

What is a Democratic Club?

A Democratic Club is an official association of local Democrats whose primary focus is to bring local Democrats together to discuss, debate, and work to promote Democratic candidates and legislation in their city, town, neighborhood, and/or region. They can be geographically based, in which case they focus on a broad spectrum of issues in the communities they serve (service area) or they can be issues based or affinity based, with a focus on one or more topics, such as environmental matters or gay rights. Some clubs also have a strong social component.

In addition to regular Democratic Clubs, special clubs exist for other groups such as younger people. Young Democrat Clubs limit membership to people 35 years of age and under. College Democrat Clubs limit membership to faculty and students of a particular college or university.

In California, all Democratic Clubs are chartered by the Democratic County Central Committee in the county in which they reside. Each County Central Committee has different chartering requirements, but they generally boil down to acceptable bylaws, a membership of at least 20, and payment of a small fee. Chartering enables an association to call itself a Democratic Club, and use the word "Democrat," which is a trademark of the Democratic Party, in its name.

To improve the coordination of the California Democratic Club system, in 1952, Alan Cranston and a number of other Democratic leaders created the California Democratic Council (CDC). The CDC is the statewide association of Democratic Clubs and County Central Committees. All chartered Democratic Clubs and County Central Committees are automatically Associate Affiliates of the CDC. Many county central committees and clubs choose to become full CDC affiliates.