

PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENT FORM

Proposed Amendment Topic: Member Petition Process

CHECK ONE: Revision of an existing Article

SUBMITTED BY (CHECK ONE):

NASW National/Chapter Executive Director

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION:

NAME: Anne Camper

EMAIL ADDRESS: Acamper.nasw@socialworkers.org

Article XI.B.

B. Special Meeting

Special meetings of the members of the Association may be called by the NASW Board of Directors or the Executive Committee and shall be called by the Secretary on written request by ~~500 members~~ three percent (3%) of the voting members of record of the Association, provided that among those members are no less than ~~25-100 members~~ from each region of the Association. Such written request shall be compiled and submitted in accordance with any applicable petition procedures that may be approved by the NASW Board of Directors, such procedures to include a process to determine the number of voting members of record. Such special meetings shall be held on such dates and at such times and places as shall be specified in the respective notices thereof.

Article IV.B.3.b.

3. Matters shall be brought to the attention of the Delegate Assembly....

b. By petition filed with the NASW Board of Directors by ~~500 members~~ three percent (3%) of the voting members of record of the Association in good standing from at least five chapters. Such written request shall be compiled and submitted in accordance with any applicable petition procedures that may be approved by the NASW Board of Directors, such procedures to include a process to determine the number of voting members of record.

Article VIII.B.2.f.

2. Duties. The duties of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification shall be:....

f. To receive nominations by petition: Within 30 days following the announcement of the candidates for a regular election, petitions that have signatures of the number of voting members of record from regions as designated below may be submitted in writing to the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification. Such written request shall be compiled and submitted in accordance with any applicable petition procedures that may be approved by the NASW Board of Directors, such procedures to include a process to determine the number of

voting members of record. When nominations have been made by petition, the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification shall recertify the amended ballot to the Secretary of the Association:

SUPPORT STATEMENT (UP TO TWO PAGES, DOUBLE-SPACED)

The creation of clear, written procedures will reduce the need for ad hoc decisions and result in a more transparent and predictable petition process in the future.

The petition process to call a Special Meeting of Members was used for the first time this past year. That experience revealed various flaws and ambiguities that made the process more difficult and less effective for the petitioning members and NASW staff alike.

The proposed amendments will enable the Board to approve procedures as needed. If future experience with the petition process reveals additional ambiguities or difficulties, the procedures could be easily changed without additional bylaws amendments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION, DATA, ETC. AND APPROPRIATE REFERENCES (UP TO ONE PAGE, DOUBLE-SPACED).

ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF PROJECTED FINANCIAL OR OTHER EFFECT, IF KNOWN.

Organizations or governmental units with experience in the petition process generally use defined procedures to increase certainty and improve efficiency and effectiveness. In this case, procedures can be drafted with the advantage of hindsight, based on recent experience with the petition for a Special Meeting of Members. For example, if a format for member signatures had been specified, it would have been more efficient for staff to verify the signatures and perhaps fewer would have been rejected due to inability to identify the signer as a member. Similarly, if the Association had reviewed the language of the petition before signatures were gathered, it would have been possible to advise the petitioners in advance that the language would not accomplish their aim of holding a binding vote of the members on implementation of the Modernization Initiative.

The number of signatures required for a petition is typically stated as a percentage of eligible voters, rather than a fixed number that quickly becomes outdated when the size of the organization or unit changes. A three to five percent threshold is common; for example, the Standards for NASW Chapter Nominations and Elections require petition by at least five percent of a unit's members in order to add a candidate's name to the ballot.

Out of pocket costs will be minimal or non-existent. "Soft" savings should include staff time to verify and administer petitions, and the time of petitioners and other members in more efficiently completing petitions that better effectuate their intent.