

Fair Ballot Democrats - South Orange Statement

As Fair Ballot Democrats running for District Leader (DL) positions in South Orange, we are committed to revitalizing our local Democratic Party to ensure that it truly represents the diverse interests of our community at both the neighborhood and county levels.

We believe that now is the time to build a local Democratic Party that is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of all South Orange residents. As the only directly-elected members of Essex County Democratic Committee (ECDC), DLs represent the true grassroots base of the party. Instead of a top-down party that expects committee members and voters alike to fall in line behind party leaders' preferred candidates, we envision a South Orange Democratic Committee (SODC) that treats voters as constituents, represents their values to the rest of the County Democratic Party, advocates for competitive primary elections, and boosts turnout by creating a Democratic Party that promotes trust and enthusiasm within the electorate.

In order to revitalize the local party, we will:

- Create a website (which SODC does not currently have) so that voters can identify who their DLs are, contact them, and learn more about the SODC.
- Conduct outreach with constituents both during and outside of election season to better represent their interests to Democratic candidates and other members of the party.
- Collaborate with other local groups to build community, get more people interested in participating in local politics, and recruit new DL candidates. Currently, one-third of SODC's 24 seats are vacant, and only 7 incumbents are running for reelection. Even after the June 4th primary, at least three voting districts in South Orange will still not have any DLs representing them on the county level. We must do better.

In order to build a County Democratic party that is representative of and trusted by voters, we will collaborate with DLs across Essex County to:

- Advocate for the ECDC to decide endorsements using a convention where all DLs vote via a binding, secret ballot. This means ending the current practice of the County Chair endorsing unilaterally.
- Advocate for the permanent end to the county line ballot, and with it, the adoption of the "office block" ballot for all races.
- Advocate for transparency and a robust conflict of interest policy for party office holders at all levels.

Fair Ballot Democrats have decades of advocacy and organizing experience and have been leaders in getting out the vote in races both locally and across the country.

On Election Day, vote for Fair Ballot Democrats to bring fresh perspectives, renewed vitality, and forward-thinking leadership to the South Orange Democratic Committee.

Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant local Democratic Party that effectively serves the needs of all South Orange residents.