



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
2022-2023 CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS PROGRAM ACTION PLAN**

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THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS PROGRAM

The Constitution & Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures at all levels. Constitution & Bylaws are the basis for governance of your department, district, and unit. Preparing and adhering to updated Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules will ensure a more successful organizational process and provide the structures to follow at all levels of our organization.

This year the Department of Florida Constitution and Bylaws Committee will be focusing on helping members understand the proper way to amend their governing documents. Department of Florida will no longer approve bylaws however they still need to be submitted to Department Headquarters to be on file and posted on the Department of Florida website.

FLORIDA CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS ACTIVITY

What can you do? The following is provided as a guideline to help facilitate reviews of your current Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. Please remember that Department, District, and Unit Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules, cannot conflict with national governing documents

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is encouraging all members and units to become more aware and involved in the process and items necessary to assure their governing documents are in compliance with critical items. We encourage units to utilize the easy-to-use amendment document when amending their governing documents. Every member should understand the process to amend the governing documents.

We are asking members to acquire the current 2022 version of the Department of Florida Constitution and Bylaws and ALA National Constitution and Bylaws and read both documents.

FLORIDA CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS ACTIVITY...CONT'D

We will have a challenge to our units to take their acquired C&B documents, take photos of unit members reading in a fun and colorful way and send committee their photos.

Units can also Plan a parliamentary procedure seminar at a unit and district function. The following is provided as a guideline to help facilitate reviews of your current Constitution, Bylaws and Standing

Rules.

Guidelines for District and Units

A. Constitution & Bylaws:

- are the foundation of the organization
- contain the most essential provisions relating to the organization, its name, purpose, membership, officers, meetings, governing board, committees, parliamentary authority and amendments to prescribe structure changes
- are the foundation of the organization
 - should be reviewed, but not changed, every year
 - have direct bearing on the rights of members
 - should have a standard form and content
- define the primary characteristics of the organization
- prescribe how the organization is structured and functions
- include all rules that are so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice.
- contain the most essential provisions relating to the organization, its name, purpose, membership, officers, meetings, governing board, committees, parliamentary authority and amendments to prescribe structure changes
- are the law of the organization

B. Standing Rules

- Relate to the details of administration for the organization
- May be adopted by a majority vote
- May be amended or rescinded at any regularly scheduled meeting: with prior notification, by a majority vote, unless the bylaws stipulate otherwise, without prior notification by a two-thirds vote

C. Parliamentary Authority

The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern this organization in all cases that are not in conflict with state statute, the constitution, the bylaws, or any special rules of order adopted by the organization.

D. Definitions

a. Resolution: A formally written motion. A resolution may contain a preamble that lists the reason(s) and solution(s) for adoption. Each reason is listed in a separate paragraph starting with the word “whereas.” A resolution must have at least one “resolved” clause that specifies the action or position being proposed.

b. Amendment: Proposes a change to the Constitution, Bylaws, Special Rules of Order, or Standing Rules. It is also used to modify a motion under consideration

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Book: National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules

Book: National Unit Guide Book

Book: Department of Florida Unit Guide

Book: Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition

Book: Robert’s Rules for Dummies

HELPFUL ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Website: Department of Florida - Constitution and Bylaws Program Action Page

Website: ALA National – Constitution and Bylaws Program Page

Website: Robert’s Rules of Order:

Website: National Association of Parliamentarians: www.parliamentarians.org

REPORTING

The Unit and District Reporting forms will be on the Department of Florida website – Constitution and Bylaws Program Action Page.

	UNIT to DISTRICT CHAIRMAN	DISTRICT to DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN
End of Year Report	April 1, 2023	April 15, 2023

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

All amendments to the Department of Florida governing documents must be received by the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at least 60, April 17, 2023 prior to Department Convention. Amendments must be submitted on the approved amendment form.

ACTION REQUIRED

UNIT CHAIRMAN: Encourage that members in your unit have a copy of their Unit C&B and access to other ALA Constitution and Bylaws booklets.

UNIT CHAIRMAN: Encourage open communication and interest to the C&B program by members in your unit.

UNIT CHAIRMAN: Complete the Unit Report Form by April 1, 2023, submit to your District Chairman.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN: Communicate and support units in your district with information, bulletins and documentation to share knowledge about the Constitution & Bylaws program

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN: Assure all Units in your District complete and submit their Unit report form to the District Chairman by April 1, 2023.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN: Prior to submission to the Department C&B Chairman, assure that the District Constitution & Bylaws Report is completed and contains information supplied by all the units in your district.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN: Submit the District End of Year Report to the Department Chairman and your District President by April 15, 2023.



HOW TO WRITE STANDING RULES

Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Contact Information for Questions:

constitution&bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Constitution & Bylaws chairman

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- ∞ Start with a specific need that relates to the administration of your department, district or unit (e.g., awards you present, budget for convention attendees, voting body).
- ∞ Write the Standing Rule. See “Guidelines for Writing Standing Rules” on the next page.
- ∞ Present it at a department, district or unit meeting.
- ∞ A standing rule can be adopted with majority vote at any regular meeting with advance notice, unless otherwise stipulated in the bylaws. Without advance notice, a standing rule requires a 2/3 vote for adoption.
- ∞ The Standing Rules document should be kept up-to-date, and each new Standing Rule should record the date it was adopted.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STANDING RULES

Standing Rules are those rules and regulations which relate to the details of the administration of an organization for the guidance of an assembly. Standing Rules are usually adopted in the form of a resolution, and require a majority vote to pass with previous notice at any regularly scheduled meeting, and a 2/3 vote in the affirmative to pass without prior notice.

The following points are intended to be a helpful guide for writing or updating Standing Rules. Not every topic or item will apply in every instance, and some things may not be listed.

The (NAME AND NUMBER) of the _____ District, American Legion Auxiliary, hereby adopts the Constitution & Bylaws as prescribed by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of _____.

The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, in all questions not governed by articles of the National, (department/district/unit) Constitution & Bylaws, shall govern this (department/district/unit).



1. State time (day and hour) of meeting, place of meeting and information on notification of meeting. Are you meeting all twelve (12) months?
2. Dues – Senior, Junior, Gold Star Mothers, Life Members.
3. Process for selecting Life Members.
4. Election
 - a. When will election be held?
 - b. Secretary and/or Treasurer – elected or appointed?
 - c. A nominating committee – yes or no? Elected per the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
5. Election of delegates for department convention, fall conference, district meetings – when and how selected.
6. Installation of officers – when, where, who is in charge.
7. Equipment – rules for loaning, maintenance, etc.
8. Finances
 - a. Rent
 - b. Utilities
 - c. Working funds for officers, chairmen, poppy purchases, ALA Girls State, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, etc.
 - d. Annual gifts for district president's visit, retiring officers, etc.
 - e. Flowers and/or gifts for illness, death, etc.
 - f. Expenses for delegates to department convention, fall conference, district meetings, etc. (registration fee, mileage, per diem)
 - g. How bills are paid and who signs the checks
 - h. Contest prizes – how much for poppy, essay contests, etc.
 - i. Department and district mandatory funds
 - j. Arrangements for special dinners – funerals, etc.
 - k. Annual donations to special programs or charities
9. The fiscal year of this department/district/unit will be _____.
10. Audit – when and by whom.
11. This paragraph should appear at the end of your Standing Rules: “Standing Rules are adopted by a majority vote and may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote at any meeting, or if notice has been given, by a majority vote.” Standing



Rules are usually adopted from time to time, as they are needed, in the form of resolutions.

12. The date of the meeting at which these Standing Rules were approved MUST be shown. ALSO – The signature of the Constitution & Bylaws chairman and president or secretary MUST appear on the bottom of the list.

Date Approved

President or Secretary

Constitution & Bylaws Chairman

Historic



HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Contact Information for Questions:

constitution&bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Constitution & Bylaws chairman

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- A resolution is a written, formal motion. Resolutions are used because the motion may be presented in written form with some of the reasons included in the document. If written well, the resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal. Importance, length and complexity of the motion, and size and formality of the assembly are major considerations in using resolutions.
- A resolution has two sections - the resolving clauses and the reasons. Resolving clauses tell the specifics of the proposal. The main reasons a motion should be adopted are included in the "Whereas" clauses. Neither section should include more clauses than are absolutely necessary. Simple, but specific is best.
- When developing a written motion or resolution, consult with members who can be of assistance to improve the wording and whose support will assist in its adoption.
- The two sections of a resolution can be written in either order, but many believe it is better to write the main motion first and then write the reasons it should be adopted. This way, you first determine what is to be done. Focus on the most crucial specifics essential in the motion. Say it in one or two sentences. A third sentence could include who is responsible and a timeline.
- Once the main motion is determined, develop three to five statements to support the adoption of it. These are worded as "Whereas" clauses. These points should be the most important and least controversial arguments for the motion. Less than three points may not make the case depending on the motion, and more than five may get too complicated and confuse the issue. Again, it is important to stay focused on the points that are strictly necessary. Leave other points for the discussion.
- When the resolution is finally written, it begins with the "Whereas" clauses and ends with the resolved clauses. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* prescribes the proper format, capitalization and punctuation. Again, it is a good idea to consult with members who can be of assistance, as well as the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, to ensure your resolution is correctly formatted.

See the sample resolution in Support Tools at www.ALAforVeterans.org.