

37th District Meeting, July 13, 2026

The 1st Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00

The minutes of the June Endorsement Meeting were adopted as submitted.

We unanimously appointed 2 PCOs:

- Alice Rothchild • Precinct 37-1610
- Jeremy Bang • Acting PCO 37-1927 (This changes the appointment we made at the last meeting when we mistakenly appointed him to a precinct that already had a PCO.)

The Treasurer, Ingrid Clair, presented the report of our current income and balance.

Rachael Snell was nominated to be our female or non-binary representative to the King County Central Committee. She was elected by acclamation.

Brian Hardison presented his resolution “Making Our Message Clear”. (Appendix 1)
After discussion the resolution was passed 25 to 1.

Jamie Fackler and Lexy Salas presented the resolution “Ban of Ratio Utility Systems”. (Appendix 2). The resolution was discussed and passed without opposition.

Randy Grein updated us on the status of the effort to create a National Infrastructure Bank. nibcoalition.com. Volunteers are needed to help advance this effort.

Bob Rosenberger and Mary Williams reported on the State Convention.

Rachael Snell reported on the King County Central Committee meeting.

Alex Russell the Events Vice-Chair gave a recap on the 7/11 Happy Hour.
We have a table at the Othello Festival on 8/9 and people should sign up for a shift.
The Book Club will start in August and a message will go out next week.

Good of the Order

- Heather Barker came introduce herself and thank us for our endorsement <https://heatherbarkerforjudge.com>
- The County PCO meeting tomorrow, which is a good place to learn and be inspired.
- Sharon Tomiko Santos came to thank us for our endorsement.
- ditto Gabe Rothstein
- ditto Melissa Chaudry. She is being threatened and hounded for her candidacy.

Adjourned at 7:53

Appendix 1

Making Our Message Clear: A Resolution to Use Plain Language in 37th LD Communications

Why This Matters

Our democracy is being taken apart. Across the country, we see efforts to limit who can take part, who has a voice and who feels welcome in civic life. In this moment, our work matters even more. We need more people to take part, stay informed and help lead. People are more likely to join us when they understand how we work, how we make decisions, and how they can get involved. Our bylaws, endorsement materials, and official communications guide everything we do. They shape how we organize, how we build trust, and how we show up for our community. They should be easy to read and easy to use.

Right now, some of our materials are hard to understand. They use long sentences, formal vocabulary, and legal terms that many people do not use in daily life. This creates barriers at a time when we need to bring more people in. Plain language makes our writing clear and direct. It respects people's time and helps them find what they need, understand it, and act. Clear communication strengthens our ability to protect our community, defend our democracy, and build a future where everyone can take part.

Plain language helps everyone. It especially helps people who:

- have limited English proficiency
 - use screen readers or other assistive technology
 - are new to the Democratic Party
 - need quick, clear information when volunteering
- Clear writing supports our equity goals.

It removes barriers and invites more people into our work.

What We Will Do

The 37th Legislative District Democrats will use plain language in:

- our bylaws and standing rules
- our endorsement materials
- our website and official publications
- our communications with members, the media and the general public.

What We Mean by Plain Language

Plain language means writing that:

- states the purpose clearly
- centers the reader and their needs
- uses everyday words
- uses short sentences and paragraphs
- uses strong verbs in the active voice and personal pronouns
- uses headings and lists to guide the reader
- follows accepted plain language writing practices

How We Will Make This Happen

The Executive Board will:

1. direct the Bylaws and Rules Committee to review our bylaws and draft clearer wording
2. set a timeline to update key documents
3. instruct all committees to use plain language in new materials
4. share simple guidance or training for members who write on behalf of the organization

We will keep the meaning of our rules the same. We will only change how we write them so more people can understand them. Our Commitment Clear writing is a form of access. When people understand our work, they are more likely to take part, stay involved and lead. By using plain language, we open the door wider to our community

Appendix 2

Resolution Calling for the Ban of Ratio Utility Billing Systems (RUBS) (The final version changes the “43rd” references to “37th”)

WHEREAS, with increasing frequency, residential landlords and property owners in Seattle are recouping utility charges by billing tenants via ratio utility billing system (RUBS) for master metered or unmetered utility services, either themselves or through a third party agent, instead of including such costs within the monthly rent; and

WHEREAS, RUBS bills tenants for utilities based on an estimation of use via a formula determined by the landlord and is not based on tenants’ actual use 1; and

WHEREAS, under RUBS tenants often pay for utilities they did not use, including vacant units, building common areas, overheating radiators that tenants cannot control, communal trash with public access, water leaks or delayed maintenance in buildings causing inefficient utility use and no incentive for the landlord to maintain or repair utility infrastructure because tenants pay the cost via RUBS; and

WHEREAS, under RUBS there are no caps on how much of a landlord’s utility charges can be passed onto tenants, with some tenants in Seattle paying 4x more in utility costs, impeding tenants’ ability to plan and budget for the housing costs; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1271 in 2025 to limiting rent increases 2 but landlords are not ensuring that housing cost increases from RUBS are below the set rent cap limits; and

WHEREAS, landlords in Seattle are deliberately violating the City Code for Third Party Billing, are not providing transparency about how RUBS bills are calculated, and the City Hearing Examiner can provide no enforcement to ensure tenants are not being overcharged; and

WHEREAS, tenants on RUBS in Seattle have received water shutoff notices because the landlord did not pay the utility bill even though tenants are paying RUBS bills; and

WHEREAS, many jurisdictions are providing stronger tenant consumer protection for utility billing, with some restricting or prohibiting RUBS 3 , and many others (including most of Europe) allowing landlords to recover shared utility costs only through transparent and strictly regulated systems 4 that require clear allocation rules (often set by statute), itemized billing, document access, flat monthly fee with annual reconciliation, exclusion of vacant units and common areas, and other tenant protections; and

WHEREAS, when the City Council passed the Third Party Billing Ordinance 121320 5 / SMC 7.25 6 in November 3, 2003 they noted that they intend “to continue monitoring the impacts of billing of master metered or unmetered utility service, to consider the requirement of submetering and the banning of RUBS, and to review whether the provisions of this ordinance have provided a sufficient degree of consumer protection for tenants”.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the 37th LD Democrats supports the coalition of tenants who have been organizing around RUBS since May 2025 and endorse their campaign to advocate for fairer utility billing practices, housing affordability, and increased tenant protections; and

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that the 37th LD Democrats will share ways to get involved in the campaign and periodic updates on the campaign’s progress with its members; and BE IT

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that the 37th LD Democrats call on the City Council and the Mayor’s Office to support tenant-led ideas for reform, and replace the Third Party Billing Ordinance 121320 with legislation that provides stronger tenant consumer protection, either by requiring that all residential utility charges that are not individually submetered must be included in tenant rental rates, or by strictly regulating shared utility cost recovery with statutory allocation rules, itemized billing, document access, flat monthly fee with annual reconciliation, and exclusion of vacant units and common areas; and

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to other Seattle LDs to encourage them to also support the campaign as well as all Seattle City Council members and the Seattle Mayor’s office; and

BE IT THEREFORE FINALLY RESOLVED that the Secretary of the 37th LD Democrats report back on the response from the aforementioned recipients of this resolution at the 37th LD Democrats General Meeting immediately following its adoption.