

14-1 Proposed Bylaw Amendment

Proposal to amend Article V, Section 2, Number and Qualifications.

Description of Proposal:

In the past there was an informal policy that to be elected or appointed to the National Board of Directors, a member should be a member in good standing for at least one year. Unfortunately, this policy, since it was informal, slipped away and opened the door for the possibility of other problems.

Summary of Effect:

Since candidates for an elected seat must post their qualifications before the entire body of veteran members, we believe there is less of a chance of an error being made. On the other hand, since the qualifications of an appointed member would be reviewed only by the president and other board members, a greater opportunity exists for an error to be made.

In both cases, there would be opportunities for us to learn more about the candidates and likewise, an opportunity for them to learn more about Veterans For Peace.

To amend Article V Section 2 Number and Qualifications:

Section 2. Number and Qualifications.

The Board of Directors will consist of at least thirteen (13) Directors. (Amended) The Board of Directors may change the size of the Board of Directors, subject to approval at the next Annual Convention. Directors must be Full Members of VFP at the time of nomination and through their term of office.

Any candidate, in order to run for an open seat on the National Board of Directors, must be a member of Veterans For Peace in good standing for at least ONE YEAR before filing to run for that open seat.

In order to be eligible to be appointed in order to fill a vacancy caused by a board member leaving the board, a member must be a member of Veterans For Peace in good standing for a minimum of TWO YEARS.

*These changes will not apply to anyone currently sitting on the National Board of Directors.

Board vote: Aye 6 Nay 6

Convention vote: Aye 25 Nay 24

Board rationale: While this amendment has a reasonable basis, it would also create unnecessary obstacles to our efforts to diversify and sustain, VFP.

Pro Statement:

Several points why Veterans For Peace should adopt the proposal to have a one year membership in good standing before one can be elected or appointed to the VFP National Board of Directors.

1. By requiring a one year membership, the member has gotten to know and understand the organization before they have to make decisions about the organization.
2. During the one year membership, the board candidate will have a chance to prove their sincerity to our mission statement.
3. Finally, the one year membership requirement will give the general membership of VFP an opportunity to know the candidate in question and their ability to serve VFP and its members

In conclusion, we hope the member of Veterans For Peace will take our proposal seriously for the good of our organization.

Kenneth Dalton, Chapter 21 North Jersey, njvfpken22@aim.com

Con Statement:

Proposed Bylaws Amendment 14-1 would do almost irreparable harm to current efforts to bring more diversity to Veterans For Peace.

Our membership is aging, and in sore need of younger veterans, female veterans, and veterans of color. We had a major success this summer when we brought 50 such veterans (15% of attendance) to our convention in Asheville. We want to build upon that success.

We must continue a proactive effort to recruit these veterans to VFP (and VFP leadership)!

The amendment is suspect as it comes on the heels of 2 recent appointments to the board of women veterans of color. These women are the only women veterans and veterans of color on the board. It appears that some people are too comfortable with our limited demographic.

This amendment, if passed, would keep Iraq Veterans Against the War members who have been associated with VFP for years from being able to run for the board because they may not have kept up their membership. This amendment will create unnecessary obstacles to our efforts to diversify, and sustain, VFP.

Patrick McCann, Chapter 16 Washing DC, unityact2@aol.com

14-2 Proposed Bylaw Amendment

Proposal to amend Article X, Section 4, Resolutions

Description of Proposal:

To advance the ability of The Membership to exercise its voice in the direction of the organization: ie to increase Democracy within VFP

To provide teeth to resolutions so that they are carried out; up until now resolutions that ask for an action to be carried out do not obligate the Board to take the indicated action. The most recent example is the fate of the Obama Impeachment resolution passed at the 2011 convention. The Board didn't want to carry it out and this inaction caused great consternation in those who worked to get it passed for 3 years. They then expressed these feelings to the Board who then became angry which produced bad feelings on both sides. This cannot be allowed to occur again. This organization supports Democracy and therefore must act democratically.

Summary of Effect:

The resolutions process in its current form is a tedious time consuming process which basically is a waste of time because the resolutions have no teeth and are just recorded without any further action. The time could be better spent doing other things such as listening to the music of Watermelon Slim which we were unable to do last year because the resolutions took up the entire afternoon. Spending this time must produce something other than making people feel good because VFP makes some declaration (that has no teeth).

To amend Article X Section 4 Resolutions:

a) The Board of Directors will appoint a resolutions committee whose responsibility it will be to receive and screen all resolutions submitted for consideration at the annual meeting. It will be the responsibility of that committee to establish and publish appropriate rules, procedures and deadlines for this process. Such Rules will include provisions for bringing resolutions after the deadline. All decisions of this committee will be subject to approval by the board of directors. **forwarded to the Board of Directors for inclusion in the Agenda**

(b) Once a resolution has been adopted it defines ~~an intent of the organization until it is countermanded by the body or until world events render it irrelevant. For this reason, a~~ **Command Prompt of the Membership to the Board of Directors to execute the course of action delineated by the resolution within 60 days of adoption of the resolution.** A comprehensive list will be maintained of all resolutions which have been adopted. Any resolutions which are submitted for consideration will be compared with that list as a means of eliminating redundancy.

(c) All resolutions submitted by the deadline shall require a majority vote for approval. Resolutions submitted after the deadline require a two-thirds majority for approval. In no case will a resolution be presented after the Annual Convention.

(d) Associate Members shall have the right to submit resolutions for consideration and vote by Full Members.

Board vote: Unanimous Nay

Convention vote: Aye 8 Nay 45

Board rationale: Directors bear the legal and moral responsibility for the decisions and actions of the organization. Therefore it is inappropriate for the Directors to be subject to a “Command Prompt” from any source.

Pro Statement:

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Submitted by Bill Warrick, 014 - Gainesville, FL, asavetmd@gmail.com

Con Statement:

Article V Section 1 of the VFP By-Laws states: "The management of VFP shall be by and through the Board of Directors." The membership elects the Board of Directors and thus, in effect, charges the Directors to exercise their best judgment in managing the organization. If Directors are not responsive to the membership at large, they can be removed at the next election. However, while serving, Directors bear the legal and moral responsibility for the decisions and actions of the organization. Therefore it is inappropriate for the Directors to be subject to a “Command Prompt” from any source.

Submitted by Ken Mayers, 055 - Santa Fe, NM - Joan Duffy, kenmayers@vfp-santafe.org

14-3 Proposed Bylaw Amendment

Proposal to amend Article VI, Section 1, Officers

Description of Proposal:

I propose that the lined through words be changed to read “and shall be elected by the general membership by vote each year.” My rationale is that in Miami the vote was taken to have direct democracy so that resolutions and by-law changes would come before the general membership for vote. The Board of Directors and the members at the business meeting at all future conventions would have advisory authority only. My by-law recommendation simply completes the intent of what transpired in Miami at the convention in 2012.

Summary of Effect:

The officers of the Veterans For Peace National Board will be determined by a direct vote.

To amend Article VI Section 1 Officers:

The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer who must be members of and ~~shall be elected by the Board of Directors~~. They shall hold office for a term of one (01) year and until their successor is elected.

Board vote: Aye 1 Nay 11

Convention vote: Aye 3 Nay 50

Board rationale: Officers are selected every year by Board members who work closely with them, and are in the best position to assess their talents and leadership qualities.

Pro Statement:

I have recommended a by-law change which would permit the general membership to vote for the president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary every three years. This complies with the terms given Board of Directors when they are elected by the membership each year. The recommendation is made to simply finish the business of providing direct democracy to work for the general welfare of the entire organization. In August, 2012 in Miami, Florida by-law changes, resolutions and elections of the Board of Directors were turned over to the general membership to be voted on to make Veterans For Peace a more democratic organization.

As it stands presently, the general membership votes for the Board of Directors and the BoD decides who will lead the organization as president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. However, in fact about 40% of the current Board was appointed with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors and so the membership had little to do with who leads the organization in some respects.

I have heard it said that this idea is a bad one because the BoD has more knowledge of the capabilities of their fellow Board members and work well together and therefore they are more able to choose the organization's leadership wisely. I could debate this probably, but rather I believe this is a form of representative democracy which does not serve the organization well in general. In some respects it could be considered self-serving or at the least condescending. The Board of Directors voted unanimously, I think, to say no to my proposal and the attendees who were present when the idea was shared with them also voted "No". However, there were only a handful of members present when this came up in the business meeting.

In summation, I trust the general membership to elect our leadership directly and not to have leadership determined by 13 people, some of whom were appointed, not elected. If you, the readers, agree with me, the mechanics for making this change should not be a problem. In order to provide continuity, two of the offices could be voted on in the year 2015 and the other two in the year 2016. I recommend that you adopt this by-law change to fulfill what started in Miami.

Submitted by John Spitzberg, Chapter 99 Asheville, NC jspitzb227@aol.com

Con Statement:

The board overwhelmingly opposed this bylaw change at the VFP convention in Asheville. To begin, it is impractical. It requires 2 general membership elections, for board seats, and for Executive Committee (ExCom) members. Losing candidates for top leadership positions would become unable to serve (and lead) on the Board of Directors.

The membership elects the board of directors, each of whom have demonstrated leadership. By directly electing the Board, VFP members select the pool from which the ExCom is chosen. Officers are selected every year by Board members who work closely with them, and are in the best position to assess their talents and leadership qualities.

VFP strives to be both democratic and non-hierarchical; VFP offices should not become coveted positions. Direct election of officers - president, vice president, treasurer and secretary - would transform the VFP Convention into a candidates' competition, an unfortunate distraction