

REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMITTEE

April 19, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After meeting with the three principal affiliates, the committee reached out to the entire US Chess membership in the District of Columbia for volunteers willing to help establish a new state chapter. There were 14 respondents with 13 who booked interviews. All 14 were offered an opportunity to be a part of the process, but soon afterward two people were removed for disciplinary reasons. The D.C. Chess Interim Board (DCIB) was created and Marc Rotenberg offered his services to facilitate all meetings after onboarding. After weeks of work, including guidance from the committee, the DCIB put forth the District of Columbia Chess Association (DCCA) as the best organization to become the new state chapter. The DCCA's board voted to accept the recommendations to incorporate a multi-level membership structure, hold open elections for at-large board seat(s), and expand to include all members of the DCIB.

BACKGROUND

The committee was formed after DM23-50 was passed during the 2023 Delegates Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is important to note that this action was taken after one organization (DCCA) received the most votes during the three-way election but lost overall when an unscheduled vote versus "none of the above" led to the creation of the District of Columbia Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carol Meyer, US Chess Executive Director (Removed)

James Hodina, Delegate (IA), States & Affiliates chair, and former state chapter president

David Grimaud, Delegate (SC) and current state chapter president

Kevin Pryor, Delegate (FL), Executive Board, and former state chapter president

Ranae Bartlett, US Chess Executive Director (Added)

EARLY COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Several committee members initially met in D.C. with the leaders of the affiliates that made presentations in Grand Rapids as a follow-up action. The committee determined that more community involvement would help gain additional perspectives. Consequently, an open request was circulated to all US Chess members, and 14 people responded. Thirteen interviews were conducted, and all 14 candidates were offered the opportunity to become the D.C. Chess Interim Board that would work

together with the District of Columbia Committee to form/recommend a new state chapter affiliate.

Unfortunately, two individuals (S. Jablon & V. Bennett) had to be removed very early for not adhering to agreed-upon behavioral expectations. The infractions were: 1) Attempting to conduct meeting(s) with the newly named DCIB before the initial meeting called by the committee (S. Jablon), and 2) Using email to broadcast content with intent to impugn the character and reputation of fellow DCIB member M. Rotenberg, who is an attorney in the community (V. Bennett).

The committee led the initial meeting and began the work to create a collaborative chess governance organization for the D.C. area with the remaining 11 members.

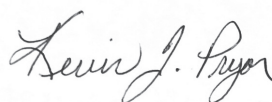
D.C. INTERIM BOARD ACTIONS

From the onset, the DCIB was comprised of members from active US Chess affiliates, chess parents, chess coaches, local players, and organizers. After our initial meeting, Marc Rotenberg came forward to assist with meeting facilitation. He is a well-recognized D.C. area chess person who has supported all affiliates and has worked to broker good relations between multiple groups. After eight sessions, they have put forward a well-detailed report of their activities and agreed to recommend the District of Columbia Chess Association with updated bylaws, a membership focus, and expanding their board with all DCIB members who stayed on and contributed during/through the conclusion of the project.

COMMITTEE CONCLUSION

The D.C. area chess environment has its share of complexities and both the committee and DCIB had to work through many challenges. The members of the interim board greatly appreciated having multiple current and former state chapter presidents providing credibility and wise counsel to the members of the interim board. As a committee, it is our opinion that the work and results of the DCIB represents the best solution for D.C. because they truly desire to represent the entire community. Still, they need time to stabilize and grow into operating as a state chapter, with the full support of the US Chess Board of Delegates. We support their decision to move forward with the DCCA as the new state chapter affiliate for Washington, D.C. and US Chess.

On behalf of the committee,



Kevin Pryor, Chair