

Candidate Statement, Yesenia Padilla

In over a decade of organizing on the Left in San Diego, I have never felt more inspired and galvanized than by the work DSA is doing, and the people doing it, in San Diego. I immediately jumped in, helping on the ad hoc steering committee, actively participating in various working groups, and creating working relationships with comrades throughout the DSA, and using my pre-existing working relationships to other organizations on the Left to bring DSA-San Diego into the greater Left Community. If elected as a member of the DSA-SD steering committee, I will throw the entirety of my drive, passion, and experience in to facilitating the strengthening and growth of our chapter.

I believe that in growing our membership, we should be actively recruiting membership from diverse communities. In order to facilitate this, I think one idea would be to develop a sponsorship trust, where members can donate memberships to a trust, so that anyone who would like to join but may not have funds for dues can still join and be an active member.

I would also like to see us develop the multi-tendency nature of the organization by creating local caucuses to house the different tendencies within our org, and aid with continuing political education beyond the “ABC’s of Socialism”, to allow our comrades to truly develop their praxis.

Our chapter is full of potential, I would be honored to serve DSA San Diego and help bring that potential to reality.

DSA San Diego Steering Committee Candidate Questionnaire, Yesenia Padilla

Democratic Socialists believe that both the economy and society should be run democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few. We are a political and activist organization, not a party; through campus and community-based chapters DSA members use a variety of tactics, from legislative to direct action, to fight for reforms that empower working people. Do you agree? If no, explain.

I absolutely agree with this statement. I think it's crucial for there to be "an orchestra of forces" creating both people power and electoral power to bring about lasting social change.

Will you have the time and energy to make a significant commitment to the Steering Committee given the other commitments in your life?

In over a decade of organizing on the Left in San Diego, I have never felt more inspired and galvanized than by the work DSA is doing, and by the people doing it, in particular in San Diego. I immediately jumped in, helping on the ad hoc steering committee, actively participating in various working groups, and creating working relationships with comrades throughout the DSA. If elected as a member of the DSA-SD steering committee, I will throw the entirety of my drive, passion, and experience in to facilitating the strengthening and growth of our chapter.

Why did you join DSA?

When I think back on why I chose to join DSA, there are many reasons, however, they all stem back to the way that, as an organization, DSA uses a variety of tactics and methods to move towards socialism. An effective move towards radical social change cannot neglect the need for electoral and policy changes, nor can it ignore the importance of building people power and alternate institutions. DSA does all of that, and from the perspective of a democratic, multi-tendency organization, which I think is crucial for a successful popular movement.

Our chapter in particular has so much promise: it's one of the larger border chapters, it's full of amazing people, of different political tendencies. It is so inspiring to work with people with such

What other organizations do you belong to or have belonged to that influence your identity as an activist/organizer? Do you currently hold office within any other organization(s)? If yes, which organization(s)?

I am a member of Democratic Autonomy Federation (DAF), and a founding member of Collective Resistance San Diego (CRSD), an alliance between several individuals and organizations on the left in San Diego. I believe that a successful leader has experience with the communities in which it hopes to organize, and that experience comes from engaging with other organizations. In the past, I've held office in DAF, as a DAF delegate for CRSD, and as chair of the internal structure committee, wherein we drafted the governing structure for the approval of the organizations in the alliance, as well as a member of the Communications Committee, and the legal committee. I still maintain strong relationships with both DAF, and all of the organizations in CRSD, and their affiliates, which I believe will be immensely useful as DSA grows, and hopes to do more in the greater San Diego area.

If elected to Steering Committee, what are some areas upon which you'd like to focus?

While my main focus will be to help facilitate the chapter's drafting and ratification of bylaws, there are a few areas with which I'd really like to help.

The first is through capacity building and member expansion. I am already working with Emily Ivanjack to develop our New Members working group, and we are researching and strategizing best practices to bring on new people, and to create space for new and old members alike to socialize. I believe that in growing our membership, we should be actively recruiting membership from diverse communities. In order to facilitate this, I think one idea would be to develop a sponsorship trust, where members can donate memberships to a trust, so that anyone who would like to join but may not have funds for dues can still join and be an active member.

I would also like to see us develop the multi-tendency nature of the organization by creating local caucuses to house the different tendencies within our org, and aid with continuing political education beyond the "ABC's of Socialism."

Finally, I would like to expand our role as allies to leftist organizations both in the US, and Mexico. As a border chapter, and given the spirit of internationalism displayed at convention, it is important for us intentionally develop a constellation of comrades for capacity building and resource-sharing.

What ideas do you have to ensure that Steering Committee decisions are made democratically?

I think it's crucial to the flourish of the org to cultivate a discursive and communicative space between leadership and the general membership. I believe that the Steering Committee should be in regular communication with all working groups, as well as the members of the organization at large. As the Steering Committee drafts bylaws, there should be ratification by the general body every step of the way. I believe that the best way to achieve this is by making sure to

reach every member multiple times to activate them. I believe that this can be facilitated by having active reminders through mass-texting, emailing and social media, as well as maintaining active and easily accessible calendar with information on meetings.