

What to Have With You

However, it is still a large venue and taking a detour may not be especially convenient if you have two competing events (often the case). A convention is very tightly scheduled, temperatures are variable throughout, and you'll want to plan for spontaneity; so, travel like a turtle...

- **Water / thermos drink**
- **Snacks (apple, string cheese, nuts)**
- **Comfortable shoes — you'll do a lot of walking!**
- **Pad of paper / pen**
- **Business cards / pre-written contact information**
- **Your group's contact information on a 3x5 card**
- **Cell phone (make sure your group has phone numbers for one-another)**
- **Chapstick**
- **Scarf, vest or sweater (dress in layers; room temperatures vary widely)**
- **A method for comfortably carrying stuff (backpack or small rolling cart); you will acquire stuff during the day, as well as what you bring with you**
- **Plan on having a preset reunion location among your group. (Getting separated is easy.)**

[Click here to download a pdf of this document](#)

Advanced planning helps you get the most from your Convention experience

Viewing our State Convention within a larger context will help you better prepare for and utilize the opportunities Convention weekend brings. We aim to make Convention an event that strengthens your effectiveness as an organizer and advocate.

OVERVIEW

The California Democrats State Convention is one of the most important, informative and engaging events of the year. Not only is a great chance to hear from some of the most prominent, influential and progressive voices in the country, it's a wonderful opportunity to connect with other Democrats around the state, gain new skills and ideas through informative training and - most importantly - get fired up and ready to go for the elections in November!

Our annual convention is a unique opportunity because:

- 1) it is the largest gathering Democratic Activists from around the state;
- 2) A large number of Democratic and Legislative leaders are present and accessible; and
- 3) Phenomenal networking opportunities are available at the various meetings, receptions, workshops and hospitality events. Very often, Delegates will have a large number of events (caucus meetings, hospitality suites, delegation breakfasts, etc.).

This year, we will also be making endorsements and adopting our Party Platform.

2018 Platform

The California Democratic Party Platform is revised every other year. The 2018 Platform will be considered and adopted at the Convention. For the 2018 Draft Platform and more information, please visit the Platform Committee webpage: www.cadem.org/platform.

2018 Endorsement Process

Endorsements for the 2018 elections will be considered at the Convention for federal and state offices. For more information, please visit the Endorsements webpage: www.cadem.org/endorsements. Delegates will also be voting on ballot measure position recommendations made by the Resolutions Committee for ballot measures appearing on the June Primary ballot.

General Tips

Pick a few clear, realistic, and strategic convention goals, for instance: network with folks from another part of the state who are organizing around a similar issue in order to share best practices, take advantage of particular training so that you can bring it home and share it with your home team, or foster a mentor relationship.

Set firm times and locations in advance if there are specific people with whom you would like to spend time; making clear plans for the weekend beforehand increases your efficiency. The Convention is large, and lots of things happen simultaneously. It's easy to be overwhelmed or become distracted. Plan in advance.

Plan as a team to make sure you get your bases get covered. Have conversations with all of the local Delegates in advance to make sure that of the desired training events, Caucus meetings and networking are covered by at least one person in your group who will be responsible for providing feedback to your group. Remember, it's easy to stretch yourself too thin at such a jam-packed weekend.

Take this opportunity to engage with folks with whom you otherwise wouldn't have face-to-face time. Remember, this is a large gathering of activists whom you may only see once every year or two. Use this networking opportunity wisely. Step outside of your social comfort zone and use the weekend to build a new alliance, increase your network or discover a different (and perhaps more successful approach) in order to increase your local productivity.

CONVENTION: DAY BY DAY

The annual Democratic Party State Convention can be fun and productive, but daunting and chaotic as well. The following information will help you know what to expect and plan your convention weekend.

FRIDAY

Registration

Registering in advance using the online registration form is the best option; it allows you to save both money and time by bypassing onsite registration/payment lines. Hyperlinks for this will be available several weeks before Convention. We'll send out an email letting folks know that things are open.

VERY IMPORTANT: You must still sign in and pick up your credential during registration hours. You must be credentialed in order to vote and enter general session. Registration closes before voting begins. If you do not have proper credentials, you cannot vote — there are no exceptions.

Credentialing and registration begins Friday afternoon. Please check the

schedule to make sure you are in line before credentialing/registration closes for the day. Lines in the early afternoon tend to be longer, so you want to enjoy other convention activities until the lines are more manageable. An online schedule will be available closer to Convention.

Caucus dues, which are set by each individual caucus can also be paid in advance online. This will help avoid otherwise long (time-consuming) lines prior to meetings. [Click here to pay your Caucus dues now.](#)

Credentials / General Session Seating

While there are several different types of credentials, for delegates and the public at large there are three:

Delegate: A member of the State Central Committee

Proxy: A person representing a Delegate. A Proxy may be chosen from a specific pool of people, depending on the method by which the Delegate was elected or appointed. If you are carrying a proxy for someone, be sure to consult with them about the issues and candidates you will be voting on at Convention. It's helpful to discuss any potential votes with the person you are proxying for to avoid confusion or misunderstanding the wishes of the Delegate when it comes time to cast proxy votes.

Observer: A “guest” of an elected or appointed Delegate. An Observer may participate in workshops and Caucus meetings, social events, and general session — but may not vote. There is a special seating section for Observers, distinct from the voting delegation.

Delegate credentials are labeled with the delegate’s name, the Delegate’s ID # legislative and congressional districts and region, and include a space for the delegate’s signature. (Note that Proxy delegates will have the delegate’s information, not the Proxy’s, and include a “Proxy” sticker. A Proxy, however, signs the credential using their own signature.)

Credentials are issued in a whole rainbow of colors, each indicating a different category: staff, volunteers, press, exhibitors, honored guests, candidates and campaign staff. You must have a credential in order to get

into the general session or to vote so take care not to leave it at home or at your hotel. Registration is closed prior to voting. You must be registered and credentialed BEFORE VOTING OPENS.

Workshops / Caucus Meetings

Workshops and caucus meetings take place both Friday and Saturday and often run concurrently. Sometimes there may also be workshops scheduled, and if so they often are repeated in order to give greater availability. But again, many events run simultaneously. If a workshop interests you but conflicts with a caucus meeting, check the full agenda to see if it's repeated. And remember your delegation will work best as a team to cover all of the events — and take notes. A schedule will be posted online closer to the Convention time, and an agenda is provided onsite.

REMINDER: pre-register for your Caucuses online to save time. The lines are often very long and you're likely to miss a part of the Caucus meeting waiting to get through registration. Please note that each caucus has its own bylaws and memberships expire at different times. Please check your caucus bylaws to determine when that time is.

As a delegate, part of your responsibility is to bring home what you've learned. Plan a post-convention presentation to your local club, County Committee or sub-committee. In fact, pre-planning will help your focus during convention and make you a better delegate. The delegate is responsible to represent their local organizations as well as to keep their local activists apprised of information, direction and education. Your role as a delegate is vital to building a stronger and more effective Party.

Hospitality Suites

Friday and Saturday evenings include late-evening hospitality suites by hosted candidates and groups. The host determines what is available. There's usually some kind of nosh and beverage provided, and these are good opportunities to network and socialize. They generally run from 10pm until midnight and delegates are welcome to visit many if not all of the suites. All Suites are listed on the agenda, which will be posted online prior to Convention and provided onsite.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

General Session

Delegate seating for General Session is divided into 21 regions. Each region is designated by tall signs, with the region's number. Delegates and proxy delegates sit in their respective regions; this is important for vote counting. (Reminder: proxies are expected to vote according to the wishes of their delegate.) Observers and media have a clearly designated separate seating section.

Volunteer ushers work throughout the general session to ensure that people are sitting in the correct section, to direct people as needed and to make sure the aisles remain clear at all times. (The Fire Marshall takes keeping the aisles clearly pretty seriously. If you want to have a conversation, you will need to do so away from the region seating section.)

General Sessions have many purposes. The Saturday session "opens" Convention and is likely to be inspirational and educational. The Sunday session includes Committee reports and votes and once concluded, formally concludes Convention. While the format follows Robert's Rules of Order, sessions can also be impassioned and enthusiastic.

To get into General Session ("on the floor"), you must have one of the following credentials:

- Delegate
- Observer
- Campaign (Floor)
- Volunteer

NOTE: REGISTRATION CLOSSES PRIOR TO VOTING. YOU MUST BE PROPERLY REGISTERED AND CREDENTIALLED BEFORE REGISTRATION CLOSSES IN ORDER TO VOTE. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. PLEASE CHECK THE AGENDA AND MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED IN TIME TO VOTE.

Saturday Luncheon

The State Party hosts a luncheon program on Saturday afternoon. This year,

in an effort to make the luncheon more accessible and affordable for Delegates, we have significantly lowered the ticket prices and increased the venue to accommodate more Delegates interested in attending the Luncheon.

Saturday Guest Dinner

The State Party hosts an annual dinner Saturday evening, usually with a very interesting keynote speaker.

More Hospitality Suites

Saturday night often includes additional Hospitality Suites. All Suites are listed on the agenda, which will be posted online prior to Convention and provided onsite.

More Workshops / Caucus Meetings

Saturday will offer additional workshops and caucus meetings. All events are listed on the agenda, which will be posted online prior to Convention and provided onsite. REMINDER: pre-register for your Caucuses online to save time. The lines are often very long and you're likely to miss a part of the Caucus meeting waiting to get through registration.

The Sunday General Session closes Convention, and no events are scheduled beyond it. The general session usually ends around midday — however, that is never guaranteed, especially if there are contentious votes, debate, and discussion.

REMINDER: You cannot get into general session and you cannot vote without a credential, even if you're pre-registered. You must be wearing a credential in order to get into general session or to vote.

NOTE: REGISTRATION CLOSING PRIOR TO VOTING. YOU MUST BE REGISTERED AND CREDENTIALLED BEFORE REGISTRATION CLOSING. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.

PLANNING SUGGESTIONS & TIPS

Most convention centers are located within convenient distances of many

eateries and the building is designed with many entrance/exits, so getting in and out is fairly easy. Review a map of the region and the Convention Center before you arrive. There are often places within and around many convention centers for gathering, or holding an off-site meeting.

We hope this quick overview of what to expect at this year's convention is helpful. Keep an eye out for email updates and notices to give you better ideas of what to expect as well as any late announcements regarding speakers or events.