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**Ventura County Democratic Central Committee
Bylaws Committee Report
Re: Rechartering of the Ojai Valley Democratic Club (OVDC)
Date: July 2025**

The Ojai Valley Democratic Club (hereafter, the CLUB) has had a longstanding presence in the Ojai Valley, serving the community and advancing Democratic values for decades. However, in March 2025, the CLUB did not complete the rechartering process by not submitting a current membership roster, a required component of rechartering under the Ventura County Democratic Central Committee (VCDCC) protocols.

In June and July 2025, VCDCC leadership contacted the CLUB's representative of record to inform them that their charter had lapsed. VCDCC was subsequently informed that new officers had been appointed in accordance with the CLUB's own bylaws. The newly appointed CLUB leadership communicated their intention to seek rechartering and have since submitted the necessary documentation.

Review of Submitted Materials

- **Ojai Charter Protocols:** Submitted materials meet the standards as to form and content.
- **Bylaws:** Revisions are recommended and outlined in the attached Bylaws Review Checklist.
- **Rechartering Documentation:** The CLUB has completed the baseline rechartering document.
- **Membership Roster:** Membership was extended in accordance with CLUB bylaws and meets current requirements.

Committee Recommendation:

It is recommended that the VCDCC grant a conditional rechartering of the Ojai Valley Democratic Club, subject to the required actions outlined in the Chartering Plan below.

This conditional rechartering will remain in effect for a period of approximately seven months (remainder of the 2025 chartering cycle), during which the CLUB must demonstrate alignment with the standards expected of all chartered Democratic clubs in Ventura County. As with all charters, the VCDCC reserves the right to modify or take other chartering actions, even during the chartering year.

Discussion

The Ojai Valley Democratic Club has faced recurring organizational challenges. While the submission of current documentation is a positive step, additional measures are necessary to ensure the CLUB operates and addresses previous concerns, whether actual or perceived. Among those previously shared with the VCDCC are transparency, accountability, and alignment with countywide Democratic Club and VCDCC principles.

The use of a Chartering Plan, though infrequent, is an appropriate mechanism to provide clear, structured guidance to CLUB leadership. This plan outlines expectations regarding governance, participation, compliance, and organizational performance.

It should be noted that the implementation of this plan does not constitute disciplinary action, nor should it be interpreted as such. Rather, it reflects a collaborative approach by the VCDCC to support the CLUB's revitalization. Sections of the plan, such as the required Bylaws revisions, while extensive, are not irregular. In 2025, all charters granted by the VCDCC contained required and suggested corrections or actions by the pertinent clubs.

Upon adoption by the VCDCC General Body, the following Chartering Plan shall be in effect.

Chartering Plan

Governance and Elections

- The CLUB shall conduct officer elections during its July 2025 meeting. These elections shall be facilitated by Regional Director Henry Montalvo or his designee.

Bylaws Revision

- The CLUB shall complete all required bylaws revisions by September 15, 2025, unless an extension (not exceeding 30 days) is granted by the Bylaws

Committee.

- Revisions must address governance standards, endorsement processes, quorum definitions, and other items outlined in the Bylaws Review Checklist (attached).

Public Engagement

- The CLUB shall hold at least four public meetings in 2025.
- Meeting notices shall be posted via the Club's social media platforms and submitted to VCDCC for public promotion.

Representation and Participation

- The CLUB President, or their designee, must:
 - Attend all VCDCC general meetings
 - Participate in the Presidents Council
 - Ensure CLUB representation in appropriate VC Dems planning committees

Financial and Legal Compliance

- FPPC Filings:
 - Complete or amend all required 2023 filings by September 1, 2025
 - Complete or amend all required 2024 filings by September 1, 2025
 - Complete or amend all required 2025 filings by September 1, 2025
 - Ensure any additional filings with the County of Ventura, State of California, and City of Ojai (if required) are completed
 - Complete or amend all required filings under the Tolling Agreement under the Open Investigation by the Enforcement Division of the FPPC; FPPC Case No. [2021-00096](#), that might include, but not limited to Government Code Sections 91000.5 and 91011, signed and agreed to by past President Jeffery Starkweather effective June 24, 2024. The Club shall report to the VCDCC progress toward this goal by September 1, 2025.
 - Note: These are VCDCC internal deadlines. The CLUB is solely responsible for meeting official legal deadlines.

Reporting Requirements

- Submit the Monthly Club Report Form by the deadline, including:
 - Accurate membership totals

- Financial account balances
- Upcoming meeting dates
- Other requested details
- Submit quarterly membership rosters reflecting current membership

Organizational Culture

- The CLUB shall operate in a manner consistent with Democratic values, including:
 - Collaboration
 - Accountability
 - Respectful and inclusive engagement
- The CLUB shall take steps to enhance its public image in the Ojai Valley and collaborate with other Democratic and allied organizations.

Endorsement Process

- Any endorsement vote held by the CLUB must be overseen by Regional Director Henry Montalvo or his designee.
- All endorsement procedures must comply with CLUB bylaws and VCDCC standards.

The rechartering of the Ojai Valley Democratic Club, with the above conditions, represents a renewed opportunity for the CLUB to strengthen its structure, rebuild community trust, and fulfill its role as a local voice of the Democratic Party. This Chartering Plan provides a roadmap to that end.

The Bylaws Committee urges the VCDCC General Body to approve this recommendation and adopt the Chartering Plan as outlined.

Submitted on behalf of the Bylaws Committee

Attachment:

- Bylaws Review Checklist (for CLUB leadership use)

Addendum A COMMITTEE Checklist for Bylaws of Chartered Clubs

Club Name: Ojai Valley Democratic Club
Checklist Template Club Comments:

Date: 7/2025

I: Name	Article I
II: Object or Purpose	Preamble and Article II Summary of Suggested Edits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "serves under" → "operates under"• "in Ojai Valley" → "in the Ojai Valley"• Add quotation marks around 'Election Code'• Consider the serial comma before the final item in a list
III: Governance	
A. Adherence to VCDCC Bylaws	Article II.B.1 - The web links must be updated
B. Parliamentary Authority	Specifies use of <i>Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised</i>
IV: Members	
A. Qualifications for membership	Found – Article III Membership currently includes non-Democrats. this is not permitted Type in Article III.A.1 Article III.2 - Members must be allowed to seek a dues waiver. They would be considered paid. The Non-voting status for those under 18 is permitted. but otherwise Democrats. whether registered or not, are eligible to become members. Student membership - this section need to be clarified
	"Dues" section under Article III

B. Required fees or dues, when payable	
C. Hardship clause	"Dues" section under Article III. A request for hardship must be included on all membership forms online and in person.
V: Officers	
A. Elected	Found – Article VI
B. Term of Office	Found – Article VI. One-year term. ends at annual meeting in December
C. Method of filling vacancies	Found – Article VII
D. Duties	Found – Article VI
VI: Meetings	
A. Meeting schedule	Found – Article IV
B. Regular; Special	Found – Article IV. This section must include the number of days ahead of the meetings which notice must be given.
C. Quorum	Found – Article IV.B
D. Secret ballots allowed	Found (Prohibited) – Article IV.3, Participation. This is incorrect: members must be permitted a secret vote. This section must be adjusted to permit a request for a secret ballot.
VII: Executive Board	
A. Composition	Found – Article VIII Article VI.B.8 "Chairmen" should be adjusted to chair.
B. Powers	Found – Article VIII
C. Meeting schedule	Found – Article VIII
D. Quorum	✗ Not explicitly stated
E. No secret ballots	✗ Not explicitly stated
VIII: Committees	
A. Standing	✗ Mentioned but not listed – Article VIII.A Article VIII.A - Standing Rules need to be submitted.
B. Special	

	✓ Implied – via endorsement committee and “committees created by Board”
IX: Non-Discrimination Policy	
A. Open public meetings	All public meetings are open
B. Timely meeting notices	Found – Article IV.4
C. No test for membership or oath	Found – Article V
D. Non-discrimination clause	Found – Article V
E. Code of Conduct	Found – Article V The links in this section would need to be updated.
X: Amendment of Bylaws	Found – Article XI
Notes:	
• 12-point font	Yes
• Numbered pages (at bottom)	Missing
• Necessary dates: Bylaws origin or revision; latest amendment	Missing in part
• Have Bylaws available to members	Not currently on the website
Optional (to qualify for CDP delegates):	
• Define "member in good standing"	Article III.3. Missing in part.
• Process for appointing delegates to the California Democratic Party Pre-endorsement conferences	Missing
• Clear that membership fee waivers are available	Dues section. Article III. Missing from the membership application online.
• Notes that membership is open to registered Democrats and Democrats who intend to register as Democrats when eligible	Article III.2
Recommendation (approve/not approve):	Approve with charter correction plan
Completed by Committee Member:	

Additional notes:

- Endorsements
 - II.B.3. remove the requirement that Club members are registered Democrats. Membership is open to registered Democrats and those who

- would register as Democrats when eligible.
 - It is recommended that the club refers to its governing board as the Executive Board, to ensure consistency with other clubs in the county.
 - The Club should continue actively participating in the VC Dems planning committees, the President's Council, and ensure the timely submission of membership rosters.
 - Membership rosters should be formatted according to the request and include the details previously noted as needing to be captured. The next submission is due in September 2025 and quarterly thereafter.
 - The current club bylaws unintentionally limit Democrats who are undocumented immigrants or otherwise unable to register from voting. The restriction on these Democrats is irregular and should be reversed. The creation of a two-tiered membership structure where Democrats who are over 18 and lack the ability to register are marginalized or have membership rights restricted is not permitted. Democrats over the age of 18 must be permitted to vote; those under 18 may be restricted. Due by September 2025.
- Current Bvlaws:
1. Any person registered to vote as a Democrat.
 2. Any person less than 18 years of age or is a non-citizen awaiting naturalization.
- who supports the principles of the Democratic Party, and has expressed an interest to register to vote as a Democrat upon becoming eligible, is eligible for Associate Membership without voting rights.
- The online membership page and printed applications should note that waivers are available for membership dues. Due by September 2025.

Suggested Selection of Representatives to the California Democratic Party Language:

"Selection of Representatives to California Democratic Party (CDP) Pre-Endorsing Conferences

1. Club representatives shall be allocated as follows: one representative, resident in the Assembly District and duly registered as a member of the Democratic Party of California, for each full (not a fraction thereof) 20 members in good standing registered to vote in the Assembly District who were listed on the roster submitted to the Ventura County Democratic Central Committee, the appropriate Regional Director and the CADEM Secretary no later than the date announced by the CDP in accordance with the CDP bylaws.
2. For purposes of this Section:
 - a. Only members in good standing, who are registered Democrats, as of the date announced by the CDP in accordance with the CDP bylaws, shall be included on the roster;
 - b. "Member in Good Standing" shall mean a member whose dues are current, or have been waived;
 - c. The status of such members shall be certified by the Club's President, Secretary, or Treasurer; and,
 - d. The Club's representatives to any particular pre-endorsing conference be from the roster described above and that the overall list of representatives to all conferences adhere to the Equal Division Rule, to the extent possible.
3. Said representatives shall be selected by **[Insert selection process for your club here. The VCDCC suggests that the President appoint the representatives, unless the club decides on another process.]"**

SPELLING & GRAMMAR ISSUES

Issue	Correction/Recommendation
"Democratic who has joined"	Change to "Democrat who has joined" or "Democratic Party member."
"Democrat Party voter"	Correct to "Democratic Party voter."
"talley"	Correct to "tally."
"nroscribed by Robert's Rules"	Correct to "prescribed."
"Pay valid obligations..."	Verb should be "Pays" for subject agreement.
"FEPC statements"	Should be "FPPC statements" (Fair Political Practices Commission).

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

Item	Issue	Fix
Member Types	Definition of Non-Voting Member includes both non-Democrats and students.	Consider distinguishing with labels like "Associate Member" or separate sub-articles.
Numbering	Article III has two items labeled "5."	Renumber for clarity.
Officer Terms	"...elected at the Annual Meeting or replaces followed the procedures..."	Fix grammar: should read "or replaced following the procedures..."
Dues Section	Contains multiple, slightly varied statements about due dates and effectiveness.	Consolidate into one clear statement.
"Voting Member must be present..."	Consistently use "Voting Member(s)" across sections.	
"Secretary is responsible for counting and reporting..."	Inconsistent use of "Secretary" and their duties. Clarify whether this includes elections.	

Use of "Club"	Sometimes written in all caps "CLUB" sometimes capitalized normally.	Standardize to "the Club."
Officer titles	"First Vice-President" vs. "First Vice President" – inconsistent hyphenation.	Remove hyphen throughout.

FORMATTING ISSUES

Issue	Recommendation
Spacing	Extra space before quotation mark: "the Club " → Should be "the Club"
Font consistency	Headers and sub-headers vary in size and indentation.
Article titles	Some are bolded or in all caps, others are not (e.g., "ARTICLE IX" vs. "Dues").
Use of bullets/numbers	Some lists are numeric; others use paragraphs or line breaks.
Quorum language	"Ten percent of Members present..." is confusing. Likely meant: "Ten percent of Membership constitutes a quorum."
Mixed indentation	Lines like "Participation" and "Non-Discrimination Policy" aren't aligned with other headings.
Repetition	"Annual Meeting/Holiday Party in the first week of December" appears 3–4 times nearly verbatim.

LINK FUNCTIONALITY

Link

CDP Bylaws: <https://www.cadem.org/our-party/by-laws>

VCDCC Bylaws: <http://www.venturacountydemocrats.com/bylaws.html>

CDP Code of Conduct: <https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Code-of-Conduct-FINAL-1-92821.pdf>

VCDCC Disciplinary Procedure:

http://www.venturacountymdemocrats.com/uploads/2/5/9/2/25926878/vcdccbylaws3-21-17revisionamended_2021.01.26.pdf

BYLAWS PROCEDURES & LOGIC

Section	Issue	Recommendation
Endorsement Thresholds	"60% 2/3" appears—these are not equivalent.	Clarify if it's 60% or 2/3 (66.7%). Recommend using one consistently.
Recall Procedures	Recall process mentions written notice but not appeal rights.	Consider adding a right to respond/appeal for due process.
Committee Formation	Committees are defined as per Standing Rules, but Standing Rules are not included.	Either attach them or clarify where to find them.
Vacancy Process	Logic is mostly clear, but slightly disorganized.	Add numbering and clarify First VP succession clearly.
Nominations	Requires in-person nomination unless written letter submitted.	Consider specifying a deadline or method for submission (e.g., email).
Voting Procedures	"No secret voting" is noted, but it does not clarify procedures for virtual or absentee voting.	Consider adding clarification for remote/virtual participation.
Amendment Process	Reasonably clear but could use subsections (e.g., Proposal, Notice, Vote).	Break into bullet points or numbered steps for ease of use.

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Correct typos like "talley," "Democrat Party," and "proscribed."

2. Fix numbering and format consistency, especially in Article III.
3. Clarify and consolidate dues language—currently redundant.
4. Standardize officer titles and references to “the Club.”
5. Verify or update broken links—especially to VCDCC documents.
6. Add structure to amendment and voting processes for clarity.
7. Ensure terminology (Voting Member, Non-Voting Member) is distinct and consistent.

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