

UPDATES ON THE 2020 YOUNG DEMOCRATS OF GEORGIA CONVENTION

Report as of March 12, 2020 Regarding the COVID-19 aka Coronavirus.



Original Plan

Our 2020 Convention was originally planned for Friday March 20th- Sunday March 22nd on the University of Georgia campus in Athens, Georgia.

The weekend included a Friday night welcome reception at Hendershots in Downtown Athens 7pm-9pm.

Saturday's agenda included educational and interactive breakout sessions, caucus meetings, committee meetings, and a special fundraising luncheon with keynote speakers.

Sunday's agenda included more breakout sessions and focused on the general session where a new Board of Directors would be elected.



Concerns

As we approach convention, concerns over public health have spiked. The convention was scheduled the weekend before our Presidential Preference Primary with a goal of increasing interest in political youth engagement and fundraising.

Colleges and local school systems across the country have begun to take measures by closing campuses and moving classes to online. Traditionally, our conference is the largest physical gathering of Young Democrats every year. Health professionals are now asking everyone to practice social distancing by avoiding large crowds and public places.



COVID-19 aka Coronavirus

You've probably heard of COVID-19 also known as Coronavirus. Here's what you may not know. COVID-19 is a novel (or new) coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus.^[1] How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary... The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community.^[2] On March 11th, 2020 the World Health Organization publicly classified the issue as a pandemic.^[3]



WHO Director's Remarks

The World Health Organization's Director said it best.

“This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector... Let me summarize it in four key areas. First, prepare and be ready. Second, detect, protect and treat. Third, reduce transmission. Fourth, innovate and learn. I remind all countries that we are calling on you to activate and scale up your emergency response mechanisms; Communicate with your people about the risks and how they can protect themselves – this is everybody's business... Prevention. Preparedness. Public health. Political leadership. And most of all, people. We're in this together, to do the right things with calm and protect the citizens of the world. It's doable. I thank you.” ¹³¹



SO What About Convention?!

The vast majority of our members and attendees would likely be able to attend the convention without any issues. However, The Young Democrats of Georgia is heeding the advice of public health officials and will be moving our convention to an online event. This move is in an effort to support public health efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 in order to help healthcare workers manage the influx of cases and create a more inclusive convention for all of our members regardless of their personal health. The Young Democrats of Georgia Board of Directors is working diligently to transform this conference from an incredible in person experience to an unforgettable virtual one.



And YDG Elections?!

This move requires lots of time, effort, and coordination as we work with the venue, sponsors, and speakers to create an entirely new and fulfilling convention experience. Elections will still take place for all elected leadership positions in the High School Democrats of Georgia, College Democrats of Georgia, all Young Democrats of Georgia Caucuses, and all Board of Directors positions for the Young Democrats of Georgia excluding the President as outlined in the bylaws. ^[4] We are working to find a solution so voting may take place in a secure manner in accordance with our bylaws.



Is the Schedule the Same?

It will be nearly impossible to put all the working pieces of an entirely virtual convention together to the standards of our organization by the originally planned dates of March 20-22. According to our bylaws, 45 days notice must be given before convention. If we move convention according to our bylaws, that would mean convention could occur no earlier than the last weekend of April.

The Board of Directors is reviewing all of our options and a final decision for the new date for the YDG 2020 Convention will be voted upon during the Monday, March 16th Executive Committee Call. A poll will be shared in the Facebook event^[5], in our Slack workspace^[6], and via email^[7] to all of our members to hear their feedback on the new date. Please participate.



Is the Schedule the Same?

We will be rescheduling for the earliest possible date. The bylaws will be suspended and the date will be prior to the 45 day notice due to the extenuating circumstances in the case that the YDG Executive Committee votes on such a date. All efforts to communicate the new date and how to attend the virtual convention will be made to all YDG members.



Should I Be Scared?

This is a serious global situation. Please remain vigilant and compassionate.

You should not be scared. At this time, the risk of contracting COVID-19 is limited in the state of Georgia.^[8] Together, we can slow the spread of this viral disease. Please inform your family and friends of best practices suggested by the CDC found [here](#).



So What Now?

Call your local, state, and national elected officials to ask what they are doing to help constituents access medical care and make smart decisions regarding COVID-19.

Organize a virtual phone or text bank with your local chapter and your friends to GOTV for the March 24th Presidential Primary and May 19th Georgia Primary.

Encourage everyone you know to request an absentee ballot so they can avoid crowded polling centers.



Sources

[1]https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#anchor_1580079137454

[2]<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

[3]<https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19--11-march-2020>

[4]https://docs.google.com/document/d/196T3h7JipVWI04_D_-DjVmhDCH6_BbseEHSoKFxDcNA/edit?usp=sharing

[5]<https://www.facebook.com/events/189933652200940/>

[6]https://join.slack.com/t/georgiayds/shared_invite/zt-9avaxtk0-FzzwzDzQcA2f6VE4TQCwUg

[7]<https://mailchi.mp/georgiayds/9dwleals8k>

[8]https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fprevention-treatment.html





Young Democrats of Georgia