

Labour Party Democracy Task Force

<http://labourdemocracy.wordpress.com>

Everyone in the labour movement agrees that the Labour Party should be made more democratic. Conference 2010 started a year-long review of policy-making, in which all the drastic changes introduced by Tony Blair in 1997 (“Partnership in Power”) should be up for examination. It is now clear that the scope of this review can cover not only policy-making but the election of the leader and other aspects of party structure.

Real democracy can’t happen without a living, democratic Party Conference. The Labour Party cannot be democratic unless it allows democratic rights and safeguards at least comparable to best practice in our affiliated trade unions. Our Task Force has been set up to campaign for that, and to push for a thorough review and an open debate.

Below we set out our main objectives. We will also circulate briefing papers and responses to the Party’s consultation document. We will supply speakers to all CLPs and trade union bodies wishing to organise discussion on questions of party democracy.

We invite sponsorship and donations from individuals and organisations in the labour movement who support our aims.

A number of rule-change proposals were submitted to Conference 2010 and, under the rules, are due to be debated at Conference 2011. We will press to make sure that these proposals are actually debated, not ruled out of order on artificial grounds as some rule-change proposals were in 2010, or sidelined on the grounds that one or another proposal from the platform supersedes them.

We want a real debate at Conference 2011, with all significant strands of Labour Party opinion able to get their proposals to the floor for discussion and decision.

Our objectives:

A real functioning democracy - “a living breathing party”

- Party & union members, through their CLPs & Unions, able to submit their policy proposals, have them considered, have them voted on & see the outcome
- Conference, sharing power equally between unions and constituency parties, as the ultimate decision-making body, able to amend policy statements or reject parts, debate an adequate range of motions on policy issues, organisation, finance and campaigning
- A rolling policy programme overseen by the directly elected NEC, approved by party conference, feeding into the manifesto
- The NPF must become democratic and inclusive, first identifying options, allowing time to digest proposals and consult, then making recommendations to conference, accompanied by any minority positions which attract 20% support
- The whole-hearted engagement in this process of (shadow) ministers and other elected representatives

We ask Labour and trade union activists who endorse the principles above to contact us and sponsor the campaign, and if they can to make a donation.

We also campaign for:

- A cleaned up party - which members are "proud to call their own"
- Party officials who respect members rights and observe civil service principles of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality
- Clear line of accountability of officials to NEC through the General Secretary
- a renewed right of members to select and reselect all candidates without interference by officials - an end to "selection" by parachute
- a charter of members' rights, together with a post of ombudsman and code of ethics including a whistleblowing policy
- a return to operating within the rule book.

- Check out our website: <http://labourdemocracy.wordpress.com>
- Use the materials there to inform motions to your union branch or committee, or CLP
- Invite a speaker to your union branch or committee, Trades Council, or CLP: contact us via the e-address or phone number below.
- Sponsor our campaign at <http://labourdemocracy.wordpress.com/about/> or by filling in and mailing the form below
- Send a donation to help us send out mailings, organise meetings, etc. Donate online at <http://labourdemocracy.wordpress.com/about/> or send a cheque payable to "CLPD" and marked "Democracy Task Force".
- Join our e-list by sending a blank email to democracytaskforce-subscribe@lists.mayfirst.org

Tear off and return this slip

[] Please phone me to arrange sending a Task Force speaker to my union branch or CLP

[] Please add my name to the list of sponsors of the Task Force

Name

Union/ LP position

Phone E-address

Address

.....

0207 219 1982

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