



Endorsement Policy for Partisan Primary Elections (Adopted January 2022)

Key Considerations & Principles

Our Vision: An America where elected officials represent all people fairly and with respect and where people who value fairness, tolerance, inclusion, and truth participate actively in democracy.

Why Endorse in primaries? IndivisibleHoCo may choose to endorse candidates:

- to increase the likelihood of a strong candidate who supports our values wins public office;
- to elevate and advance the issues we care about; and/or
- to increase our influence on policymakers & candidates.

Principles

- We do not engage in personal attacks.
- We use clear, transparent rules to make decisions
- We are selective.
- We commit to support the nominee in the general election.

Process

A. Deciding whether to initiate a partisan primary endorsement process

The decision to initiate a primary endorsement process is not a decision between being engaged and not being engaged in a primary. IndivisibleHoCo Action Teams are always encouraged to consider holding candidate forums on their issues, both in order to elevate Indivisible priorities and to make sure that voters are getting an accurate view of where candidates and electeds stand on those issues. However, in some cases, it may be worth investing the time and risk in formally endorsing a candidate. This will be determined as follows:

1. No later than the end of February of the year of the election, any Action Team may propose to the Facilitators group that we initiate a primary endorsement process for a local, state, or national race.
2. Facilitators take the question back to their respective Action Teams to gauge their team's level of enthusiasm and their willingness to invest time into such a process for the proposed race.
3. Based on feedback from Action Teams and if at least 2/3 of the Facilitators group support advancing an endorsement process for the race, the Coordinators appoint an ad hoc Endorsement Team. That team may be composed of volunteers from multiple Action Teams and led by a Facilitator with the experience and background to safeguard IndivisibleHoCo's reputation throughout the process. If no one who meets these qualifications volunteers or if there are not enough volunteers to constitute an ad hoc Endorsement Team, the process does not go further. Once appointed, the ad hoc Endorsement Team organizes the remaining endorsement process.



- B. **Research & discussion.** At a minimum, the ad hoc Endorsement Team will review all candidate statements or platforms in the chosen race. The team should draft summaries, with commentary on how the candidates' records match their statements and how they align with Indivisible goals. Action Teams should have an opportunity to comment and add specific details from their experience. Summaries should be factual, to the point, and phrased in neutral language. The ad hoc Endorsement Team should collaborate with appropriate Action Teams to administer questionnaires or review & aggregate those of other organizations, and/or conduct interviews to get at any key questions not covered by other means. This information should be posted to the IndivisibleHoCoMD website and distributed to members via Updates.
- C. **Making an endorsement.** The Facilitators group may refer a race for a Membership vote only after it considers the ad hoc Endorsement Team's research findings. If the Facilitator Council determines by a 2/3 vote that such a referral is appropriate, the Communications team will create a Google form for voting that allows anonymous replies, draw up a list of Active Members, and invite Active Members to vote. "Active" is defined as having opened at least 50% of our bi-weekly updates during the preceding 90 days, and not being an elected official. To qualify for endorsement, at least 50% of ballots need to be returned and one candidate must receive at least 2/3 of votes cast. The purpose of these conditions is to ensure that any endorsement genuinely has the enthusiasm of the majority of members and will not be empty.
- D. **Announcing an endorsement.** Facilitators will hold the results of the Membership vote in strict confidence and no endorsement is "official" until it is announced. Pending a 2/3 vote supporting a primary candidate for endorsement, the Communications Team will draft internal and external announcements. The Coordinator(s) will contact candidate(s), as appropriate, to inform them of the endorsement decision and, as appropriate, coordinate a strategy for the optimal manner & timing for a public announcement. Coordinators will inform Members of the outcome prior to issuing any public announcement and invite Members to amplify our public announcement via social media and/or other means.
- E. **General election.** After the primary election, or where there is only one Democratic candidate as of the end date for primary candidate registration, IndivisibleHoCoMD may support Democratic or independent candidates whose views are aligned with the articulated views of IndivisibleHoCoMD (including our Mission, Vision, and Principles). This support may include listing campaign information and volunteer opportunities in our web pages, newsletters, and other communications.
- F. **Coordination with other groups.** The Facilitators group may choose to coordinate with other Indivisibles and/or other like-minded groups. This may include the exchange of research information, coordinated organization or participation in candidate fora, or possibly a joint endorsement subject to completion of the process set forth above.

Timeline for primary endorsement(s): Aim to announce at least 2 months prior to election day.