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Joseph Lynn Kitchen Jr.  
President

## **A Blueprint for Rebuilding in Maryland**

Rebuilding the Maryland Democratic Party will require a deep investment in growing our grassroots operations, including new voices at the table, and getting everyone on one page. As a deeply rooted grassroots organization the Young Democrats of Maryland have worked hard to develop a vision for how, working together, we can do just that.

This plan, our blueprint, is centered specifically on grassroots operations. It does not set out to be a catch all for all the retooling we will need to undertake in various areas in order to be prepared for the coming state elections.

### **Fully Incorporate the Young Democrats in MDP**

1. Include the Young Democrats of Maryland President in retreats, briefings and meetings of Central Committee chairs.
2. Conduct a yearly census of the Democratic State Central Committee by jurisdiction that includes not just the gender but also age of every member and make the information available to the public.
3. Add the President of YDM and YDM's two National Committee Members as at-large voting members of the State Central Committee.
4. Mandate youth representation on all standing and select committees of the State Party.
5. Require at least one of the vice-chairs be under the age of 40 at all times.
6. Hire a full-time youth engagement staffer to assist YDM, the College Democrats and High School Democrats with youth organizing.
  - a. Include YDM and CDM in the interview and hiring process for this position and the Executive Director.

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7. Continue efforts to remove high contribution efforts from dividing young people with the party.

### **Reform the State Committee**

1. Create a Commission to conduct an exhaustive review of the bylaws and report to the State Committee areas that can be modernized.
2. Meetings of the Democratic State Central Committee need to be structured to give members something meaningful to learn and to do. Far too much time is spent listening to speeches and far too little time is spent actually working.
3. Seriously consider the proposal by former Chair Bruce Poole of an annual conference/convention/summit. This event, suggested to be multiple days, should give elected officials, party leaders, volunteers and grassroots activists an opportunity to network, hear and learn from one another, attend trainings and set forth an agenda for the next year.
4. Give the Party Officers something to do. Far too much of the work is being coordinated and carried by the Chair. Few, if any, could tell you they know what the three Vice-Chairs do or how they can use the Treasurer or Secretary.

### **Empower and Embolden the Central Committees**

1. The State Party has to create a staff position that works specifically with local central committees. The Director of Committee Services should work with committees as they develop their annual work plans, assist them in setting measurable goals, point them in the direction for how they can be successful and regularly coach them through the process.

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2. Following on the point of party staff support, the party must challenge our local Democratic Central Committees to produce at election time. What does produce mean?
  - a. We know that committees in very blue areas are not in a race for winning a specific local race, however their turnout directly impacts the statewide ticket. Blue areas should set real and measurable turnout numbers and plans to influence that turnout.
  - b. Committees in purple areas often are trying to grow their electoral wins or defend vulnerable incumbents. These areas should set goals on how they plan to grow their representation on the county council for example from 2 to 3 members or defend an open legislative seat for a retiring Democrat.
  - c. Committees in red areas should set targets on votes or races. If you are in a very red area it is not realistic to say you will take over a County Commission or even elect an executive, however it might be possible to say we will grow our Democratic percentage of the vote. It might even be possible to target a race lower on the ballot to begin to build a bench of trusted Democrats in elected office. A Democrat who has served well on the school board or municipal authority can come with a base of support and record in a race for county commission or delegate.

These goals would require a complete change in how some committees do business. That will take help and should come with accountability but also resources and investments.

3. Develop leadership and transition manuals for new central committee members and party leaders.
4. Mandate orientation and training for all new party leaders but specifically for chairs, vice-chairs and treasurers.
5. Over and over members elected to the Democratic State Central Committee feel they are not included in the decisions of the party.

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We can give them a voice at the leadership table by establishing an Association of Democratic Central Committee Chairs and add their President to the Executive Board as a Vice-Chair.

6. Create an online dashboard for party leaders (officers, staff, central committee members, YDM, UDW, DLCs) that is regularly updated with information such as minutes, records, finance reports, strategic plans, bylaws, etc.
7. Form an organizational chart (including names and contact information) that includes that is regularly updated, readily accessible to leaders on the dashboard.

### **Incorporate and Include Constituency Groups, DLCs, & Clubs**

1. Establish a Message Center and Rapid Response Network that is communicated to party leaders, central committee members, constituency groups, DLCs and clubs. The message calendar should be coordinated with any statewide campaign, statewide officials, legislative leaders and caucuses, and the DNC. Messages should include specific asks or objectives.
2. Provide access to party tools such as VAN, communications, trainings, and more to all party constituency groups, DLCs and clubs. These tools should come with training. Sadly local chairs at the expense of the party have guarded control over VAN access. No way should grassroots activist be forced to pay the party for a tool owned by the party to build the party.
3. MDP should have a full time staffer committed to building out our constituency outreach. This staff should also be given a major voice in decisions on how we engage these constituency groups.

### **Actively Engage Communities and Voters Regularly**

1. Regular canvassing and organizing in communities we've struggled with in previous elections.

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2. Begin building the bench of the Democratic Party by highlighting the work of new leaders doing great things at all levels.
  - a. Assist with developing a permanent surrogate operation and building a pipeline of new prominent speakers for local events and fundraising events.
3. Establish support and leadership opportunities for local municipal and county leaders within the party. We cannot just have our statewide elected officials or the county executives. School board members, county council members, commissioners, mayors and others have to be on the team and in the boat.
4. Embark on a statewide effort to build strong precinct organizations in all 24 counties.