

Specific Language, with Explanations – WILPF US Bylaws Amendments on the 2019 Ballot
(Web location of the WILPF US Bylaws: <https://wilpfus.org/about/wilpf-us-section-bylaws>)

In the last ten years, the size, staffing, and capacity of WILPF US have changed considerably. These proposed Bylaws amendments address just a few of the most pressing and substantial changes currently needed. Some needed amendments will take more time to work out what change is needed to correct them. Additionally, we would like to have a national discussion of some possible changes

For example, we *do* need Bylaws amendments related to the former position of International Board member from the US Section. (That position no longer exists, due to the August 2018 changes in the WILPF International Constitution.) So we'll work out how to change IV.A.3., which designates the "US Member of the International Board (IB)" as an *ex officio* member of the WILPF US Board.

The national Board strongly recommends that members vote in favor of the six changes, shown here in approximate order of importance. If you have comments or questions – and/or if you would like to volunteer to help the Bylaws Committee – email info@WILPFUS.org or call 617-266-0999.

1. National WILPF decision making

Consensus was widely used for decision making among civil disobedience and other activist groups in the 1980s and 90s, as part of "feminist process". Subsequently, WILPF US embraced consensus in its 1996 Bylaws. However, consensus decision often requires lengthy discussion, in order to generate new possible solutions and to explore them. Even when the Board was still meeting regularly in person, with the limited meeting time available, using consensus led to severe limitations in making decisions. Additionally, Board meetings have now shifted from in-person to conference calls, which further limits the circumstances conducive to making decisions using consensus.

In a number of situations, the Board had been unable find a way to resolve the concerns that led to "blocks" of a decision, so no decision could be made.

For the last few years the national Board has experimented with making decisions by majority vote. The Board has found that a majority vote seems to produce reasonable decisions, and decisions allow the organization to function. This amendment is presented now to the members to acknowledge, in our Bylaws, the experience of both last year's Board and this year's Board.

This amendment would change **section IV.B.4.**, to add (or delete – as shown by "strike-through" text, like ~~this~~) the underlined words:

4. Decision Making:

a. Other than in electing or appointing positions and in endorsing International office candidates, the National Board and its standing committees shall make decisions by consensus majority vote.

~~b. It is the responsibility of the Board President(s) to see that consensus guidelines and training are provided to each Board at the beginning of its term.~~

~~c. On the Board, only members of the Board may participate in the consensus process. On standing committees, only members of the committee may participate in the consensus process.~~

2. Scheduling of national WILPF congresses

Normally, our national WILPF Congresses take place every three years. Additionally, those congresses had previously been hosted by one or more WILPF branches, with assistance from national

WILPF. Unfortunately, due to changes in the time availability of branch members, no branches were in a position to host a 2020 Congress. With what are expected to be milestone elections in 2020 – at both local and national levels, the Board decided to postpone the national Congress to 2021. This decision was based on both a realistic assessment of national WILPF capacity and the likely personal and financial involvement of many WILPFers in ballot campaigns.

This amendment would change the language in **III.E.**, to allow WILPF US Congresses scheduling to be slightly flexible, by adding (or deleting) the underlined words:

E. The National Board shall call a National Congress every three years and, except, under special circumstances, the board may delay the congress by no more than one year. If the circumstances cause the Board to go off the regular schedule, the board will return to the schedule at the earliest opportunity.

The Board shall decide the dates and place. Any member of the US Section may attend and participate in decisions. Fifty members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any duly called national membership meeting of the US Section, of which the National Congress is one.

3. WILPF US membership requirement to apply for Board candidacy or appointments

To qualify for running to be a board member (or to be appointed to fill a board opening), a US WILPF member must have a certain number of months of membership. However, many of our members have lapses in their membership, and such lapses have sometimes prevented otherwise well qualified candidates from running. This proposed change *doesn't* change the currently required 24 months of membership, but it increases the period of time within which one may have established those membership months.

This amendment would change the language in **section V.A.1.** by adding the underlined words:

1. Qualification for Board Membership.

A) To serve on the Board a WILPF US member must be a current member and must have been a member for at least twenty-four months out of the prior thirty months.

B) Additionally, a former WILPF staff member is not eligible to serve on the Board until twelve months after leaving WILPF employment.

4. Nominating Committee procedures

The national Nominating Committee *does* seek to recruit Board applicants and, subsequently, contacts all applicants to review the responsibilities of the Board position and to assist the applicants. However, the Nominating Committee *has not* – for many years now – made recommendations or sought to agree on such recommendations.

This amendment would change the language in **section IV.F.** by deleting the underlined words:

F. The Nominating Committee shall recruit potential Board members and emerging leaders on an ongoing basis using all organizational communication tools available as well as word of mouth referral, with a commitment to maintaining a racial, geographic and age balance among the Board. The Nominating Committee will ask a potential Board member to submit an application and references in a timely manner. A-

~~Nominating Committee member will contact the member in a timely manner and, if interested, will set up an interview. This process will be followed until the Nominating Committee members agree on the recommendation.~~

5. Personnel Committee changes

WILPF US no longer has any full-time staff. Future changes in this section are likely, as our national organization determines appropriate ways to work with our part-time independent consultants. This current amendment proposal seeks to make our Bylaws more accurate.

This amendment would change the language in **section VI.B.4.** by deleting the underlined words:

4. PERSONNEL: The Personnel Committee has responsibility for ensuring that all personnel policies are implemented, particularly in the areas of staff evaluations ~~and career development~~, and for making recommendations regarding personnel issues, including revisions of the personnel policies, as needed to either the Finance or Steering Committees. It is composed of the Personnel Committee Chair, ~~director of operations (or staff person with similar duties), a representative appointed by staff~~ and members appointed by the Board. ~~in consultation with staff members~~

6. Board terms and election of President.

The term for board positions is, generally, three years; however, that is not stated in the appropriate Bylaws section. Additionally, in the same section is obsolete language – from the time when the President was appointed by the Board. This proposed amendment makes three changes:

- a. states the length of board term (no change, except board terms were altered for one election, in 2014),
- b. creates a new section number to address term limits,
- c. and corrects the above-mentioned oversight, from when a prior amendment established the current practice of *election by the general membership* of the President. (The new language uses the election language, while still maintaining the (old) “Board appoint” language, to allow Board action in the event of a mid-term vacancy in the Presidency.)

This amendment would change the language in **section V.D.** by adding the underlined words:

3. After 2014 (see V.3.a. and b.), all other Board positions have three-year terms.

4. A board members may be elected or appointed to the National Board for not more than six consecutive years, except that the membership may elect, and (in the event of a vacancy) the Board may appoint, a National Board President to serve a third Board term. A Board President who has served only one term in that office is, in all cases, eligible for a second term.