

County & Municipal Committee Law

N.J. Public Laws 2009, Ch. 135

(bill S-930 of 2009)

Signed into law by Gov. Jon Corzine

This legislation AMENDED N.J. R.S. 19:5 (Title 19: County Political Committees)

INTRODUCTION: The manner in which political party committees operate is governed by LAW, under “Title 19” of the State’s statutes. While individual municipal political committees and county political committees can have their own Bylaws, THOSE BYLAWS MUST COMPLY WITH THE LAW. In many cases across New Jersey, this is not the case. Also in NJ, many political party committee chairman “run” their committees based more on local tradition than on what they are currently allowed to do. Therefore, it is a responsibility of EACH elected or appointed political party committee member to KNOW what the law is, so that past practices that violate the law can be discussed, the LAW referenced, and local practices changed to comply with the LAW. This document summarizes the law pertaining to municipal and county political committees. A complete copy of the law can be referenced at:

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2008/Bills/PL09/135_.PDF

or

<http://njleg.state.nj.us> – far-left column, then scroll far down to “Statutes”

OVERVIEW – State law grants special privileges and powers to political party committees, to nominate candidates, to influence candidate position on ballots, to raise and spend funds on elections. The law also defines how these committees should operate. While it gives options in some cases, in ALL cases, municipal and county operations must comply with the State Law.

1. Definitions

- a. [Geographical] Unit of Representation – Each county political party can choose how it will be structured. Most Republican organizations are based on the full county, full municipalities and full election districts within the municipality. Democrat organizations use a different scheme. We discuss the Republican structure in this document.
- b. Election/Appointment - When you are appointed or elected to the “county committee,” you simultaneously become a member of your “municipal [Republican/Democrat] committee.”ⁱ
- c. Term of Office - You “take office” at Noon on the Saturday following the election, or on June 9, 2012 for persons elected in the June 5, 2012 Primary Election.ⁱⁱ
- d. Organizational Meetings - Your municipal committee is required to reorganize immediately after the election, on June 11, 2012ⁱⁱⁱ. At that meeting, the members will elect a “municipal chairman.” Then, on June 12, 2012, all municipal committees will come together as the full “county committee” to reorganize and elect a “county chairman.”
- e. Chairperson – ANY member of the municipal committee may serve as chairman; the person elected as County Chairman must reside in the county, but need not be an elected member of a municipal political party. However, the County Chairman cannot vote unless he is an elected member of a municipal committee.

2. Membership –

- a. The LAW requires each voting district to be represented by one man and one woman – there is no option for two members of the same gender.

- b. You must LIVE IN the district you represent.^{iv}
 - c. When a member ceases to be a RESIDENT of the district from which elected, a vacancy exists.
 - d. All vacancies are filled for the unexpired term by the REMAINING MEMBERS of the committee – NOT by the chairman.
 - e. Vacancies must be promptly reported and Notarized to the County Clerk and County Committee Chairperson.
 - f. Appointments must be promptly reported and Certified to the County Clerk and County Committee Chairperson.
 - g. TERM: The term for which you serve is determined by the Bylaws of the full county committee, and is the same for all municipal committees within the county.
3. **Voting** – Anyone appointed or elected to the municipal or county committee cannot vote unless they shall have been appointed AT LEAST 7 calendar days prior to such vote, and their appointment must have been certified to the county chairman and Board of Elections.
 4. **Bylaws** – Your municipal committee may adopt its own Constitution and Bylaws, but they must comply with the restrictions of the LAW. The full County Committee must adopt its own Bylaws, but they also must comply with the law; an accurate and updated copy must be transmitted to the County Board of Elections for its public file and website. Upon your election, your chairman must give you a copy of the current Bylaws. Anyone may request a copy of the county bylaws.

Note: Model Bylaws for a Municipal Republican Committee are available.

ⁱ R.S. 19:5-2 or see P.L. 2009, Ch. 135, page 1

ⁱⁱ R.S. 19:5-3 or *ibid*

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*

^{iv} R.S. 19:5-3