2019 and Fifth Party Congress in 2022.

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Preamble

The Party for Socialism and Liberation exists to promote the interests of working-class and oppressed peoples in the United States. Facing the most powerful capitalist class of bankers and owners with the most centralized and far-flung military apparatus that the world has ever seen, the PSL seeks to overturn the existing social order and reorganize it on a new basis with the working class in political power and the economy organized in the interests of the majority class of working and oppressed people. The Party's organization, as reflected in this Constitution, is guided by this fundamental purpose.

Article I

Name, Purpose and Symbol

1. Name

1.1 The name of the Party is the Party for Socialism and Liberation.

2. Abbreviation

2.1 The abbreviation of the Party name is PSL.

3. Purpose

3.1 The aims and purpose of the Party are set forth in the PSL Party Program.

4. Symbol

4.1 The symbol of the Party shall be the Party's abbreviation "PSL" with a flag flying above the letters, printed in red.

Pictured here:



Article II

The Organization of the Party: Principles and Structure

1. Democratic centralism

1.1 The Party organization and its internal life are guided by the fundamental features of democratic centralism.

1.2 The principle of democratic centralism implies the following rights and responsibilities of all Party members:

- The model of membership is the professional revolutionary. The PSL Constitution Bylaws, Guidelines and Program provide the basis of all democratic discussion and action;
- During periods of discussion on political, organizational or administrative issues, Party members are expected to fully and freely participate without any restrictions on presenting their views;
- Decisions are made on the basis of majority (more than 50 percent) vote, except where specifically noted in this Constitution;
- All decisions made on the basis of open and democratic discussion and majority vote shall be binding on all members to whom such decisions refer. All members, including those who voted in the minority, are bound to carry out the decisions of the majority;
- A centralized leadership elected on the basis of the above norms and in the manner prescribed in this Constitution shall have the authority to make decisions in accordance with adopted policy that is binding on the membership that elects it;
- All members, including the elected leadership, are bound by a common discipline to carry out Party decisions;

- Decisions made at the national level are binding on all members of all branches and localities; decisions made at a local level are binding on all members forming the locality.

1.3 The discipline of democratic centralism is binding on all Party members. Discipline is voluntarily assumed by members upon joining the Party and based on conviction, understanding and dedication to the cause to which the Party commits its efforts.

2. National leading bodies of the Party

2.1 The leading bodies of the Party described in this section are elected bodies.

2.2 The highest body of the Party is the Party Congress (See Article III).

Between Congresses, the highest body is the Central Committee, which is elected at the Party Congress (See Article IV, Section 1).

When the Central Committee is not in session, the highest body is the Executive Committee of the Central Committee (hereafter referred to as “Executive Committee”), which is elected by the Central Committee (See Bylaws Article II: National Organization)

Decisions of a lower body are subject to review, amendment or reversal by a higher body when it convenes.

2.3 Each Party body is subordinate to the next higher body, with central authority vested in the Party Congress, the highest body of the Party, which has the authority to act on all aspects of Party policy and activity.

2.4 Leading Party bodies have the right to make decisions on the basis of policies adopted by the Party. These decisions are subject to review by higher bodies.

2.5 The leading bodies at different levels shall submit reports of their work to the Congress, Central Committee, Executive Committee and leadership of the National Organization Department (See Bylaws)

and these bodies shall keep other leading bodies informed of developments in their work.

3. Functioning of the leading bodies

3.1 Party bodies at all levels operate on a principle of collective leadership, utilizing a division of labor to carry out responsibilities, with individual accountability for the execution of duties.

3.2 Decisions taken by a higher Party body shall be transmitted to the lower bodies with appropriate explanation and discussion. Decisions shall be implemented on an appropriate schedule.

3.3. Matters concerning international and national affairs, and those of national significance, shall be decided upon by the Party Congress, Central Committee or Executive Committee. Matters concerning local affairs of purely local significance shall ordinarily be decided upon by local bodies. In no case shall such decisions run counter to the decisions of a higher Party body, or to the PSL Party Program or Constitution.

4. Decision-making procedures

4.1 After a thorough discussion in any branch or Party body, at the Party Congress, or at a national internal conference, decisions are arrived at by majority vote of all full members present, except when otherwise noted herein.

All members, including those who disagree, are duty bound to publicly defend and carry out these decisions.

In an uncontested election and for a non-controversial proposal, unanimous consent may be used. This means asking if there is any objection, and if there is not, deeming the nominees elected or the proposal passed.

4.2 The election of individuals to leading bodies shall be based on a critical review and evaluation of the work of the elected body and of the individuals proposed for office. Those elected to leading bodies should have demonstrated a heightened sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice.

5. Representation

5.1 The development of new layers of leadership and the promotion of qualified comrades into leadership is central to building the Party. The Party, in the development of its leadership, shall give due regard to the qualities of self-sacrifice, dedication and Marxist political understanding; links with the working class; participation in mass organizations and geographic representation. The Party shall strive to balance the need for experience and continuity of leadership with the timely promotion of newer and younger members into local and national leadership. Moreover, given the unique character of racism and national oppression in the United States, special efforts shall be made to ensure in the Party's leadership the representation and advancement of members from oppressed nationalities. The Party shall also recognize the need to train and develop the leadership of women, LGBTQ people and other oppressed sectors of the multinational working class.

6. Composition of membership

6.1 The Party must strive to represent in the composition of its membership the multinational character of the U.S. working class. It shall strive for full participation of different sectors of workers, and from oppressed communities, women, LGBTQ people and youth.

Article III

The Party Congress

1. Party Congress

1.1 The Party Congress is the highest body of the Party. It has the authority to act on all aspects of Party policy and activity.

1.2 The Party Congress shall convene every two to three years. Under special circumstances, the Congress can be advanced or postponed.

1.3 It shall be the responsibility of the Central Committee to organize the Congress.

2. Delegates to the Congress

2.1 The Party Congress shall be comprised of voting delegates elected at the branch level and by the Central Committee.

2.2 The Central Committee shall determine a ratio of delegates per full members in each branch by a set date.

These delegates, while elected at the branch level, are elected to engage in discussions, debates and votes at the Congress on the basis of the deliberations of that body, and not to represent those who voted for them or the branch as a whole.

There shall be the provision for delegates to be allotted based on Party fractions at worksites and in sectors of the workforce.

2.3 The Party Congress may also have voting delegates nominated directly by the Central Committee, the maximum number of which shall not exceed 40 percent of the total elected delegates. Such delegates shall

be elected by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Central Committee (for two-thirds votes, round up when the outcome is a fraction).

2.4 The Central Committee may also invite non-voting delegates in any number that it deems appropriate to give reports or act as observers.

2.5 The members of the outgoing Central Committee who are not voting delegates shall be invited to participate in the Congress as non-voting delegates.

3. Election of delegates to the Congress at the branch level

3.1 Each branch shall convene a special series of internal meetings during a period scheduled by the Central Committee. The meetings shall give all full members the opportunity to understand the process for the election of delegates, make nominations of candidates, accept or decline nominations, and vote.

Candidate members may not stand for election, nominate candidates or vote, but they may and are encouraged to participate in this process to better understand the Party's functioning. Candidate members may speak in discussions.

3.2 Nominees must have been a full member for at least two years and be in good standing at the time of the nomination.

Members do not have to be present at the meeting at which nominations are made to be nominated as long as they meet the qualifications.

All full members in good standing may make nominations and vote. Any member making a nomination shall explain the reason for the nomination. A nomination must be seconded by another full member in good standing to be valid.

Members shall be given up to a week, and not less than three days, to accept or decline nominations, and may do so without explanation. Members who accept their nomination are committing to being present at the Congress.

When the election is held, a quorum must be present (See Bylaws). All members must cast a complete ballot — they must vote for as many nominees as there are delegate positions available for that branch. Incomplete or improperly filled out ballots will be considered void. The vote will be carried out by secret ballot. Members must be present in person at the meeting at which voting takes place in order to cast a vote; no proxy or absentee votes are permitted.

Those receiving the most votes shall be declared elected provided that they obtain more than 50 percent of the ballots cast. In cases when there are not sufficient persons elected in this way, there shall be additional rounds of voting until a sufficient number of candidates have received the majority of votes.

Small branches who are unable to resolve a vote because of their numbers (due to a tie or inability for a nominee to reach a majority) may request the assistance of a member of the National Organization Department who works with them to resolve the vote, if necessary by casting a vote themselves.

3.3 The Central Committee may waive the membership requirements of a nominee (See Article III, Section 3.2) by a majority vote.

3.4 A branch may elect alternate delegates in the case that an elected delegate is not able to attend the Congress. Such delegates shall be elected in the same manner set forth in this section.

3.5 Vacancies for delegates can only be filled by special elections held in the same manner laid out in this article for delegates, if there were not alternates elected for the purpose of filling such vacancies.

3.6 At-large members (See Bylaws) and members of branch preparatory committees (See Bylaws) are not eligible for election through the branch nominating process. They are eligible for nomination directly by the Central Committee.

The National Organization Department shall conduct a membership review prior to the delegate election process and determine if there

are any instances in which at-large members and/or members of branch preparatory committees should be counted with a nearby branch for the purpose of allocating delegates.

4. Functions and powers of the Party Congress

4.1 The tasks of the Party Congress shall include the following:

- a. Hear and examine the political/organizational report of the outgoing Central Committee and other leadership bodies;
- b. Discuss and decide major questions confronting the Party;
- c. Determine the Party line and tactics in the current situation;
- d. Revise the PSL Party Program, if necessary;
- e. Revise the Constitution of the Party, if necessary;
- f. Adopt any other document(s) that may be deemed necessary;
- g. Elect the new Central Committee;
- h. Elect members to any other positions, or refer those elections to the Central Committee;
- i. Set immediate business for the new Central Committee.

5. Pre-Congress discussion period

5.1 Prior to the Party Congress, at least one month shall be provided for a pre-Congress discussion period in leading bodies and throughout the Party on the matters before the Congress. A summary political document approved by a majority vote of the Central Committee shall be submitted prior to the opening of the discussion period. The Central Committee shall strive to submit additional documents for discussion prior to the opening of, or during, the discussion period.

During this discussion, all Party members have the right to express their views and propose changes, including amendments to the Constitution, to propose resolutions on all questions of policy and tactics, and on the work of leading bodies for consideration by the Congress.

All existing policies and decisions remain in full force during the pre-Congress discussion, which is a completely internal discussion.

5.2 The outgoing Central Committee shall propose an agenda to the Congress, which shall be ratified or amended as the first order of business at the Congress. The Congress has a right to refer additional

matters to the new Central Committee as opposed to placing them on the agenda of the Congress proceedings.

6. The term of the Congress

6.1 The term of the Congress shall be the duration of its deliberations.

Article IV

National Organization

1. Central Committee

1.1 Between Congresses, the highest body of the Party is the Central Committee, which is elected at the Party Congress as provided for below. The Central Committee remains in place until the next Congress.

1.2 The Central Committee represents the Party as a whole and is responsible for directing the work of the Party. It is responsible for carrying out the political line and decisions adopted by the Party Congress, and for enforcing the Party Constitution. Within the context of the PSL Party Program, Party Constitution, Bylaws and Congress decisions, the Central Committee shall have the power to determine questions of policy.

1.3 The decisions of the Central Committee shall be binding on all Party bodies and members until and unless they are overturned by the Party Congress.

1.4 The Central Committee has the authority to make decisions and take action necessary and incidental to the good and welfare of the entire Party, and to act upon all problems and developments occurring between Congresses.

2. Election of the Central Committee

2.1 The outgoing Central Committee shall propose to the Congress the number of seats for the new Central Committee that is to be elected. This proposal is subject to amendment and confirmation by the Congress delegates.

2.2 The outgoing Central Committee may choose to propose to the Party Congress a slate of candidates for the new Central Committee. This serves as a nomination for those candidates. When a vote takes place, all candidates who were part of the slate are voted on as individuals, as are other nominees, not as a slate.

2.3 The Congress shall elect a Nominations Committee, which shall administer the election.

2.4 Only voting delegates to the Congress may be nominated for the Central Committee. All nominees will have the opportunity to accept or decline the nomination.

2.5 The Congress will allot time for nominees to speak in favor of their nomination, and for other delegates to speak for or against any nominee(s).

2.6 Delegates will vote using a secret ballot. All delegates must cast a complete ballot — they must vote for as many nominees as there are positions available. Incomplete or improperly filled out ballots will be considered void. The Nominations Committee will administer this process, count the votes and report the outcome to the Congress.

Those receiving the most votes shall be declared elected provided that they obtain more than 50 percent of the ballots cast. In cases when there are not sufficient persons elected in this way, there shall be additional rounds of voting until a sufficient number of candidates have received the majority of votes.

2.7 The Congress may also elect a group of alternate Central Committee members to fill any vacancies that may arise during the term of the Central Committee.

Article V

Party Membership

1. Eligibility

1.1 Any person whose primary place of residence is the United States, and who voluntarily accepts and works to carry out the Party's program and policies, and the requirements of membership — as determined by this Constitution, Bylaws, the PSL Party Program and decisions of the Party Congress — may apply for membership in the Party.

2. Basic Norm

2.1 Membership in the Party for Socialism and Liberation is a voluntary act of the individual.

Article VI

Rights and Responsibilities of Party Members

1. Rights of Party members

1.1 No member shall seek or attain personal gain or privilege from their membership.

Article VII

Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals

1. Introduction

1.1 The sections of this article are in place to protect the integrity of the Party, and to protect the rights of those members who bring charges or have charges brought against them.

1.2 Disciplinary action shall be taken against any member who carries out actions that are in violation of any provision of the PSL's Constitution, Bylaws and Guidelines, or any other conduct detrimental to the Party or the working class.

1.3 Assistance should be given to help members to overcome weaknesses and shortcomings, when possible. Disciplinary action should be taken whenever possible based on assisting comrades, taking into account their whole record of service and not isolated incidents.

In general, events that took place prior to someone's membership fall outside the scope of disciplinary action — although exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

Branches and all leadership bodies shall strive to solve conflicts and problems through education and discussion with individual members, reserving formal charges and disciplinary action for those situations where no other mode of resolution is possible.

1.4 Disciplinary proceedings shall normally be conducted at the level where the alleged violation or offense took place, though they may be referred to a higher body.

Disciplinary proceedings are internal in nature unless designated otherwise by the Central Committee or Executive Committee.

1.5 The sections in this article pertain to full members except where candidate members are specifically noted.

Article VIII

Finances of the Party

1. Financial sources

1.1 The financial responsibility for the Party rests with the membership, with dues as the central source of funds.

1.2 Other financial resources include income from various Party undertakings, and donations from sympathetic individuals or organizations.

Article IX

Mass Organizations

1. Basic norms of functioning

1.1 Party members working in or relating to mass organizations must work under the centralized leadership of the Party.

Article X

Amending and Interpreting the Constitution

1. Amendment

1.1 The Party Constitution may be amended only by vote at the Party Congress.

2. Interpretation

2.1 The Central Committee and Executive Committee shall have the authority to interpret the Constitution and to create procedures in matters not specifically covered by it. Interpretations made by the Executive Committee shall be submitted to the next Central Committee meeting for approval. All interpretations shall be submitted to the next Party Congress for approval.

