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### Democratic Farmer-Labor Party Of Minnesota

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committees in each house of Congress to provide technical assistance and financial support for congressional candidates. For the Democratic Party those committees are the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), which handles House elections, and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), which assists senatorial candidates. Membership on each committee is drawn from the party membership in the respective chamber, with the chair of the committee serving as a major party official in that chamber.

These committees originated in the era between the Civil War and World War I when political parties were the principal direct and indirect sources of campaign support; the DCCC was founded in 1882 and the DSCC in 1916. Campaign finance during this period was dominated by party committees, with local committees playing a much more significant role than in the 1980s. The congressional committees, which were and continue to be separate from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), were useful because they were removed from direct concern with presidential elections.

With the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act and its amendments in the 1970s, information about the activity of these campaign committees became more widely publicized as the quality of the information improved. Data detailing the funds raised and spent by the committees is periodically published by the Federal Election Commission. For the 1988 election, the DSCC contributed approximately \$400,000 to Democratic senatorial candidates and the DCCC contributed \$670,000 to House candidates. Overall, Democratic Senate candidates spent \$96.5 million in 1986, while Democratic House candidates spent a total of \$242.6 million. While these figures suggest that the committees do not play a significant part in congressional campaign finance, their roles have been critical in certain situations. And the congressional candidates who stand to gain by their activity have paid close attention to their actions. First, while direct contributions to campaigns may be relatively small, "indirect expenditures," such as providing research on incumbent Republicans, on the behalf of candidates are much larger. Second, these indirect expenditures tend to be used late in the campaign, providing a key boost to candidates close to election day. Third, while the committees may contribute small amounts overall, they may choose to disburse

their funds unevenly among candidates, thus helping a few campaigns significantly.

In the 1970s the Democratic committees were more likely to contribute funds to incumbent members of each chamber. In the 1980s, however, distributional strategies changed, so that candidates in open seat races and candidates in close races were more likely to be the beneficiaries of the committees' largess.

The future direction of the influence of these committees is open to speculation. With congressional campaigns growing increasingly expensive, the congressional campaign committees could become more important. Some believe committee prestige to have elevated Tony Coelho (Calif.) from the chair of the DCCC to the House Majority Leader's post in 1987 and to have elected George Mitchell (Me.) to the position of Senate Majority Leader in 1989, following Mitchell's service as DSCC chair between 1985 and 1987. However, individual members of both chambers have established political action committees as a way of channeling money to colleagues, circumventing traditional party channels and the congressional campaign committees.

*See also:* Tony Coelho, Democratic National Committee, Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 and Amendments, Federal Election Commission, George Mitchell

Charles Stewart III

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#### Democratic Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota

The two national parties, Democratic and Republican, were once viewed as uneasy federations of state-level parties. Each state-level component of a national party was seen as having its own unique history that made its leadership ideologically and organizationally different from—and potentially hostile to—the other 47 to 49 parties with which it was nomi-

nally affiliated. While this understanding is now passé (for a variety of reasons), the Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party's ideological and organizational distinctiveness after its establishment in 1944 demonstrates the plausibility of the earlier hypothesis. Indeed, Hubert Humphrey's 1948 civil rights speech at the Democratic convention—one which threatened to divide the southern parties from the national Democratic Party—is an event that seems to fit the model well.

The ideological distinctiveness of the DFL Party was partly evident in the policy and coalitional stances of its most famous leaders—Hubert Humphrey and his protégé, Walter Mondale. During their active political careers both men were—relative to other national Democratic politicians—strongly social Democratic politicians. Among Humphrey's last political acts was co-authorship of legislation calling for full employment; among Mondale's last political acts was securing a rare pre-convention endorsement by the AFL-CIO for the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination.

This social Democratic distinctiveness can be traced to the ideological and organizational consequences of the DFL Party's "founding." The Democratic Farmer-Labor Party is the only Democratic party in the Union whose name reflects a merger between a third party and the state-level affiliate of one of the two major national parties. The DFL Party's name results from the merger in 1944 of, on the one hand, a once very weak but increasingly powerful Democratic party and, on the other hand, a once very powerful but increasingly weak third party, the Farmer-Labor Party.

At the merger, the Democrats, in order to retain the loyalties of Farmer-Labor voters and activists, agreed to keep "Farmer-Labor" in the new party's name. The DFL Party was anchored, by choice, on the left of the ideological spectrum. This ideological positioning continued to shape the party's policy stances even after many Farmer-Labor activists, particularly those close to the Communist Party, were purged from the party during the internal split created by Henry Wallace's 1948 presidential campaign.

The DFL Party also inherited the Farmer-Labor Party's historic and unusually strong ties to the labor movement. The Farmer-Labor Party had initially been founded and financed in large part by trade unions, city central bodies, and the Minnesota State Federation of Labor.

Since its founding, the DFL Party has become increasingly like other state Democratic parties in all but name, and by now there are no Farmer-Laborites in the Minnesota electorate. Nevertheless, the DFL Party has not changed its name. Because the party's resources have been invested for several decades in advertising its unusual name, the party's leaders might face high exit costs from their electoral market if they wished to adapt to a regular name (i.e., the Democratic Party). The DFL Party's leaders probably will continue cherishing their unique linguistic link to Minnesota's political past.

*See also:* AFL-CIO COPE, Election of 1948, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, Henry Wallace

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#### Democratic National Committee

Formally created in 1848 by the Democratic National Convention "to promote the Democratic cause" between the quadrennial nominating gatherings and to prepare for the next convention. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) has existed continuously since that time, making it the country's oldest national party institution.

Like its counterpart, the Republican National Committee (established in 1856), the DNC for more than a century reflected the largely local and decentralized nature of American politics. The power to control internal party affairs, especially the nominating process, resided principally with state and local Democratic organizations. In this political environment, the national Democratic Party was an undisciplined collection of autonomous state and territorial parties that displayed little inclination to relinquish authority or power to a national organization. This arrangement prompted an apt description of national party committees by Cotter and Hennessy: "National Committees themselves are large groups of people, variously selected, representing different amounts and kinds of local political interests, who come together now and then to vote on matters of undifferentiated triviality or importance, about which they are largely uninformed and in which they are often uninterested."

During its first 100 or so years, the DNC was concerned with preparing for and managing the quadrennial presidential nominating convention and, at times, helping to conduct the