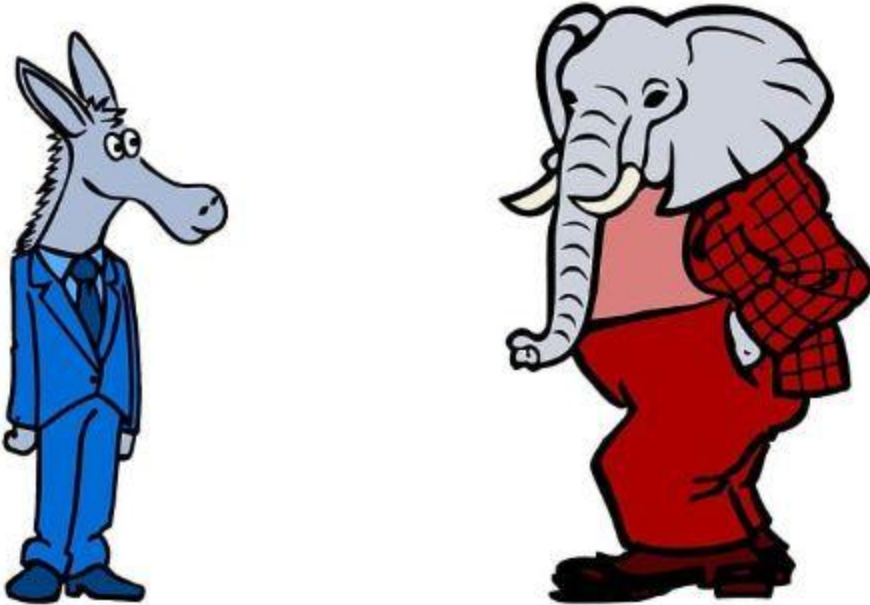


Review of the Political Party Structure in NY State (How NYS is different from other states.)

LET'S PARTY



Early voting starts at the end of this week, so it's a good time to review some facts about political parties in New York State.

- As of 2024, New York State recognizes four political parties. They are the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Conservative Party, and the Working Families Party. In New York, these parties become "recognized," or "ballot-ready," by garnering a certain threshold of votes in a presidential or gubernatorial election. That threshold was changed in 2020 to be 2 percent of the total votes cast or 130,000 votes, whichever is greater.
- New York is one of 22 states that allows independent candidates and others to run on political party lines other than those of its official parties. Thus, you may see candidates running on the "Good Government" line (in Hamilton), the "Roots & Vision" line (in Lenox), the "United 4 Oneida" line (in Oneida), and so on. Candidates, supporters, and campaign workers pass petitions to collect enough signatures from registered voters in any party to run on an independent line, whether they are using it as a second ballot line or as their only ballot line.
- The Democratic and Republican National Committees (DNC and RNC) are based out of Washington, DC. In addition, each state has a state committee for each party, usually headquartered in a large city. In New York, the NYSDC is in New York City, and the NYSRC is in Albany with smaller NYC satellite offices. But the real action happens at the local level. It features people you probably know but don't currently recognize as elected officials.



LOCAL PARTY MEMBERS



An election district is the smallest geographical unit used for elections. Your polling place, the location where you vote, may serve a single election district, or it may serve two or three. At the local level, every election district is allowed to have a certain number of committee members on the Democratic and Republican Committees for that town or ward. That number is based on election results and thus changes from time to time.

To join a local committee, you must be registered with that party. Every two years, you will carry a petition with your name on it to neighbors who are also registered with your party. When you have the required number of signatures (greater in large election districts; smaller in small election districts; often 10 or fewer in small, rural districts), your signed petition goes to the Board of Elections, and you are officially a member of the party committee—and an elected official. Once you are an official member of a town or ward committee, you are allowed to participate in and vote with the county committee as well.

Each assembly district within a county sends two representatives (usually from the county committee) to the state committee, which is how that committee is populated. Those state committee members must circulate petitions just as local committee members do. Because Madison County is part of four separate assembly districts, our parties are allowed to send eight representatives in all to each state committee. That's unusual—most counties are in a single assembly district or possibly two. Those representatives attend meetings a few times a year and work on party strategy and statewide initiatives. Last week, Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado sent out a [multi-point plan](#) "reimagining" the state Democratic Party, which has often seemed unresponsive and slow to implement change.



WHAT DO LOCAL PARTY COMMITTEES DO?

Most local committees recruit candidates for office. They raise money for campaigns. They hear from elected officials about issues of interest. They inform voters about upcoming elections and spread the messages of their candidates. They help the Board of Elections keep voter contacts up to date. They are the people on the ground who know the electorate, know the candidates, and understand local issues.

At election time, local party committee members work to circulate petitions, arrange and run caucuses, support candidates, register new voters, and get out the vote.



WHY WOULD I WANT TO JOIN A LOCAL COMMITTEE?



1. It's a great way to meet likeminded people in your community.
 2. It's a great way to test your interest in running for local office and meet the people who could help you do that.
 3. It's a great way to be the first on your block to know about current events in your village, town, or city.
 4. It's a great way to help establish the direction of your local political party.
 5. It's a great way to get to know elected officials at all levels.
 6. It's a great way to support democracy without the aggravation of campaigning, endless meetings, or red tape.
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WHAT CAN I DO?

Actions to take part in over the next few weeks; see the calendar for more information

Connect. The [Madison Democratic Committee website](#) has contact information for your regional chair, who can connect you to your town chair. Many of the town and ward committees in Madison County, including the Caz committee, have room for additional committee members—and a few towns have no Democratic Committee at all and could use your help starting one!

Learn. Learn about running for office in Madison County [HERE](#) and find out more about the rules and bylaws of the County Democratic Committee [HERE](#).

Visit. See one of our most active local committees in action by showing up at 8:30 am any Thursday morning at the Eaton Democrats' breakfast meeting, held at Annie's Sweets & Treats, Morrisville. Anyone from any town is welcome, and they'll be happy to answer any questions you might have.