



## Bylaws Amendment Submission

### Final Amendment ID #

2026-10

### Summary of Proposed Bylaw Change

The proposed amendment enhances the rules for the biennial County Central Committee organizational meeting (held between November 15 and January 31 after a general election) by adding two key provisions:

1. **Mandatory Notice Requirements:** The meeting must be announced at least 14 days in advance via email to all committee members, posting on the sdgop.com website (dedicated tab), and additional public outreach through local newspapers, county GOP websites, and/or social media to maximize accessibility for all interested Republicans.
2. **Enforcement and Remedy for Non-Compliance:** If the meeting is not properly noticed or held on time, its elections will not be recognized by the South Dakota Republican Party. Upon notification to the State Chairman, the Chairman and/or the county's Regional Director will schedule and conduct a new properly noticed meeting to elect officers.

These changes aim to promote transparency, inclusivity, modern communication, and accountability while preventing disputes over legitimacy.

### What Section(s) Does the Bylaws Change Involve?

- Section III - County Central Committee

### Detailed Reason for Change(s)

#### Introduction and Context

The existing bylaw governing the County Central Committee organizational meeting, as outlined in the first paragraph, establishes a basic framework for convening the committee every two years following the general election. It specifies a timeframe (between November 15 and January 31) and the primary purpose (electing officers) but lacks detailed provisions for notice requirements and enforcement mechanisms. The proposed amendments, detailed in paragraphs 2 and 3, introduce mandatory noticing protocols and remedial procedures for non-compliance. These changes are essential to modernize the bylaw, align it with best practices in organizational governance, and ensure the integrity, transparency, and inclusivity of the South Dakota Republican Party's (SDGOP) county-level operations.

This reasoning outlines the rationale for these amendments, drawing on principles of democratic participation, legal compliance, technological advancements, and risk mitigation. By incorporating these updates, the SDGOP can strengthen its grassroots structure, reduce disputes over legitimacy, and foster greater engagement among party members and the public.

#### Rationale for Paragraph 2: Enhanced Noticing Requirements

The addition of detailed noticing provisions in paragraph 2 addresses several critical shortcomings in the original bylaw, which does not specify how or when notice must be provided. This omission has historically led to inconsistent practices across counties, potentially resulting in low attendance, exclusion of interested Republicans, and challenges to the validity of elections. The proposed changes mandate a 14-day advance notice via multiple channels—email to the entire County Central Committee, posting on the sdgop.com website (under a dedicated tab for County Reorganizational Meetings), publication in the local county newspaper, and dissemination through the County GOP website and/or social media pages. This multi-faceted approach ensures broad accessibility and avails notice to "all who desire to participate in their County party."

Key reasons for this amendment include:

1. **Promoting Transparency and Inclusivity:** In an era where political engagement is increasingly digital and decentralized, relying solely on informal or ad hoc notifications risks alienating potential participants, such as new voters, precinct committeepersons, or unaffiliated Republicans interested in party involvement. By requiring notice through diverse media (email for direct communication, websites for ongoing reference, newspapers for traditional outreach, and social media for real-time reach), the amendment democratizes access. This aligns with the SDGOP's commitment to grassroots empowerment, as evidenced by similar noticing standards in other state Republican parties (e.g., requirements for public notices in party bylaws in neighboring states like North Dakota and Nebraska). It ensures that meetings are not insular events but opportunities for broader party building, potentially increasing turnout and diversity in leadership.
2. **Adapting to Modern Communication Technologies:** The original bylaw, likely drafted in a pre-digital age, does not account for the ubiquity of email, websites, and social media. In 2026, with over 90% of South Dakotans having internet access and social media penetration rates exceeding 70% in rural areas, these tools are indispensable for effective outreach. The dedicated tab on sdgop.com provides a centralized, verifiable resource, reducing confusion and enabling state-level oversight. This update mitigates risks associated with outdated methods, such as mailed notices that may be delayed or lost, and positions the SDGOP as a forward-thinking organization.
3. **Ensuring Legal and Ethical Compliance:** South Dakota state law (e.g., SDCL 12-5-1 et seq., governing political party organizations) emphasizes fair and open processes for party elections. Inadequate notice could invite legal challenges under open meetings principles or claims of due process violations. The 14-day requirement mirrors standards in South Dakota's open meetings law (SDCL 1-25), which mandates reasonable notice for public bodies. By formalizing these protocols, the amendment protects the party from litigation, audits by the Secretary of State, or internal disputes, while upholding ethical standards of fairness.

## Bylaws Amendment Submission (continued)

Practical Benefits for County Operations: Counties vary in size and resources; smaller rural counties may rely more on newspapers, while urban areas like Minnehaha County benefit from social media. The flexible "and/or" language allows adaptation to local contexts without mandating burdensome requirements. This could lead to higher quorum rates, more robust discussions, and stronger officer slates, ultimately enhancing the SDGOP's effectiveness at the county level.

Without these changes, the bylaw remains vulnerable to inconsistent implementation, potentially undermining trust in the party's organizational integrity.

### Rationale for Paragraph 3: Enforcement and Remedial Mechanisms

Paragraph 3 introduces consequences for failure to properly notice or hold the meeting within the specified timeframe, including non-recognition of elections by the SDGOP, notification to the State Chairman, and intervention by the State Chairman and/or the County's Regional Director to schedule and conduct a new meeting. This enforcement layer is a direct response to past instances where procedural lapses have disrupted county operations, leading to contested elections or leadership vacuums.

Key reasons for this amendment include:

1. **Safeguarding Election Legitimacy:** Absent clear penalties, improper meetings could result in unrecognized officers, creating confusion in party certification processes (e.g., with the county auditor or Secretary of State). By declaring such elections invalid, the amendment ensures that only compliant processes yield official results. This protects the SDGOP's statewide cohesion, as uncertified county officers could complicate delegate selections, fundraising, or coordination with the State Central Committee.
2. **Providing a Clear Remedial Pathway:** The involvement of the State Chairman and Regional Director offers a neutral, authoritative resolution mechanism. Upon notification of an infraction, they can swiftly schedule a new meeting with proper notice, either jointly or individually conducting it. This prevents prolonged disputes and empowers state leadership to intervene constructively, similar to oversight roles in other GOP state organizations (e.g., the Republican Party of Texas's provisions for state-directed reorganizations). It also deters negligence by county leaders, encouraging proactive compliance.
3. **Mitigating Risks of Disruption and Abuse:** In politically charged environments, procedural errors—intentional or otherwise—could be exploited to manipulate outcomes. For example, inadequate notice might exclude opposition voices, leading to unrepresentative leadership. The amendment's notification requirement (to the State Chairman) creates an accountability loop, while the rescheduling process ensures continuity. This is particularly vital in South Dakota's biennial cycle, where delays could impact preparations for upcoming elections, such as the 2026 midterms.
4. **Enhancing Overall Party Governance:** By tying compliance to state recognition, the SDGOP reinforces a culture of responsibility. This could reduce administrative burdens on the State Central Committee, as fewer invalid elections mean smoother certifications. It also aligns with broader governance trends, such as those recommended by the Republican National Committee for state party bylaws, emphasizing standardization and enforcement to build resilient organizations.

### Potential Impacts and Implementation Considerations

Adopting these amendments would have positive ripple effects, including increased member satisfaction, reduced legal exposures, and a more vibrant party apparatus. To implement, the SDGOP could provide templates for notices on [sdgop.com](http://sdgop.com) and training for county chairs. While minimal costs (e.g., newspaper ads) may arise, these are offset by the benefits of stronger engagement. In contrast, maintaining the status quo risks perpetuating inefficiencies, as seen in occasional county disputes in prior cycles. These changes represent a balanced, proactive evolution of the bylaw, ensuring it serves the SDGOP's mission in a contemporary context.

### Conclusion

The proposed amendments in paragraphs 2 and 3 are justified by the need for transparency, adaptability, compliance, and accountability. They transform a rudimentary bylaw into a robust framework that empowers counties while safeguarding the party's integrity. Approval of these changes would affirm the SDGOP's dedication to inclusive, effective governance.

### Proposed New or Revised Content

The County Central Committee shall meet at the county seat between November 15 following the general election and the following January 31 and proceed to form their party organization by electing officers.

***This County Central Committee Organizational meeting, held every two years, shall be properly noticed at least 14 days in advance by email to the entire County Central Committee and also posting on the [sdgop.com](http://sdgop.com) website tab for County Reorganizational Meetings. Notice should also be given for all Republicans in the local County newspaper, and/or the County GOP website, and/or any County GOP social media pages, to ensure that notice is availed to all who desire to participate in their County party.***

***If the County Central Committee Meeting is not properly noticed, or held within the allowed timeframe, those elections will not be recognized by the South Dakota Republican Party. If this happens, and notice is sent to the State Chairman of the infraction, the State Chairman and that County's Regional Director shall schedule a new meeting with the same proper notice given, and either, or both, shall conduct a new meeting to elect the officers of that County party.***

A majority vote of the County Central Committee members present and voting shall constitute an election, which shall be certified to the county auditor, secretary of state, and state secretary of the State Central Committee.

### Supporting Document(s)

### Members Who Also Support This Change

Jim Eschenbaum, SDGOP Chairman

**Bylaws Amendment Submission (continued)**

**Confirmation**

✓ I affirm I am a current member of the SDGOP State Central Committee

**Confirmation**

✓ I confirm I have read and understand the current bylaws regarding how bylaw changes are handled.

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