

NDP Statement of Principles

Sexual assault, abusive behavior, and molestation are never acceptable and will not be tolerated at and within the Nebraska Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP firmly opposes persons and organizations that perpetrate or give shelter to such action. The NDP rejects excuses or attempts at mitigation for political expediency, mistaken claims for tolerance for those hiding behind their privilege(s), and misogyny masking behind religion and cultural differences.

The NDP officers and governing members (State Executive Committee, State Central Committee, County Party leaders), and all representing the NDP, including elected office holders and candidates, shall have an affirmative duty to refrain from unacceptable behavior that causes abuse or injury to other persons. NDP representatives shall use their official capacities to take actions, promote policies, and hold persons accountable to address abusive, harassing, and discriminatory environments.

Policy to Promote Productive Communications

The issues and policies that the NDP promotes and champions are of such importance and consequence that passions and excitement are the normal result. Nevertheless, if we are to fulfill our mission, the NDP and its members must actively redirect that energy to productive efforts.

NDP-affiliated meetings, events, and communications, including social media, shall be conducted in such a manner to inspire ideas and

solutions, promote collaborative communications, and energize our team of volunteers, members, and candidates.

To create that productive environment, we must strive for a welcoming, respectful, safe, and professional tone to our activities and endeavors. There will always be many differing viewpoints in our “big tent party”, and we are challenged to foster dialogue on difficult topics. Persons working as, with, or for the NDP shall assume positive intent on behalf of third party speakers and shall also be accountable for unintended negative impact of NDP communications.

While self-regulation is always the most effective, a framework for redirection and proportionate redress must be applied if NDP members act in disrespectful, hateful, and disruptive ways. Thoughtful procedures can avoid inequitable and disruptive reactions. Depending on the nature of the unacceptable behavior, the NDP may use education, role modeling, mentoring, mediation, and in extreme cases, appropriate consequences after proper due process to effect necessary change.

Sexual harassment is of deep concern to our members. It serves as a clear impediment to full participation in our government, economy, and society. Sexual harassment is action of disrespect, and often privilege, seeking to diminish and even degrade the recipient. It can include but is not limited to predatory activity. It is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. It can also include non-sexual offensive remarks about a person’s sex, and it can be generalized comments, as opposed to targeting a specific individual.

NDP members, whether officers, employees, or volunteers, should not have to endure demeaning harassment of any kind. A culture that

promotes or condones such unacceptable behavior runs at cross purposes to our mission and ethics. Creating a safe and welcoming place for ALL promotes an environment of productivity and excellence.

The NDP recognizes that negative behavior should be addressed with consequences of appropriate severity. Sexual assault and molestation are criminal and actionable. Distinctions can and should be recognized for different actions and motivations of a less serious nature. ***An offender's intention or motivation plays a part in distinguishing improper behavior and arriving at an appropriate response.*** The goal of this policy is to assure all persons interacting as, with, and for the NDP will have an environment to work and express their political views free of abuse and harassment.

The NDP encourages the reporting of harassment or other concerning behaviors. ***Credibility of the reporting party shall not be dismissed, but respected in any responding process adopted by the NDP.***

The NDP understands the importance and limits of confidentiality. Depending on the nature of the report and parties involved, confidential and neutral third party dispute resolution may be the most appropriate and effective process.

In making these important decisions, the NDP is cognizant of the serious nature of any restrictions place on the political participation by either the reporting or responding person. We undertake our administration of these Principles with a commitment to ethical leadership and responsible governance.

Nebraska Democratic Party Ethical Leadership Policy and Guidelines

The Nebraska Democratic Party (NDP) leadership includes a diversity of professionals, elected leaders, and volunteers from all over Nebraska who work together to advance a truly representative Democratic Party open to all who support our principles and platform.

All NDP party leaders (including elected officials, candidates, and members of the State Central Committee, State Executive Committee, Congressional District Organizations, Affiliated Caucus Organizations, and County Democratic Party Committees) are expected to promote an open and welcoming environment and provide a harassment-free experience for everyone participating in NDP business or activities.

This responsibility is undertaken to encourage and support participation of others regardless of age, race, disability, ethnicity, level of experience, ability, socioeconomic status, nationality, personal and/or physical appearance, religion or lack thereof, sexual identity, gender identity, and orientation.

NDP Leaders, Volunteers, and Staff (collectively Members) understand and acknowledge that:

- NDP convenes and collaborates in many physical and virtual spaces;
- Decisions they make will often affect others in the community;
- Disagreements never excuse poor behavior and bad manners;
- Individuals expressing disagreement should be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard and understood;

- Individuals may not understand or agree with jokes, sarcasm, and oblique references communicated by others; and
- NDP will provide mandatory leadership training to communicate on-going expectations for appropriate behavior, safe environment requirements, and possible disciplinary actions.

These *Nebraska Democratic Party Ethical Leadership Policy and Guidelines* (NDP Leadership Policy) applies to any physical or virtual location where individuals participate in NDP business or activities. NDP Leadership Policy may be revised from time to time in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Nebraska Democratic Party (NDP Rules).

EXPECTATIONS FOR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Members are considered political leaders in their communities, and should make themselves aware of and reasonably anticipate the sensitivities of others. This responsibility extends to all forms of communication, including committee meetings, whether in person, by telephone, discussion groups and other forums, and other communication media, such as Facebook, Twitter, mailing lists, and issue trackers used by the NDP.

Members are expected to promote a culture of respect, inclusion, and equity by:

- Using welcoming and inclusive language, and maintaining a cordial and patient attitude and demeanor.
- Assuming good intent on the part of other speakers and participants.

- Making a personal commitment to be nonjudgmental about cultural differences, living conditions, and the lifestyles of other individuals.
- Being kind, considerate, respectful, and professional by treating all individuals with a sense of dignity, respect, and worth.
- **Respecting the requests of others who object or ask to be excluded from photos, videos, and audio recordings.**
- Respecting the reasonably assumed communal nature of online spaces such as Facebook groups and webpages, and complying with the NDP Listserve Ground Rules.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Members should ensure their own safety and promote a safe environment for others by:

- Avoiding all rude, disruptive, and abusive behavior.
- Never engaging in or tolerating sexual harassment (See NDP Statement of Principles).
- Avoiding profane, racist, other prejudicial, exclusionary, abusive, or sexualized language.
- **Respecting others' personal space, and avoiding non-consensual physical contact in all situations and circumstances, respecting that consent cannot be granted by an individual who is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or mental capacity.**
- Respecting others' property, and the property of the organization to which the Member belongs.

- Complying with applicable laws and regulations governing behavior in public and private settings used for NDP business and activities, including any prohibited use of alcohol, drugs, firearms, and motor vehicles.
- Immediately ceasing any behavior that is objected to as being harassing, abusive, violent, or risking the safety of others, and respecting others' feelings about the incident.
- **Failing to conform to an assumed duty to keep information confidential.**
- **Members are encouraged to amicably work toward resolving disputes with others, but only if and when further communication and contact is mutually agreeable to all parties.**

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Individuals violating this NDP Leadership Policy at a NDP state or local meeting or event may be asked to leave the event.

A member who continues to violate NDP Leadership Policy after a warning and/or suggestions to cease the non-compliant behavior, or whose violation is especially severe in nature, will be asked to leave the organization.

Violations of the NDP Leadership Policy may result in censure, suspension, or expulsion of the Member from a party leadership position and/or withholding resources from a candidate or elected official.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CONDUCT RESPORTS

Any member of the Nebraska Democratic Party (Concerned Member) may report concerns about the conduct of another Nebraska Democrat (Identified Member). Concerns may not be submitted anonymously, but the Concerned Member may ask that their identity remain confidential. If confidentiality is requested the ad hoc committee will make a good faith reasonable effort to maintain it and all members of the committee will be duty bound to respect it. Confidentiality will be specifically reviewed and discussed with the Concerned Member at each stage of the NDP ad hoc committee handling process to reach an understanding concerning confidentiality for the ongoing process. The Concerned Member will be advised that the ad hoc committee has an equal duty to protect fairness and due process on behalf of the Identified Party and that the taking of formal action may require disclosure.

A Concerned Member's report may be submitted (in writing, electronically, or in person) to the State Chair, First Associate Chair, Executive Director, their CD Caucus Chair, or CD Caucus Associate Chair (collectively, ad hoc ethics committee).

The ad hoc ethics committee shall consist of the State Chair, First Associate Chair, Executive Director, and the CD Caucus Chair and CD Caucus Associate Chair of the congressional district where the Concerned Member resides. The ad hoc ethics committee may, by a majority vote, substitute or add committee members as they may determine.

Any ad hoc committee member who receives a report will ask permission of the Concerned Member to take the matter to the ad hoc ethics committee, at which point all committee members should be informed (in writing, electronically, or in person).

Ad hoc ethics committees may meet in person or via telecommunications. They may appoint, from the committee, a subcommittee to gather information on the issues raised by the Concerned Member or speak on behalf of the committee with the relevant parties.

If a member of an ad hoc ethics committee is the Identified Member or Concerned Member, they will be replaced by the National Committee member of the same gender.

All decisions by ad hoc ethics committees are made by vote of a majority of its members.

The ad hoc ethics committee has these options:

- 1) Take no action;
- 2) Attempt to facilitate an amicable resolution between the Concerned and Identified Members, including the possible use of a trained third-party mediator;
- 3) Deliver a warning and/or suggestions to the Identified Member but take no further action; or
- 4) Refer the complaint to the Nebraska Democratic Party State Executive Committee (SEC) for review and consideration of the matter under the NDP Constitution and Bylaws (NDP Rules).

All actions of the ad hoc ethics committees shall be reported to the Concerned Member and Identified Member in writing with reasoning. At the same time, the ad hoc ethics committee will issue a written notification to the SEC and NDP State Central Committee (SCC) explaining the issues raised and any referral to the SEC for further proceedings. Written notifications will be transmitted in accordance with NDP Rules.

The SEC will review the referral from the ad hoc committee and submit a statement with any recommendations for the matter to the SCC and NDP Rules Committee for consideration in accordance with this NDP Leadership Policy and NDP Rules.

The SEC statement with any recommendations will be reported at the next SCC meeting by the State Chair or Rules Committee and further action shall then be considered in accordance with the NDP Constitution and Bylaws, including but not limited to Article X, Section 1 of the Constitution, Bylaw 5.1.2.13, and Bylaw 8.19.