

*Prepared May 14, 2019*

## Resolutions proposed by members for the General Meeting of the DPCA, May 17-19, 2019

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Dear DPCA Members,

Resolutions pertaining to the DA Charter have been referred to the DPCA Bylaws Committee. Please note that there are two changes from the distribution on May 2: one additional resolution on electronic ballot options and an update to the resolution on the scrutiny of U.S.-based venues.

The Resolutions Committee will give an oral report of our committee at the upcoming global meeting. The authors of each resolution consented to the text presented here.

DPCA Resolutions Committee: Susan Vaillant, Carol Adamson, Rick Wicks, Will Bakker

## Resolution to support expansion of electronic ballot options for UOCAVA voters

*This resolution was added to the agenda by International Chair Julia Bryan as crucial for the May 2019 door knock and with the cooperation of Resolutions Chair Susan Vaillant.*

*Proposed by Eileen Weinberg (DA Switzerland). Supported by Julia Bryan (DA Czech Republic) and Heidi Burch (DA Canada).*

WHEREAS one of the major objectives of *H.R.1 - For the People Act of 2019* is to expand voter access to the ballot;<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS federal voting rights statutes protect the ability of eligible voters to cast ballots that can be counted, and laws that restrict ballot access conflict with constitutional principles and congressional mandates;

WHEREAS democracy suffers when ballot security initiatives suppress eligible votes by blocking or creating unnecessary hurdles for eligible voters or inadvertently disrupting the voting process;

WHEREAS rates of ballots returned and counted for voters covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* are well below those of the general population;<sup>2</sup> the *Help America Vote Act (HAVA)* promoted accessibility, including expansion of electronic systems as a means of improving UOCAVA ballot return rates; and as a result more than 30 states currently provide some UOCAVA voters with the option to return ballots using a digital communication method (email, fax, or a web portal);

WHEREAS documented intrusions into local election offices and political organizations in 2016 have amplified cybersecurity concerns, the risk of adverse impact of malicious tampering that targets a ballot returned by a UOCAVA voter using a digital communication method is minimal;<sup>3</sup>

- All absentee voting consists of known risks,<sup>4</sup> but intentional malicious attacks that target digital ballot return options are not considered to be among the most likely, nor are there any documented cases of attacks on these ballots;

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<sup>1</sup> 116th Congress (2019-2020). H.R.1 - For the People Act of 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1>

<sup>2</sup> Council of State Governments. "Overseas Voting: Strategies for Engaging Every Voter." 2016. page 3.

The MOVE Act requires that states mail ballots to UOCAVA voters no later than 45 days before an election for federal offices and also required that election officials send out the blank ballot electronically, upon a voter's request. Data show that the MOVE Act resulted in significantly increased acceptance rates for UOCAVA ballots.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service. "The Help America Vote Act and Election Administration: Overview and Selected Issues for the 2016 Election." October 2016. Summary.

<sup>4</sup> FVAP. "Comparative Risk Analysis of the Current UOCAVA Voting System and an Electronic Alternative." February 28, 2013. [https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/ComparativeRiskAnalysisReport\\_20151228.pdf](https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/ComparativeRiskAnalysisReport_20151228.pdf)

The Executive Summary of the report explains that in order to ensure that UOCAVA voters are able to cast their votes securely and accurately, it's not enough to debate the potential risks associated with electronic (internet) voting without considering the risks associated with the current postal-based absentee voting processes.

- Security concerns discussed under the term “electronic voting” generally involve in-person voting as may be affected by voting machines (like optical scan systems, ballot-marking devices, and direct-recording electronic (DRE) machines) and voting equipment (including e-pollbooks, and tabulation systems) used at polling stations or technology used in election offices;
- Cyberattacks discussed surrounding recent elections involve attempts targeting voter registration lists or disseminating disinformation to influence public opinion;<sup>5</sup>
- All risk varies substantially, and depends largely on the proportion of voters using an option;<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS H.R.1 provides for the expansion of the following Internet-facilitated aspects of the voting process despite documented attacks that targeted voter registration lists:

- A. Online application for voter registration
- B. Online assistance to applicants in applying to register to vote
- C. Online completion, submission and receipt of completed voter registration application
- D. Use of Internet to update registration information
- E. Confirmation of receipt of voter registration application or update
- F. Notice of disposition (approval or rejection) of an application or update
- G. Provision of election information by email to registered individuals

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<sup>5</sup> Deluzio, Christopher. “A Smart and Effective Way to Safeguard Elections.” Brennan Center for Justice. July 25, 2018. <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/smart-and-effective-way-safeguard-elections>

<sup>6</sup> 29 states only allow electronic submission for the UOCAVA voters, and 3 states allow any absentee voter to return completed ballots electronically

WHEREAS reliance on the U.S. postal system or foreign postal services to deliver elections materials includes inherent flaws and potential risks, some of which are mitigated by the use of digital return options<sup>7 8</sup> and international mailing systems continue to present documented challenges that effectively disenfranchise some overseas voters;<sup>9 10</sup>

WHEREAS most states limit transmission of ballots using a digital communication method to UOCAVA voters, minimizing risk, and current methods support paper balloting systems and post-election risk-limiting audits through ballot duplication:

- Under the provisions of H.R.1, UOCAVA voters will continue to have the essential option to receive blank ballots electronically, which are printed by the voter at a remote location, as required under the *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE)*; ballots that are transmitted to voters electronically are duplicated once received by the local election official (LEO) so that they can be tabulated accurately;<sup>11</sup>
- Some states allow UOCAVA voters to submit a marked ballot using a digital communication method; these ballots are also managed by duplication by the LEO;<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Vote Foundation. “The Future Of Voting: End-to-end Verifiable Internet Voting.” July 2015. page 16. [https://www.usvotefoundation.org/sites/default/files/E2EVIV\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.usvotefoundation.org/sites/default/files/E2EVIV_full_report.pdf)

The 2008 Post-Election UOCAVA Survey Report and Analysis found that voting boards did not count 52% of attempted UOCAVA votes due to problems in the mail delivery process.

<sup>8</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*. 2018. page 66-68. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/25120>

The secrecy associated with marked ballots makes it more difficult for a voter to detect whether a marked ballot has been tampered with or intercepted. Problems related to inconsistencies in service: The mail return of marked ballots may be delayed past the deadline. Since, currently, there are no agreed upon chain-of-custody procedures for mailed ballots, mail-in voting presents more chances for votes to be lost than is the case with in-person voting.

<sup>9</sup> FVAP.gov. “New Research: Reliability of International Mailing Systems Remains a Challenge for Many Overseas Voters.” November 2016. <https://www.fvap.gov/info/news/2016/11/28/reliability-of-international-mail-remains-a-challenge>

In 2014, an estimated 17,000 ballots from U.S. citizens living overseas were not recorded as a result of foreign postal obstacles. Without any foreign postal obstacles, there would have been an estimated 15% more ballots recorded from developed countries and approximately 37% more ballots recorded from developing countries in 2014.

<sup>10</sup> FVAP. “International Mailing Systems and Voting by Overseas Citizens.” November 28, 2016. [https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/ResearchNoteInternationalMail\\_20161128\\_final.pdf](https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/ResearchNoteInternationalMail_20161128_final.pdf)

FVAP concluded that “overseas citizens, especially those living in developing countries, would benefit greatly from policies that mitigate these postal-related obstacles to absentee voting. Future research should examine the effectiveness of alternative modes of transmitting absentee ballots and assess policies intended to make government run postal systems more reliable.

<sup>11</sup> Council Of State Governments. “Recommendations from the CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group.” page 2. <http://www.csg.org/ovi/documents/KKOVITechRecs.pdf>

In general, ballot duplication involves transferring the voter’s selections to a new paper ballot and creating an audit record (e.g., numbering the original ballot and the remade ballot) so that the original and re-made ballots can be linked throughout the tabulation and election certification process.

<sup>12</sup> Center for Internet Security. *A Handbook for Elections Infrastructure Security*. <https://www.cisecurity.org/elections-resources/elections-infrastructure-handbook-part-2>

WHEREAS the restriction of ballot return options by digital communication methods will unquestionably negatively affect the ability of a significant number of UOCAVA voters to submit marked absentee ballots to the LEO in time to have that ballot counted in future elections.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Democrats Abroad endorses expansion of ballot return options by digital communications methods; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Democrats Abroad will actively campaign for changes to the paper ballot mandate included in H.R. 1 to ensure ballot accessibility by all overseas voters, by clarifying the definition of paper ballot that includes alternative ballot marking or return options for UOCAVA voters using a digital communication method, or by declaring the inapplicability of Section 1502, subparagraph a for UOCAVA voters (omitting (iv) Application to All Ballots).

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While this type of voting can carry transmission-based risks, the risk does not extend to the ballot tabulation systems as long as it is kept free of network connections.

## **Resolution urging closer scrutiny of the political donation history of U.S.-based venues when considering Democrats Abroad annual general meetings or other global meetings**

*This text was revised and submitted before the deadline, but the Secretary of the Committee failed to include it in the May 2, 2019 distribution.*

*Proposed by Will Prescott (DA Mexico). Sponsored by Democrats Abroad Global Hispanic Caucus. Supported by Sue Alksnis (DA Canada).*

WHEREAS, the practice of political spending, as determined by the U.S. Supreme Court, is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment; and

WHEREAS, business entities donating to U.S. political candidates, parties, or causes are assumed to do so in order to influence political decision-making; and

WHEREAS, the Democrats Abroad member (or members) who secure the venue for each annual general meeting in the District of Columbia are commended for doing outstanding work in the event's early preparation stages; and

WHEREAS, Democrats Abroad regularly holds an annual general meeting located in or around the District of Columbia, and

WHEREAS, resources are available to the public for the purpose of ascertaining past U.S. political expenditure by these hotels, corporations, and other businesses known for hosting formal meetings and conferences; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of Democrats Abroad to check which potential global meeting venues have contributed to persons, parties, or causes outside of the Democratic Party's interests;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad is encouraged to consider the political donation history and ownership of potential venues and vendors, in or around the District of Columbia, before selecting a Democrats Abroad annual general meeting place or any other DPCA meeting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad is encouraged to expand the concepts of this resolution to apply to all of its major procurements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad is encouraged to include a question about the political donation history and ownership when soliciting bids from potential venues and vendors.

## Resolution in support of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact<sup>1</sup>

*Changed from the version distributed by the Resolutions Committee on April 22, 2019.*

*Proposed by David Mivasair (DA Canada). Unanimously endorsed by the board of DA Canada.*

WHEREAS on five occasions the winner of the national popular vote for President of the United States did not become President, notably twice since 2000; and

WHEREAS shifting demographics make such mismatches between the popular vote and the electoral vote likely to happen with increasing frequency in the future; and

WHEREAS the Electoral College violates the democratic principle of “one person, one vote,” by giving unequal weight to voters by state such that, for example, Wyoming has three electors while California has only fifty-five despite having a population about seventy times larger; and

WHEREAS the Electoral College results in “wasted” votes since any votes cast in excess of a simple majority in a state add nothing to the outcome and are therefore “wasted”; and

WHEREAS this effect is most profound in states that lean strongly toward one candidate; and

WHEREAS the Electoral College process creates so-called “swing states,” in which small differences in voter preference can determine the election outcome for the entire country; and

WHEREAS swing states receive disproportionate numbers of candidate visits and vastly more campaign spending; and

WHEREAS due to their lopsided importance, swing states are identified years in advance, political operatives have clear guidance on where to concentrate voter suppression efforts, voting machine hacking, and other types of voter fraud; and

WHEREAS the Electoral College heightens a “red state/blue state” mentality, reinforcing an “us versus them” attitude and deepening perceived political divides; and

WHEREAS a majority of Americans support the idea that the winner of the national popular vote should be President<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS amending the U.S. Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College in favor of the national popular vote would require ratification by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the state legislatures; and is therefore unlikely to happen; and

WHEREAS the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC), if adopted by states (including the District of Columbia) with a total of 270 electoral votes, which is the number needed for a majority in the Electoral College, by having those states instruct their members of the Electoral College to vote for the candidate who won the overall national popular vote, would alleviate the aforementioned problems by assuring that the candidate who gains the majority of the national popular vote also will receive the majority of votes in the Electoral College; and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Popular\\_Vote\\_Interstate\\_Compact](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Popular_Vote_Interstate_Compact)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>

WHEREAS the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact has already been enacted into law in 14 states and the District of Columbia, representing 189 electoral votes (CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, MA, MD, NJ, NY, NM, RI, VT and WA); and

WHEREAS the National Popular Vote campaign strategically liaises with legislators in specific states where it is being considered each year to increase the number of states enacting into law measures supporting the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact; and

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad wishes to ensure that the votes of all our members count equally toward the election of the President; and

WHEREAS some Americans living abroad decline to join Democrats Abroad or to vote in the Presidential election citing that they do not vote in a 'swing state' and therefore feel that their vote will not make a difference to the outcome of the election; and

WHEREAS the 2016 Democrats Abroad Platform states in the chapter on Election Integrity that we favor the National Popular Vote Compact and it is currently the formal position of Democrats Abroad on the issue, and

WHEREAS members of Democrats Abroad are an important segment of the constituency of those legislators and can be mobilized to advocate for their state legislators to pass this measure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad endorses the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad will actively urge its members who vote in states where the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is being considered, to lobby their legislators in favor of the NPVIC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad will urge the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Party as a whole to promote the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

## Resolution to update Regional Vice Chair Job Descriptions and Election Process

*Changed from the version distributed by the Resolutions Committee on April 22, 2019.*

*Proposed by Susan Alksnis (DA Canada).*

**Whereas** Regional Vice Chairs (RVCs) serve at the global level as Officers of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA) with commensurate responsibilities and privileges; and,

**Whereas** Regional Vice Chairs have significant responsibilities related to Country Committee development, compliance, and cooperation; and,

**Whereas** Democrats Abroad wishes to continue to have qualified, effective RVCs in all regions; and,

**Whereas** there are currently no Charter restrictions against Country Committee Chairs and/or Vice Chairs serving on the NEC for the RVC election they will be voting on, potentially creating a conflict of interest, and the potential for an NEC to include 12-25% of the votes for a position they are recruiting and vetting for, should an entire NEC be made up of Country Committee Chairs or Vice Chairs; and,

**Whereas** the Global Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) has developed a formal election process for all other International Officers of DPCA, including screening for malpractice, arrest records, PAC and super PAC involvement, etc, and similar background check is not conducted for Regional Vice Chairs;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Global ExCom will see that charter amendments or other documentation will be developed and presented at the 2020 Annual General Meeting to update the documentation of Regional Vice Chair responsibilities and the nomination and election process.

## Resolution to endorse Medicare for All

*Changed from the version distributed by the Resolutions Committee on April 22, 2019.*

*Proposed by Kent Getsinger (DA Australia) and Siera Burtrum (DA United Kingdom). Supported by Sue Alksnis (DA Canada); Gordon Gaul (DA Japan); Lissette Wright (DA Canada); Martha McDevitt-Pugh (DA Netherlands); Adrienne George (DA Sweden); Katie Solon (DA Germany); Ken Sherman (DA Canada); Angela Fobbs (DA Germany); Ann Hesse (DA Germany); Kendra Borgen (DA Netherlands); David Wenk (DA United Kingdom); Layne Mostyn (DA Australia); Marnelle Dargila (DA Canada); Merrill Oates (DA Hungary); David Mivasair (DA Canada); Bruce Murray (DA Austria); Kelsey McLendon (DA Germany); Quaide Williams (DA Germany); Denise Roig (DA Canada). Also supported by members of the Progressive Caucus of Democrats Abroad: Alaina Vaisey, Michael Steltzer, Jenise Treuting.*

WHEREAS the United States spends more per capita on healthcare and has worse health outcomes than any other developed nation on earth<sup>1</sup>;

WHEREAS two-thirds of all the bankruptcies today in the United States are due to medical costs and 80% of those filing for bankruptcy had some kind of health insurance<sup>2</sup>;

WHEREAS one-third of all GoFundMe campaigns in the US are created to pay for medical expenses, a stunning 250,000 campaigns<sup>3</sup>;

WHEREAS Americans abroad can become ‘healthcare refugees or exiles’ unable to return to live in the US due to pre-existing conditions that make them or their family members ‘un-insurable’ or too expensive to insure in the US;

WHEREAS Medicare is not currently portable to Americans living abroad, which creates a hardship for Americans whose health is endangered by living in countries with inadequate healthcare systems and who cannot afford to live in the US and cannot afford to travel to the US for health care;

WHEREAS many Americans living overseas fear for the health and financial security of family members living in the US;

WHEREAS the Democrats’ Affordable Care Act (ACA or “Obamacare”) made vastly significant progress towards improving Americans’ access to health care and has led to improved health outcomes;

WHEREAS the ACA has been weakened and threatened by partisan attacks and increasing insurance premiums;

WHEREAS Medicare for All is the only universal health care plan that will ensure cost-effective continued coverage and equitable access to health care for all Americans, and Medicare For All will not be at risk of for-profit interests undermining our medical system as it is doing to the ACA;

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<sup>1</sup> National Academy of Sciences, 2013: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK154480/>

<sup>2</sup> Public Citizen, 2019: <https://www.citizen.org/medicare-all-prevents-medical-bankruptcies>

<sup>3</sup> Time, Jan 2019: <http://time.com/5516037/gofundme-medical-bills-one-third-ceo/>

WHEREAS 70% of Americans support Medicare for All<sup>4</sup>;

WHEREAS Medicare has been the most financially efficient health care system in the United States with administrative costs averaging only 2 percent of program outlays versus 13 percent for private insurance companies<sup>5</sup>;

WHEREAS the United States is projected to save \$2-5 trillion dollars over 10 years after implementation of Medicare For All<sup>6</sup>;

WHEREAS Medicare for All would significantly help relieve financial hardship among the most marginalized and minority groups;

WHEREAS 37 state and local governments have passed resolutions supporting single-payer Medicare for All<sup>7</sup>;

WHEREAS many Democrats Abroad members live in countries where a majority enjoy and benefit from universal public healthcare;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad collected over 350 stories from its members detailing how universal health care can and does work in many other countries in the world, and their wish for urgent health care reform in the United States<sup>8</sup>;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad International Executive Committee has expressed support for the US Senate “Medicare for All” bill and similar legislation in 2017<sup>9</sup>;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad is in a unique position overseas to inform our fellow Americans about examples of successful universal health care and contribute to the campaign for an American Medicare For All system;

WHEREAS access to timely, affordable, and comprehensive healthcare is a fundamental human right;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad endorses Medicare For All; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad will campaign amongst its members to influence US House Representatives to support H.R. 1384 and US Senators to support S. 1129, including potential lobbying on Capitol Hill; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad urges its delegates to the DA 2020 Global Convention and Democratic National Convention to consider and include a Medicare for All plank in the corresponding Platforms.**

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<sup>4</sup> Reuters/Ispos poll, June-July 2018, cited in CNBC: <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/08/28/most-americans-now-support-medicare-for-all-and-free-college-tuition.html>

<sup>5</sup> Health Affairs: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20110920.013390/full/>

<sup>6</sup> Public Citizen “The Case for Medicare for All”, Feb 2019, pp. 11-12:  
[https://www.citizen.org/sites/default/files/the\\_case\\_for\\_medicare-for-all\\_-\\_february.pdf](https://www.citizen.org/sites/default/files/the_case_for_medicare-for-all_-_february.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Medicare for All Resolutions: <http://www.medicare4allresolutions.org/partial-list-of-past-local-resolutions/>

<sup>8</sup> Democrats Abroad Healthcare Stories: [https://www.democratsabroad.org/healthcare\\_stories](https://www.democratsabroad.org/healthcare_stories)

<sup>9</sup> Democrats Abroad Press, 2017: <https://www.democratsabroad.org/press>

## Resolution Honoring Arian Ardie

*Proposed by Kat Allikian (DA New Zealand), Dave Van Rooy (DA Indonesia), Wuryati Morris (DA Indonesia), Fritz Gheen (DA Indonesia), Gary Suwannarat (DA Thailand), Wayne Weightman (DA Cambodia), Carmelan Polce (DA Australia), Alex Montgomery (DA Hong Kong), Julia Bryan (DA Czech Republic), Ada Shen (DA France), Will Bakker (DA Luxembourg), Jeffrey Cheng (DA Sweden), Lissette Wright (DA Canada), Jody Quinnell (DA Mexico), Kathy Rothschild (DA Costa Rica), and Amanda Mohar (DA Germany).*

Whereas Arian Ardie was a tireless champion of Democrats Abroad and Democratic Party principles;

Whereas Arian Ardie served as Chair of Democrats Abroad Indonesia for several terms;

Whereas Arian Ardie revived Democrats Abroad Indonesia not once, but twice, during his tenure with Democrats Abroad;

Whereas Arian Ardie was a key force during the 2008 Democrats Abroad Global Presidential Primary, organizing the first-in-the-world Super Tuesday vote in Jakarta which, combined with his extensive personal connections to journalists, garnered worldwide media coverage and boosted Democrats Abroad's profile across the globe;

Whereas Arian Ardie, through his relationships with Democratic Party figures including Representative Pramila Jayapal, connected Democrats Abroad Indonesia and the wider Democrats Abroad community with high-profile figures within the Party including Maya Soetoro Ng, President Obama's sister;

Whereas Arian Ardie was also a member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, serving in leadership roles between 2002 - 2014 and standing as a liaison between American and Indonesian business communities, including green energy companies;

Whereas Arian Ardie was a committed, loving, and very proud father and grandfather and a multi-talented individual: a keen musician, a stellar communicator, a strong community organizer, and most recently, a budding film producer;

Whereas Arian Ardie was a friend to many Democrats Abroad members throughout Indonesia, Asia Pacific, and the world; and

Whereas Arian Ardie's sudden and untimely passing on 11 February 2019 shocked and saddened the Democrats Abroad community.

Be it resolved:

Democrats Abroad declares its appreciation and gratitude to Arian Ardie for his dedicated service to our organization and community, and to a greater sense of purpose as Americans and Democrats.

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family and friends — we will miss him, and we honor his memory.

## **Resolution Addressing Likely American Family Separation Arising from the Closure of United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) Offices Outside the U.S.**

*Proposed by Carmelan Polce (DA Australia) and Wayne Weightman (DA Cambodia). Supported by Julia Bryan (DA Czech Republic).*

Whereas in March 2019 the Trump Administration announced, without public consultation and without warning even to USCIS staff, its intention to close all 22 international USCIS offices and transfer those duties, now performed by USCIS employees worldwide, to domestic offices and U.S. embassies and consulates;

Whereas the DPCA passed a resolution on October 16, 2011 supporting the reinstatement of the acceptance and adjudication of I-130 immigrant petitions for non-U.S. immediate family members (Family) of U.S. citizens living abroad and who wanted to return home to the U.S. with their Family at U.S. Embassies and Consulates that did not have a USCIS office in that country. That resolution references the particular concerns of Democrats Abroad with regards to family separation during immigration application processing and the right to freedom of movement generally;

Whereas while the international USCIS field offices continued processing of I-130 petitions for Family of Americans living in the country where the USCIS field offices were located, Direct Consular Filing (DCF) was terminated on August 15, 2011;

Whereas, when USCIS terminated DCF of I-130 petitions in 2011, due to intense advocating by DPCA and other overseas U.S. citizen groups, USCIS did put in place a policy<sup>1</sup> that allowed for DCF of I-130 petitions in exceptional circumstances with approval of international USCIS field offices: the very offices that are now being ordered closed;

Whereas, since August 15, 2011, international USCIS field offices have been regularly approving requests made by Americans living abroad to DCF their Family I-130 petitions so that they would not be separated for the more than a year it can add to the process versus DCF'ing their I-130 petitions. There are also additional costs and time issues incurred by international mail and answering requests for evidence, and time zone issues involved with calling USCIS in the U.S. instead of dealing with the process in the country they currently reside;

Whereas USCIS officers are responsible for adjudicating a wide variety of petitions and applications filed internationally, providing information services, and issuing travel documents to people in a wide variety of circumstances;

Whereas the closure is expected to materially slow the processing of matters such as family visa applications, foreign adoptions and citizenship petitions from U.S. citizens living abroad and members of the military stationed abroad;

Whereas closing the USCIS offices would reassign about 70 staffers who solve a wide array of problems (such as assisting those who lose their green card, aiding widows of U.S. citizens, helping members of the military obtain legal documents), provide valuable information services (such as providing expertise and advice to families going through the process of adopting

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<sup>1</sup> USCIS Policy for DCF of I-130s, USCIS Policy Memorandum PM-602-0043.1, dated May 14, 2012, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Laws/Memoranda/2012/May/DOS-I130May1412.pdf>

internationally, investigating fraud in visa applications, providing technical immigration advice to other U.S. government officials), and, within its Refugee Asylum and International Operations division, process refugee applications;

Whereas the Trump Administration has made no secret of its intention to limit both legal and illegal immigration and to end the policy that allows U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to sponsor non-nuclear family members to immigrate to the U.S., known more recently in the pejorative as “chain migration” and implement a policy of “merit-based” immigration;

Whereas the closure of immigration offices abroad will discourage and thwart immigration applicants by adding considerable time to what are already lengthy wait times for application processing, eliminating processing in foreign languages and removing services that handle emergency applications;

Whereas immigration lawyers say the Trump administration has delayed application processing and heightened scrutiny of applications that used to clear quickly, preventing foreigners from being able to work, study and join their families in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>;

Whereas the Trump Administration claims this is a cost-cutting exercise although USCIS's funding comes primarily from fees paid by people who use its services;

Whereas the policy is part of a greater isolationist endeavor by the Trump administration, withdrawing engagement in international institutions and pulling back U.S. international presence generally;

Whereas the work of the USCIS officers is expected to be taken over by State Department officials in U.S. embassies and consulates, though their consent to take over these duties has not yet been obtained, thus causing enormous concern amongst Americans abroad and the immigration law practitioners who prepare and submit their filings;

Whereas there are going to be discussions between the Department of State (DOS) and USCIS to transfer some of the duties currently undertaken by the International USCIS Field Offices, there's a good argument to be made that returning DCF of I-130s for Family of U.S. citizens living abroad to DOS as it was pre-August 15, 2011, would make sense for efficiency of the process.

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<sup>2</sup> American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) issued a new policy brief that digs into newly available data from USCIS to show the dramatic extent to which processing delays have grown in recent years. This information can be useful in speaking about case delays and answering their questions, as well as with reporters and other interested parties about the huge delays in the system and what should be done. Below please find some key messages from the policy brief as well as links to resources that may offer additional assistance:

"Processing delays" may sound like something minor but make no mistake, these delays mean families struggling to make ends meet, survivors of violence and torture facing danger and an uncertain future, and U.S. businesses falling behind and losing talent to overseas competitors.

The consequences of delays in USCIS processing immigration cases can be dire and they impact millions of people.

As revealed in an AILA policy brief, those delays have reached crisis levels under the Trump administration, inflicting hardships on individuals and employers nationwide.

AILA found that the overall average case processing time surged by 46 percent over the past two fiscal years and 91 percent since FY2014.

USCIS processed 94 percent of its form types—from green cards for family members to visas for human trafficking victims to petitions for immigrant workers—more slowly in FY2018 than in FY2014.

Case processing times increased substantially in FY 2018 even as case receipt volume appeared to markedly decrease.

There was a USCIS "net backlog" exceeding 2.3 million delayed cases at the end of FY2017. This total amounts to more than a 100 percent increase over a one-year span despite just a four percent rise in case receipts during that same period.

Yet rather than ease such destructive logjams, USCIS compounds them by imposing policies and practices—like unnecessary interview requirements and spikes in burdensome Requests for Evidence—that drive down efficiency and ratchet up delays. Such measures act as bricks in the Trump administration's growing "invisible wall"—a comprehensive set of actions slowing and decreasing legal immigration to and in the United States.

Congress meant for USCIS to function as a service-oriented benefits entity—one that efficiently and fairly processes immigration cases.

AILA's analysis makes clear that the agency is failing its congressional mandate.

DOS is most likely able to absorb the filings as they would collect the filing fees for adjudicating the I-130s as well as the fee they get for adjudicating the visa and they can staff up accordingly;

Whereas the practical impact of the closures absent a transfer back to DOS of the authority to accept and process DCF of I-130s, is that it will separate American families who will have to choose between staying with their Family abroad or returning home to the U.S. and being separated from them for at least a year at current processing times (USCIS I-130 processing at U.S. service centers and Visa adjudication at Embassies and Consulates abroad);

Be it resolved that Democrats Abroad :

- supports reverting to the DCF process that was in place prior to August 15, 2011, ie DCF of all clearly approvable Form I-130s (Petition for Alien Relative) for Family of Americans living abroad; and
- will advocate for this reversion by all reasonable means including provision of information to American citizens, contacting the agencies concerned, alerting members of the House and Senate and otherwise vigorously advocating the restoration of DCF.

## **Appendix to the Resolution Addressing the Closure of United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) Offices Outside the U.S.**

### INTERNATIONAL USCIS OFFICES

#### Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean (LACC) District

- Dominican Republic - Santo Domingo Field Office
- El Salvador - San Salvador Field Office
- Guatemala - Guatemala City Field Office
- Haiti - Port-au-Prince Field Office
- Mexico - Ciudad Juarez Field Office
- Mexico - Mexico City Field Office
- Mexico - Monterrey Field Office
- Peru - Lima Field Office

#### Asia/Pacific (APAC) District

- China - Beijing Field Office
- China - Guangzhou Field Office
- India - New Delhi Field Office

#### Asia/Pacific (APAC) District continued

- Philippines - Manila Field Office
- South Korea - Seoul Field Office
- Thailand - Bangkok Field Office

#### Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) District

- Germany - Frankfurt Field Office
- Ghana - Accra Field Office
- Greece - Athens Field Office
- Italy - Rome Field Office
- Jordan - Amman Field Office
- Kenya - Nairobi Field Office
- Russia - Moscow Field Office (Closed)
- South Africa - Johannesburg Field Office
- United Kingdom - London Field Office

### **Text for reference: resolution adopted by the DPCA October 16, 2011, concerning changes to Form I-130 in the immigration process for family members of US citizens living abroad**

Proposed by Peter Alegi (Italy), Wayne Weightman (Cambodia), Katie Solon (Austria), Gary Suwannarat (Indonesia) and Meredith Wheeler (France). Co-sponsored by Carmelan Polce (Australia), Connie Borde (France), Merrill Oates (Hungary) Dave van Rooy (Indonesia), Kass Corbelli (Italy), Albert Kang (ROK), Peter du Pont (Thailand), and Reno Domenico (Ukraine).

WHEREAS protecting the rights and promoting the interests of American citizens residing abroad has from our founding been one of the principal purposes of Democrats Abroad;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad continues to represent such citizens to the American government, including Congressional and administrative levels, in particular by furnishing information on the concerns of its overseas constituency;

WHEREAS a change has been established, without adequate examination of those concerns, by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service and the Department of State in the procedure for obtaining immigrant visas (Form I-130) for close relatives, eliminating the jurisdiction of the Department of State to receive and to process applications as well as other changes, for the reported purpose of preserving the financial claim of one federal agency;

WHEREAS the new procedure by requiring multiple mailings of the visa application and supporting documents to the US will significantly and adversely affect overseas citizens by seriously delaying the processing and granting of visas, resulting in separation of many families as one spouse is required to return to the United States for any one of many serious reasons without the other who is awaiting a visa;

WHEREAS the new rule will also adversely impact the ability for citizens to visit the US with their spouse and children due to the suspicion that they may be attempting to circumvent the long wait times inherent in the new process;

WHEREAS such separation is not in keeping with President Obama's 2008 campaign statement "Supporting Americans Living Abroad" which states his commitment to addressing issues related to immigration of family members;

WHEREAS the Platform of Democrats Abroad calls for simplifying and expediting visa and immigration processes for the immediate family of American citizens living abroad;

WHEREAS the effect of the new rule is a restriction of the citizen's right to freedom of movement;

WHEREAS the adoption of the changes occurred with no examination of the actual circumstances of the citizens residing overseas who would be impacted;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad must act in fulfillment of its duty to guard the interests of citizens resident abroad, and wishes to assist the government with detailed and accurate information on this matter;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad continues to seek the retraction of the changed rule and reinstallation of the former one, by all legitimate means, including provision of information to American citizens, contacting the agencies concerned, alerting members of the House and Senate and otherwise vigorously advocating the withdrawal of the rule.

## Resolution in Support of a Green New Deal

*Changed from the version distributed by the Resolutions Committee on April 22, 2019.*

*Proposed by Susan Alksnis (DA Canada). Supported by Ken Sherman (DA Canada); David Mivasair (DA Canada); Lissette Wright (DA Canada); Martha McDevitt-Pugh (DA Netherlands); Kent Getsinger (DA Australia); Ann Hesse (DA Germany); Merrill Oates (DA Hungary); Jim Mercereau (DA Spain); Angela Fobbs (DA Germany); Bruce Murray (DA Austria); Ed Ungar (DA Canada); Gordon Gaul (DA Japan); Kendra Borgen (DA Netherlands); Kelsey McLendon (DA Germany); Susan Brennan (DA Canada); Quaide Williams (DA Germany); Darius Pruss (DA Canada); Tim Smith (DA Canada); Rachel Eugster (DA Canada); Amy Poteete (DA Canada); Layne Mostyn (DA Australia).*

**Whereas** climate breakdown is an existential threat to the global environment, human and non-human life, security and economies; and,

**Whereas** disruptions caused by climate breakdown already negatively affect Americans living outside and in the United States, as well as fellow world citizens, by leading to more and deadlier extreme weather events; rising sea levels; battering the world's infrastructure; decreasing agricultural production; increasing mass migrations; threatening global and national security; disproportionately impacting poor and vulnerable communities, women and girls; and exacerbating systemic injustices (racial, regional, social, gender-based, environmental, and economic); and,

**Whereas**, the United States is currently experiencing related crises regarding life expectancy, access to basic needs, wage stagnation, job reductions, anti-labor policies, and the greatest income inequality since the 1920s; and,

**Whereas**, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that in order to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate the world must cut greenhouse gas emissions from human sources in half by 2030 and achieve net-zero global emissions by 2050; and,

**Whereas**, the Trump Administration and the Republican Party have not only renounced the national commitment to the Paris Accord but are actively and openly working to increase America's reliance on fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases; and,

**Whereas**, congressional Democrats have introduced H.R. 109 and S.Res. 59, supported as of April 15, 2019 by 103 co-sponsors, to implement a "Green New Deal," with the aim of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions; establishing millions of high-wage jobs and ensuring economic security for all; investing in infrastructure and industry; securing clean air and water, climate and community resiliency, healthy food, access to nature, and a sustainable environment for all; and promoting justice and equality; and,

**Whereas**, the Green New Deal calls for a 10-year national mobilization effort, including the following goals and projects: building smart power grids; upgrading existing buildings and constructing new buildings to achieve maximum energy and water efficiency; removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation and agricultural sectors; cleaning up existing hazardous waste and abandoned sites; ensuring businesspersons are free from unfair competition; and providing higher education, high-quality health care, and affordable, safe, and adequate housing to all; and,

*Whereas*, at least 19 states have already set or are considering 100% clean or renewable electricity targets, several referencing jobs and social justice, and the Green New Deal specifically<sup>1</sup>; and,

*Whereas*, the 2016 Democrats Abroad Platform states in chapter 5 on Environment and Climate Change that we support progressive policies that simultaneously protect the environment and improve quality of life, while stimulating economic development, specifically mentioning carbon emissions, sustainable energy, and energy efficiency; transportation; environmental toxin removal; and animal agriculture subsidies; and in other chapters the Platform supports tuition-free public colleges and universities; improving transport networks, cities, water supplies, and housing stock; nationwide infrastructure development and rehabilitation; economic opportunity for all; federally funded job training and job-creation; and universal health care coverage for every American;

*We therefore resolve* that Democrats Abroad actively supports the Green New Deal and similar legislation, and will mobilize our members to urge their elected representatives, candidates for office, the Democratic Party as a whole, and members of the public to support the creation of a Green New Deal, similar in its goals and scope to H.R. 109 and S.Res. 59..

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<sup>1</sup> EQ Research, “States Chart Paths to 100% Targets,” <https://eq-research.com/blog/100/> and Environment America, “Nine States Campaign for 100 Percent Clean Energy,” <https://environmentamerica.org/news/ame/nine-states-campaign-100-percent-clean-energy>

## Resolution on Renewable Energy 2019

*Proposed by Connie Borde (DA France). Supported by Dana Powers and Jim Christiansen of the DA France Energy Policy Group.*

**WHEREAS** the dangerous and expensive threat of climate change is compelling us to eliminate sources of anthropogenic carbon pollution in order to avoid serious ecosystem degradation or even collapse;

**WHEREAS** catastrophes continue to engulf our planet, including rising sea levels, intensifying storms, floods, landslides, melting glaciers, fires, desertification and more;

**WHEREAS** even our life-support system on earth is jeopardized by a warming of more than 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels

**WHEREAS** renewable energy is now competitive with coal in 75% of cases, and will soon be less expensive than all fossil fuels;

**WHEREAS** grid management and energy storage technologies are rapidly developing to meet the challenges of managing high volumes of renewable energy;

**WHEREAS** renewable energies drastically reduce the pollution of our air, land, and water, and can provide the basis of a new “green” economy with plentiful jobs and adequate energy for our well-being and our industry;

**WHEREAS** climate science has been under systematic attack by climate change deniers, including the present administration, with renewable energy research to be cut from \$2.3 billion to \$700 million in the 2020 federal budget;

**WHEREAS** experimental and pilot programs have been developed to ease the transition from fossil-fuel related jobs to renewable energy and other jobs;

**WHEREAS** markets alone are not capable of piloting a systems-level change, especially in the face of entrenched oligopolistic energy corporations with their subsidies, amortized infrastructure and assets, and established supply chains and delivery systems

**WHEREAS** Democrats and Republicans alike have argued that alternative energy programs help ensure US energy security;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the US federal government should actively support an energy transition to a clean, renewable power system, to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050, with binding interim deadlines at 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040, and 2045;

That the US government should pursue a strong industrial policy to halt climate change and put the United States back in line with other countries committed to the Paris Agreement.

That the US government should support a new mobility system powered by electricity, biogas, or hydrogen as appropriate, such as creation of a national high-speed train system run on hydrogen;

That the US government should require building renovation and insulation to reduce drastically the energy needs of both new and older buildings;

That the Department of Energy should actively support renewable energy through support of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and through loan guarantees and investment;

That the EPA should regulate carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases, and require states to draw-up plans to achieve the emission-reduction targets for each of the 5-year periods until 2050;

That States be allowed to go faster than the minimum national targets, allowing those states who want to be pace-setters and pioneers to pilot new systems and ideas, the national targets being minimum targets, not maximum targets.

## Resolution on Open Service of Transgender Members of the Armed Forces and for Improved Health Services of Transgender Military Veterans

*Proposed by Martha McDevitt Pugh (DA Netherlands) and Joe Smallhoover (DA France).*

WHEREAS on July 26, 2017, President Trump announced via Twitter that the United States Government would reverse the existing policy of allowing transgender servicemembers to serve openly in order to implement a ban on transgender people from serving in the Armed Forces;

WHEREAS President Trump's ban on transgender members of the Armed Forces targets and stigmatizes a whole class of people;

WHEREAS the Department of Defense has failed to provide evidence *that* the existing policy has impaired morale, unit readiness, or unit cohesion.

WHEREAS all five military Chiefs of Staff have testified publicly that the existing policy has had no adverse effect on military readiness;

WHEREAS on August 1, 2017, fifty-six retired generals and admirals released a statement affirming, "This proposed ban, if implemented, would cause significant disruptions, deprive the military of mission-critical talent, and compromise the integrity of transgender troops who would be forced to live a lie, as well as *their* non-transgender peers who would be forced to choose between reporting their comrades or disobeying policy"

WHEREAS the Department of Defense report from 2018 falsely asserts there is "considerable scientific uncertainty" regarding the efficacy of transition-related care;

WHEREAS there is a global medical consensus that such care is effective, safe, and reliable

WHEREAS over 15,000 transgender people are serving in the military today;

WHEREAS transgender servicemembers have served openly since 2016;

WHEREAS gender dysphoria is not the result of a personal decision, but rather, is a medical condition which can result from biological differences present at birth;

WHEREAS the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and three former military Surgeons General each have affirmed the medical efficacy of transition-related care and have expressed opposition to President Trump's discriminatory ban;

WHEREAS a 2016 study by the RAND Corporation found that allowing transgender Americans to serve openly in the Armed Forces would "have minimal impact on readiness and health care costs" and "little or no impact on unit cohesion, operational effectiveness or readiness";

WHEREAS the decision to prohibit transgender people from serving in the military is scientifically and medically unfounded, unjust, and morally reprehensible;

WHEREAS 18 nations allow transgender people to serve openly and effectively in their armed forces;

WHEREAS an estimated 134,000 or more American veterans are transgender;

WHEREAS transgender veterans face difficulties obtaining updated service records which respect their privacy, and which prevents them from receiving VA coverage of necessary medical procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad:

*strongly opposes* President Trump's discriminatory ban on transgender members of the Armed Forces;

*rejects* the flawed scientific and medical claims upon which it is based;

*calls for* the revocation, with retroactive effect, of the discriminatory ban on transgender members serving in the military

*calls on* the Department of Defense to make, produce and publish guidance for transgender individuals on how to update information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and on the DD214 Military Discharge Record;

*strongly urges* that clinical treatment methods as outlined in the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care including psychotherapy, changes in gender expression and role, hormone therapy, or surgery, or any combination thereof be made available to those who have served;

*commits* to provide our members with a standard statement they can use to contact their representative to urge them to reverse the transgender military ban by voting to pass HR 124, against the reinstatement of President Trump's ban on transgender members in the Armed Forces, and replace it with an inclusive policy that allows qualified transgender Americans to enlist and serve in the Armed Forces;

*urges* those members of Democrats Abroad who are veterans to ask the Department of Defense not to implement the transgender military ban; and

*strongly urges* our DNC members to communicate in their caucuses and other DNC work that DA expects Democrats in Congress to support HR 124 and the companion Senate bill.

## Resolution urging action on Gun Violence Prevention

*Changed from the version distributed by the Resolutions Committee on April 22, 2019.*

*Proposed by Susan Alksnis (DA Canada). Authored by Sanchi Rohira (DA-India).*

WHEREAS every day an average of 100 Americans are killed with guns, and hundreds more are shot and injured<sup>1</sup>;

WHEREAS in the first ten months of 2018, at least 307 mass shootings had occurred in the United States (Gun Violence Archive, 2018);

WHEREAS the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that approximately 40,000 people died in the U.S. by gunshot in 2017, the highest in 50 years<sup>2</sup>;

WHEREAS firearms are reported to be the second leading cause of death for American children<sup>3</sup>;

WHEREAS March 2018 saw one among the largest youth-led protest movements in modern U.S. history - the March For Our Lives - which called for comprehensive gun safety legislation at the local, state and federal levels;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad invited all members to support March For Our Lives, and initiated and conducted a 'Virtual March For Our Lives'<sup>4</sup>;

WHEREAS March For Our Lives had over 800 sister-marches and rallies across the U.S. and around the world, including many organized and supported by DA chapters;

WHEREAS by virtue of residing in countries with tougher firearm regulations, Democrats Abroad members experience the effectiveness of such legislation in preventing the rampant loss of life that is seen in the U.S.;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad members are concerned by the possibility of their friends and family residing in the U.S. being harmed by gun violence;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad members therefore acknowledge the possibility of life free from gun violence and strongly wish for its implementation in the U.S.;

WHEREAS the 2016 Democrats Abroad Platform called for universal and complete background checks, greater control of assault weapons and ammunition, funding gun violence research, abolition of all "Stand Your Ground" and "Open Carry" laws, and other measures to help ensure dangerous people are prohibited from having guns;

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<sup>1,3</sup> "Gun Violence In America - Everytownresearch.Org". 2019. *Everytownresearch.Org*.  
<https://everytownresearch.org/gun-violence-america/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Nearly 40,000 People Died From Guns In U.S. Last Year, Highest In 50 Years". 2019. *Nytimes.Com*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html>.

<sup>4</sup> "Dems Abroad Marches For Our Lives". 2019. *Democrats Abroad*.  
[https://www.democratsabroad.org/dems\\_abroad\\_marches\\_for\\_our\\_lives](https://www.democratsabroad.org/dems_abroad_marches_for_our_lives).

WHEREAS the American people elected a gun-sense-majority to the U.S. House of Representatives during the 2018 midterm elections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad will actively campaign for gun-sense legislation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad calls on the Democratic National Committee and the Party recognize gun violence as a public health issue and urge all policymakers to actively prioritize gun violence prevention legislation, such as:

- banning high-capacity magazines and the manufacture and sale of semi-automatic weapons while introducing programs to manage those already in private hands (for example by registering them under a federal database or offering to buy them back);
- stricter disarmament of domestic abusers and high-risk individuals, including better coordination between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to those ends;
- fully funding the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to research gun violence;
- eliminating Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) restrictions which hinder monitoring of gun sales; and
- strengthening universal required background checks on all gun sales including online and at gun shows.

## Resolution on VFA Integrity and Sustainability

*Proposed by Merrill Oates (DA Hungary).*

*Proposer's Summary: To ensure the long-term integrity, sustainability, stability, and security of VoteFromAbroad.org as the premier resource of Democrats Abroad for growing our membership and registering voters.*

*Proposer's Preface: In order for DA to assume the responsibility of fully managing and sustaining all technical aspects of a custom designed, non-supported, software platform, and to ensure trust in the integrity of the service, DA must define a structure and process by which it is accountable and transparent to our leadership as to how this service is being developed and maintained.*

*This resolution proposes the creation of a VFA Policy Steering Committee to define the policies and priorities for our VFA platform, and a VFA Technical Management Standing Committee to oversee the development work.*

WHEREAS, the VoteFromAbroad.org (VFA) website is the single most important on-line asset Democrats Abroad (DA) has as a tool for both acquiring new members and registering voters – VFA is the “Crown Jewel” of Democrats Abroad;

WHEREAS, it is essential that this tool be developed and maintained with the highest standards of accurate information for voters, of technical security and best practice, and of compliance with appropriate laws and regulations;

WHEREAS, DA has proposed ending our existing hosting, maintenance, and support contract with the independent, non-partisan, Overseas Vote Foundation/US Vote Foundation, which has hosted VoteFromAbroad (VFA2) since 2014 and throughout the 2018 election cycle;

WHEREAS, DA has undertaken to custom develop our own fully in-house owned and maintained version of VFA (now referred to as VFA3);

WHEREAS, the new VFA3 offers many new innovations and capabilities that can improve the voter experience and potentially expand our voter outreach capabilities, in ways that may not otherwise be available;

WHEREAS, the responsibility to maintain, update, and support an in-house software platform now falls fully on the shoulders of DA volunteers, and as this obligation has proven to be a significant challenge, liability, and cost to the organization in the past;

WHEREAS, DA must ensure that we have appropriate and sustainable governance oversight structures and established management processes to sustain such technical operations and commitments beyond the office terms and volunteer efforts of any one person, or group of individuals;

WHEREAS, DPCA is the governing body of DA, it is essential for DPCA leadership to establish and maintain suitable governance structures and technical maintenance processes that ensure appropriate accountability, sustainability, compliance, transparency, and security for the long-term successful management of VFA – as well as for the body to remain reasonably informed of the costs and organizational implications of the policies and intended uses of VFA3,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

A VFA Policy Steering Committee of five (5) or more individuals shall be established with responsibility for reviewing, approving, and defining the high-level features, priorities, policies, and appropriate uses of VFA by Democrats Abroad. This Committee will be responsible for, or appropriately delegate responsibility for, maintaining up-to-date and accurate content within [VoteFromAbroad.org](http://VoteFromAbroad.org).

The VFA Policy Steering Committee shall regularly report its activities and recommendations to the International Executive Committee. All budgetary-related recommendations shall receive approval from the International Executive Committee, prior to implementation. The International Executive Committee may, at any time, adopt rules and regulations on the governance of VFA, which shall be binding upon the VFA Policy Steering Committee.

A separate (non-overlapping) VFA Technical Management Committee of three (3) or more individuals shall be established to oversee and guide the technical implementation and maintenance of the VFA platform. This Committee shall be responsible for defining and guiding all technical configuration and development work done by external or internal software engineers. The VFA Technical Management Committee shall report directly to the VFA Policy Steering Committee.

The appointment of Committee members shall be made by the International Chair with the advice and consent of the International Executive Committee;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,

That the membership of these two committees shall be appointed within thirty (30) days of the adoption of this resolution.