

South Orange County Young Democrats

Inaugural General Body Meeting — Minutes

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Location: Laguna Niguel, CA

Presiding: Jack Whitney, Acting President

(John Paculdo Koenigshofer presided over board elections)

Attendance: approximately 20 members and guests

Acting Officers Present: Jack Whitney (President), Fatima Muniz (Vice President), Jasel Steinmetz (Treasurer), Ben Bartlett (Secretary), John Paculdo Koenigshofer (Board Advisor).

7:14 PM — Call to Order

Acting President Jack Whitney called the meeting to order. He outlined the evening's agenda: bylaws ratification, board elections, an overview of the political landscape of South Orange County, campaign and volunteer opportunities, and an open discussion on outreach strategy.

7:15 PM — Ratification of Agenda

A motion to ratify the meeting agenda was moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote without opposition.

7:16 PM — Member Introductions

While a QR code linking to the bylaws was shared for member review, attendees introduced themselves in turn. The room included members from across South Orange County and guests representing the Orange County Young Democrats (OCYD), the Sunrise Movement, campaign staff from several congressional and local races, and the Saddleback College Democrats.

7:30 PM — Ratification of Bylaws

A motion to ratify the club's bylaws was entertained. During discussion, Sahand Cyrusian raised a concern regarding the geographic boundaries defined in Article II, Section 2, which draws the club's eastern boundary at California State Route 133 — effectively splitting the city of Irvine.

Amendment Motion (Sahand Cyrusian): Moved to amend Article II, Section 2 to remove the language "East of California State Route 133" and to add the cities of Irvine and Tustin to the club's boundaries. Seconded.

Discussion: Members debated whether to include Irvine. Proponents argued that the current boundary illogically splits Irvine, that Irvine shares South County infrastructure challenges (e.g., limited OCTA bus coverage south of the 55 freeway), and that Irvine is not currently represented by another Young Democrats chapter. Opponents noted that the club was formed specifically to address an organizing gap from Lake Forest south, and that OCYD already has strong coverage in Irvine and Newport Beach. Adam Tallabas, the immediate past OCYD Chair, recommended allowing the club to operate for several months before amending its boundaries.

Motion to Table (Jack Whitney): Moved to table the boundary discussion until the June general body meeting to allow time for the club to establish itself. Seconded.

Hand vote: 17 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention.

Motion to table carried.

Second Amendment Motion (Sahand Cyrusian): Moved to include the entirety of the city of Irvine (without Tustin) within the club's boundaries. No second was received; motion died.

Motion to Ratify Bylaws As Written: Moved and seconded.

Hand vote: 13 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention (Chair).

Bylaws ratified as written. The boundary discussion is formally on the agenda for the June general body meeting.

7:42 PM — Board Elections

Board Advisor John Paculdo Koenigshofer presided over elections, as all acting officers were candidates. All four positions were uncontested. Each candidate delivered a two-minute statement followed by a question-and-answer period.

- **President — Jack Whitney.** Drew on his experience witnessing martial law in South Korea to argue for building ground-level democratic organizing infrastructure. Set goals of membership growth and strong midterm election mobilization. In Q&A, confirmed the presidential term is one year and defined success as significant club growth and a strong field presence in the 2026 midterms.
- **Vice President — Fatima Muniz.** Cited the San Clemente City Council's approval of DHS surveillance cameras as a catalyst for the club. Called for greater transparency, accountability, and democratic representation in South Orange County.
- **Treasurer — Jasel Steinmetz.** Highlighted founding CUSD Against Racism, which gathered approximately 6,000 student signatures across five high schools. Referenced experience with grant applications and a legislative fellowship at the City of Oakland. Prioritized diverse funding sources and fiscal transparency.
- **Secretary — Ben Bartlett.** Emphasized making meetings community-oriented rather than purely procedural. Committed to accurate minutes, timely communications, and collaborative social media. Noted ability to recruit Mike Levin field interns from the southern Orange County area.

As all positions were uncontested, a motion was made and seconded to elect all four candidates as a slate.

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor.

All four candidates elected. The South Orange County Young Democrats is officially chartered.

7:57 PM — Post-Election Business

- Brandon Thede expressed interest in serving as an appointed media coordinator. The board will establish a formal application process for appointed (non-voting) board positions.
- Members requested that meeting agendas be distributed in advance of future meetings. The board committed to doing so.
- The endorsement process was clarified: a three-fifths (60%) vote of voting members present is required to endorse, and a candidate's race must intersect with the club's boundaries.

7:59 PM — State of Play: South Orange County

President Whitney presented an overview of the club's political landscape:

- The region voted Republican in 2024 and for Joe Biden in 2020. The composite partisan breakdown across recent statewide races is approximately 51% Republican / 47% Democrat — a purple, competitive area.
- Overlapping congressional districts: CA-40, CA-47 (Rep. Dave Min, D), and CA-49 (Rep. Mike Levin, D). Following the most recent redistricting, CA-40 features two Republican incumbents (Reps. Ken Calvert and Young Kim) drawn into the same district and running against each other.
- Most overlapping state assembly and senate districts are currently Republican-held.

8:01 PM — Campaign & Volunteer Opportunities

The following were presented as informational items, **not constituting official club endorsements**:

- **Mike Levin Field Internship** — Rolling applications; office in Carlsbad. Ben distributed flyers with a QR code to apply.
- **Esther Kim Varet for Congress (CA-40)** — Hiring paid canvassers. Contact Josh or Jack for details.
- **Jesse Lopez (AD-68)** — Paid canvasser and phone banker positions available.

8:03 PM — Outreach & Growth Discussion

Members contributed ideas for growing the club:

- **Social events at breweries and restaurants.** Adam shared that OCYD grew significantly by hosting casual watch parties and social outings, posting photos on social media to attract new members organically.
- **Canvass-launch recruiting.** Approach young people at campaign canvassing events and direct them to the club's Instagram.
- **Traditional Democratic club liaison.** Send representatives to traditional Democratic club meetings in the area, which tend to skew older, to recruit younger attendees who may feel out of place.

- **High school teacher outreach.** Share internship opportunities and club information through teachers who connect with students.
- **College campus presence.** Post flyers at Saddleback College and other local campuses.
- Young professional networks, club merchandise, and word-of-mouth were also discussed.
- **Online accessibility.** Members emphasized that meeting times and locations should be clearly posted online, not gated behind direct messages.

On the question of hybrid meetings, John Koenigshofer advised that hybrid formats are difficult for Young Democrats chapters. He recommended either fully in-person or fully virtual meetings, with Zoom reserved for remote guest speakers or candidates seeking endorsement. A member also raised the concern that open public events can attract bad-faith attendees, underscoring the eventual need for a sergeant-at-arms.

8:11 PM — Adjournment

President Whitney adjourned the meeting. Members were encouraged to follow the club on Instagram (@southocyoungdems), take photos with fellow attendees, and share on social media.

Minutes prepared by Ben Bartlett, Secretary