



KYD STATEMENT ON THE ENDORSEMENT OF OSCAR IRENIA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[TUESDAY, JULY 21ST, 2020] In 2020, the Kansas Young Democrats have implemented an endorsement system that has never been utilized before. Prior to 2020, Kansas Young Democrats would only endorse Young Dems, or Democrats who are near YD status, this year we have opted to change that policy so that in the General election we will endorse Democrats of all ages, but in Primaries we will prioritize electing YDs. Alongside that, we have a multistep process that engages all of our chapter Presidents, from across the state, to analyze and deliberate on every candidate that potentially could receive our endorsement.

First, we sent out a Candidate Questionnaire to every Democratic candidate of whom KYD had contact information. This form permitted said candidates to input information that was crucial in our assessment of whether or not to endorse. The Candidate Questionnaire was advertised for over 30 days. In addition, we promoted a secondary form so that candidates who had not been previously contacted had the opportunity to request the initial questionnaire. Second, the Executive Board looked through these Questionnaire responses and created Candidate Summaries based on them and third-party data we acquired from multiple sources on the elections themselves. Third, the Executive Board deliberated on each Young Democratic Primary, and then sent a list of recommended endorsements to our State Committee. Finally, our State Committee convened and we had individual debates on each candidate which ended with a 2/3rds majority vote to endorse the candidate.

In years past, a select few KYD Executive Officers would decide endorsements for the entirety of the organization, in large part without much outside opinion involved in these discussions. This year, KYD ensured that our State Committee, alongside our Executive Board, was involved in the process and had a voice on who to endorse. In 2020, KYD is raising thousands of dollars and utilizing our expansive network to help our endorsements win their election, the notion that our endorsement is irrelevant is belittling and harmful to the young democratic movement we are building.

Last night one of our endorsements was critiqued on social media in ways that KYD strongly condemns. For our Democratic peers who are outraged by this endorsement, we encourage you to contextualize the situation.

Our endorsement of Oscar Irenia, candidate in HD 32, was a unanimous decision by our State Committee which represents over 25 Young Democratic chapters throughout the state. The KYD State Committee is primarily made up of democratically-elected representatives from each local chapter, along with elected leaders at the statewide level. Oscar is a young Hispanic male in a district that is 59.9% Hispanic and over 62% of the district is below the age of 30. This is a district that went +46.9% for Clinton in 2016 and +59.6% for Kelly in 2018. HD 32 is one of the most Democratic districts, if not the most, in the state of Kansas. A young Hispanic representative is needed in this district. Part of KYDs mission is to elect Young Democrats in areas where representation is needed, this is why we endorsed Oscar.

Our endorsement is independent from the Kansas Democratic Party. We strongly recommend that in the future, if there are concerns about an endorsement to reach out to us directly. If anyone would like to contact our President, Ryan Reza, his number is 785-431-3625 and his email is ryanreza12@gmail.com

Signed,

Kansas Young Democrats Executive Board

