

Bylaw Amendment Proposals

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #1 **National Board of Directors Eligibility - Membership**

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A [Unchanged]

B. The President must have been an active eligible voting member for ~~four~~ two membership years and have served in an elected or appointed position at the national, district or chapter level for at least two membership years. The reduction in the requirement to have been an active eligible voting member for two membership years is to be enacted starting with the 2023 election cycle.

C. Directors must ~~have been active eligible voting members for three membership years.~~ be members of LPA. The elimination of the requirement to have been an active eligible voting member for three membership years is to be enacted starting with the 2023 election cycle.

D-J [Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee: Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

It is an exclusionary practice to require that a candidate be an active Member for so many years before running for the board. We believe by changing this requirement, more diverse voices will be part of future Boards. This proposed amendment explicitly addresses one of the 2021 Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility assessment findings that everyone who participated in the survey and listening sessions “experienced feeling marginalized or left out.” And most participants indicated experiences “precluded or limited participation.” Since the President has to serve in another position before becoming President, it is expected they already will have been an active board member on the national, district, or chapter level for the two years before running.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I think the current timelines and thinking for people in leadership positions need to be active and participating members of LPA should remain. Membership and activity speak to their dedication to the organization and allow people to know their character and integrity.

Mary Ellen Little, District 2 Member and Co-chair of Bereavement Committee

I oppose the proposed amendment to remove the 3-year membership requirement for Directors. Allowing a member to be a Director candidate with zero LPA experience robs the Board of LPA institutional and cultural knowledge. Three years may be too long, but no prior membership requirement swings the pendulum too far the other way.

I understand the point made by the diversity Committee, but don't believe immediate eligibility for Board membership addresses the issue of marginalization or concerns re expenses.

Angela Van Etten, District 4, Chapter Treasurer, and past national President (2005-2006)

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #2 Schedule for National Election

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A-C [Unchanged]

D. Candidates shall make their intent of running for a position on the Board of Directors known one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the first scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors at the annual national conference ~~a national election~~, by notifying the National Voting/Election Committee or President in writing.

E-J [Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1 - METHOD

These Bylaws may be amended ~~at the National Conference~~, provided that the resolution for amendment shall have been submitted to all Board of Directors one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the first scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors at the annual National Conference.

SECTION 2-4 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Jon North, LPA Programs Director

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

The LPA Board of Directors is recommending this amendment to clarify the timing for the election of national officers and amending the Bylaws. Requiring candidate announcements and Bylaw amendment proposal submissions 120 days before the start of the national conference has been the convention followed by the Elections Committee for many years, this amendment formally documents this.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION: None received.

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #3

Notification of Elections

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A-C [Unchanged]

D. Candidates shall make their intent of running for a position on the Board of Directors known 120 days prior to a national election, by notifying the National Voting/Election Committee or President in writing. Notification of the election and opportunity to run in the election must be distributed to all members eligible to vote in the election at least 6 months prior to the deadline for notifying for intent to run for a position in the election. Following the 6-month notice, Membership shall receive regular reminders.

E-J [Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

ARTICLE VIII – DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

The District Director, Assistant Director and District Treasurer shall be elected positions. Election by a simple majority vote of those present at a district meeting held between August 1 and December 1 shall determine the elections. At the discretion of the District Director and LPA National Election Committee, a district may choose to conduct the election using mail-in ballots. Notification of the election and opportunity to run in the election must be distributed to all District members eligible to vote in the election at least 60 days prior to the deadline for notifying for intent to run for a position in the election. Following the 60-day notice, Membership shall receive regular reminders. Additional officers may be appointed by the Director, including, but not limited to: Secretary, Parent Coordinator, and Young Adult Coordinator. Electronic balloting may be used if the Board of Directors obtains or identifies an acceptable and secure system, and non-profit laws allow electronic balloting.

SECTION 4-7 [Unchanged]

ARTICLE IX – LOCAL CHAPTERS

SECTION 1-10 [Unchanged]

SECTION 11 – ELECTION

The election of officers will be by a simple majority of votes in an election held between July 1 and December 1. A Chapter may conduct the election at a meeting announced to all members in advance and may choose to conduct the election using mail-in ballots. Electronic balloting may be used if the Board of Directors obtains or identifies an acceptable and secure system, and non-profit laws allow electronic balloting. Notification of the election and opportunity to run in the election must be distributed to all Chapter members eligible to vote in the election at least 60 days prior to the deadline for notifying for intent to run for a position in the election. Following the 60-day notice, Membership shall receive regular reminders.

SECTION 12-18 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Clinton Brown III, District 2 Treasurer; Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee; Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

Advance and regular communications around the election and member engagement need to happen earlier and more often. This allows more time for potential candidates to consider the crucial leadership roles at LPA and to learn more. Qualified board candidates should be identified and cultivated over time, and by requiring such notice, we set ourselves up to elect the most qualified individuals.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION: None received.

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #4

National Board of Directors Eligibility - Stature

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A-D [Unchanged]

E. Candidate is ~~not~~ required to be a person of short stature, as defined by Article V, Section 1 of these Bylaws. This is to begin with the 2023 election cycle. Board members who are not of short stature will finish their term, and little people must fill all future vacancies following 2022.

F-J [Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Clinton Brown III, District 2 Treasurer; Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee; Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

LPA needs to reflect the primary community that it serves, little people. Centering the voices of little people means having a board led by little people. LPA also serves the families of those with dwarfism, so we support and encourage average height participation in volunteer roles like participating on committees, local chapter or district leadership, and more. Per the 2021 Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility assessment, “most respondents mentioned tensions around engagement and the role of average height members.” Dwarfs understand our lives best, and it is this perspective that needs to be the majority perspective in leadership and intentionally included and centered.

If this amendment passes, all average height board members would be able to finish their term as this would take effect for all future elections. This proposal does not target any current board member who is not a little person but instead recognizes that if LPA is going to do what the 2021 assessment suggests of centering little people, we need to start at the top.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT:

Little People of America is an organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with dwarfism. LPA needs to center LP voices to make sure that dwarfism pride, identity and culture continue strong through the next 60 years as research advances are causing our community to face

new and evolving ethical challenges. Average height parent volunteers are crucial to LPA and will hopefully recognize that representing LPA at the national level should be LPs. There are many other crucial roles within the organization that this bylaw would NOT keep AH volunteers from being involved in. Additionally, requiring these roles to be LPs allows more LPs to gain leadership experience valuable for advocacy and career development.

Sarah Hunt, District 10 Member

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I would like to officially voice my deep concern regarding Bylaw Amendment Proposal #4. I am currently the Average Height Parent Coordinator for LPA.

Officially limiting the 12 Board Positions to only people of short stature is ignoring and excluding a very large portion the membership of LPA. One question I have is – are there any Average Height parents represented on the Inclusion Committee? If not, it isn't a true Inclusion Committee. When an organization looks at Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility the light is meant to be shined on ALL members of that organization – marginalizing one group in favor of another group is not the goal. The goal is to create an environment where all members feel included, seen, and heard. There is no difference in the membership structure for people of short stature and average height family members, therefore all members should expect equitable benefits and eligibility.

Remember what the Mission Statement of LPA is: LPA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives while celebrating with great pride Little People's contribution to social diversity. LPA strives to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature **and their families.**

Nicole Nastasi – National Parent Coordinator

I would like to voice my opposition to Proposal 4 for stature. As we are trying to be more inclusive as an organization, and even hired an inclusion director, I think we would be losing many qualified candidates. We have enough trouble filling the positions already, and then to cut down on the eligible candidates would be truly a loss. There have been several people who have made such an impact on our group over the years that would have been excluded if this passed.

Mark Trombino, District 10 Director

I am respectfully submitting my opposition to any bylaw that would suggest we discriminate against anyone that does not have a form of dwarfism. How could we as a group of people that fight so hard against discrimination turn the table and do it ourselves? I am sickened that this would even be suggested, and I would question the legality of it.

Mary Ellen Little, District 2 Member and Co-chair of Bereavement Committee

As an AH member of LPA for over 20 years, and a former chapter President, I oppose Bylaw Amendment Proposal #4 – National Board of Directors Eligibility - Stature. There is no logical reason that AH members cannot serve on the national board. By stating that an LP stature is required for these positions is discriminatory. Considering that 80% of little people are born to AH parents, this amendment is basically saying that LP parents cannot have a say. You will see a severe decrease in AH people volunteering across the board if this amendment is passed.

Joanne Morgan, District 2 Member and Former Liberty Chapter President, Jack Morgan, District 2 Member

Since the founding in 1957, Little People of America has stressed the value of character, ability, and teamwork. It is these attributes that have enabled the LPA organization to move forward and continue to support dwarf individuals achieve their goals.

Dwarf individuals are our parents, partners, children, public officials, leaders, and financial benefactors. Dwarf individuals have a wide range of roles and achievement records in our society.

The dwarf individual often partners with their non-short-statured parents, partners, children, coworkers, public officials, and political leaders who support their own life goals in addition to those goals the dwarf individual is helping the LPA to achieve. The teamwork between dwarfs and non-dwarfs in LPA is a key factor to the individual and LPA achieving their goals

If this Proposal #4 is passed, it will not only adversely affect the progress LPA has made supporting individual character and ability, but will also harm the bonds of teamwork between dwarfs and all other members in LPA.

I recommend that the LPA membership vote no on this Proposed #4 Amendment.

André Bourse, District 3 Member

LPA is an organization that serves and supports people with short stature and their families. The proposed amendment, as written, is exclusionary because it prohibits, by stature, who can serve an organization whose members comprise dwarfs and average height individuals, who have had associations with dwarfs. LPA prides itself on including all average height members associated with short statured individuals. Years ago, average height relatives were not permitted to be members of LPA. Returning to the practice of excluding average height members from an opportunity to serve and to contribute is regressive, not progressive. To prohibit a non-dwarf member from contributing to our organization in a leadership role is limiting LPA from benefitting from the expertise and ideas of others who are not dwarfs. If this amendment proposal is approved, it will negatively impact the diversity of the organization and will create divisions among members. When any member of LPA wants to run for a national office, the LPA voting membership will elect the most qualified individual to represent us regardless of stature. LPA

should not require all Board members to be dwarfs as this amendment proposal states. Vote NO on ByLaw Proposal Amendment #4.

Annis Arthur, District 3 Member

I am strongly opposed to this change. Average size parents, spouses, siblings, and children are a vibrant part of our organization and have been since its inception. The idea that we would welcome them to volunteer their time and money at the chapter and district levels, but exclude them from the board of directors is misdirected at best.

Right now the board has two average-size members, comprising 18% of the Executive Committee. They spend many hours a month interacting with all of the members they represent and bring that experience to bear on the topics and votes that need to be made to run LPA. Over and above that, however, they also bring the perspective of our average height members who are part of our community and our organization.

Not allowing average height members on our board is exclusionary. It is also simply bad for the health of our organization who has to hear the voices of all our members.

Lee Uniacke, Western Regional Representative

Hello, I'm an active member of the LPA-Puget Sound Chapter. I have served for the last 16 years as a President, Vice President, Advocacy and Education for schools and new families. I have worked alongside the amazing Spencer Family and many more who taught me the importance of welcoming both the average sized world and supporting the short statured world.

Both of my parents were average size. I grew up in Canada and was an active member of LP of British Columbia. LPBC needed our average sized members to help hold up the organization during times that our short statured members could not serve. My Mother played a major role in supporting new parents, hosting conferences and representing me when I was a minor and was unable to serve. Without her, LPBC would not stand. She sat with short statured members and always respected that this was their organization. She brought her profession as a Provincial adoption advocate to work alongside some amazing short statured members.

That brings me to my concern about Bylaw Amendment Proposal #4. I am deeply concerned that this proposal will divide what LPA is all about. Differences even within LPA are so important. Average size parents bring something to the table and I believe, should always be respected and represented. Do they truly understand the journey of having dwarfism, no they don't however they bring a different journey and that should also be honored and respected.

Stay Well,

Christina Reynolds, Vice President, Puget Sound Chapter

As a lifetime member of LPA, I wanted to voice that I am deeply hurt by the new Bylaw Amendment Proposal #4.

It proposes that Average Height (AH) members should no longer hold board positions. In my 53-Years' experience as a member of LPA, there have been many AH board members who have served our community so that their loved ones and many others could benefit.

The reasoning for this amendment given by the proposal states: "*LPA needs to reflect the primary community that it serves, little people*" The hypocrisy being that this amendment forcibly centers LPs by assuming AH members do not benefit from LPA's service.

You have proposed another amendment to prevent members of the same family from holding multiple board positions to prevent bias. I agree with this action. But if you bar AH members from board positions, you will ensure that over time LP-only families will have more power over our organization than our members with AH families.

Recently, we have seen a drastic loss of support vocalized against LPA leaving members out of its decision-making. We will NOT fix that by making ourselves more exclusionary. You will alienate a large part of LPA in the aim of prioritizing specific voices.

LPA is here to provide a supportive and inclusive environment that many LPs struggle to find outside of LPA. AH family members are a crucial part of creating that environment and it is important to keep their supportive voices in our organization.

**Kelly Lee, Lifetime Member, LP Parent Coordinator Co-chair, (2019-Present) Montana
Big Sky Chapter President, (2003-2006)**

**Ernie Lee, Lifetime Member, Former DAAA Board Member, Former District 11
Treasurer**

**Morgan Lee, Lifetime Member, Co-Chair of Skeletal Dysplasia Week for The Painted
Turtle Camp for Kids with Skeletal Dysplasia Week, (2018- Present) Social Media
Chair and Teen Ambassador (2014-2017)**

Bobby Lee, Lifetime Member

Chae Lee, Lifetime Member

The proposal to exclude or differentiate average height members seems, to me, to be extremely alienating. As an average height parent actively involved in this organization for the last 35+ years, I feel as if I've just been slapped in the face.

I was active in helping organize and establish Chapter 49 as well as District 13, I've served as District 13 director for two terms, as co-chair of the 2010 Nashville National Conference, and from 2012 to present as a member of the Conference Management Committee. Myself and many other average height members and their extended family have volunteered thousands of hours to an organization we love. We do this because we want to see this wonderful organization continue for future generations.

So many LPs active in the organization today are children of average height parents. These average height parents made LPA a priority for their children. They attended chapter meetings, regionals, and national conferences all with the hope of instilling pride, confidence, and self acceptance in their LP children.

This proposal clearly lets us know that volunteering all our time, energy, resources, skills, and so much more is fine, however don't expect a seat at the table. It tells us that working tirelessly for an organization we love and believe in doesn't love or believe in us. I find it very sad that despite all of the talk on inclusion, this proposal excludes one of your most valuable assets.

Please read this proposal very carefully and vote NO.

Sheryl Hankins, District 13 Lifetime member

We oppose this amendment as written.

We appreciate and agree with the intent to ensure LP's have a majority voice in the advocacy and policy direction of LPA.

As LP's, we recognize that our experience is unique from the AH perspective.

Equally important, we must also recognize that we don't have intuitive insight into the needs of our AH members.

LPA must be the first place that new families are guided to after a diagnosis. LPA must be the support system for new families, that is separate, better and more human than that given by a diagnosing clinician. LPA must be a welcoming place for all families.

We would support the Board be majority LP, but not the strict exclusionary language in this proposal.

We need a team of optimistic, empathetic, dwarf-pride advocates... both LP and AH.

Jon North, Programs Director and Melinda North, Conference Workshops Coordinator, Life Member

As an Average Height custodial grandmother, I deeply respect LP leadership and value the daily guidance they've given us. However, I believe AH family members should be allowed to serve on the board if they have desire and meet the qualifications. My goal has been to lead by example. Our grandson has learned by watching me serve in a leadership capacity. He's currently chapter teen coordinator, serves in the Boundless Washington leadership program for youth with disabilities, and at 12 years old spoke at the Washington State Capital in support of a bill to ban dwarf tossing. He is the next generation of LPA leadership. Prohibiting AH family members from serving on the national board could preclude LP youth from leadership growth within LPA.

A contributor to this amendment also encouraged on amendment #10 "a good mix of both short stature and average height point of views". Why would a good mix be encouraged on the local level but forbidden on the national level? These amendments would create a lack of consistency

throughout LPA. This amendment bans AH members from the national board, amendment #10 requires 2 LP Chapter members and there's no requirements at the district level. It seems requirements should be consistent for Chapter, District, and National.

As a dedicated AH family member who's served LPA with passion for over 10 years, I'm strongly against this amendment. I consider it an honor to give back to the organization that has helped us raise a strong and confident young man.

Deana Harris, District 11, Puget Sound Chapter President 2017-Current

The LPA community is one that includes the person with dwarfism and the strength that family members and friends provide. While it could be understood that the LPA community should have a strong presence of people with dwarfism in leadership roles, not including people of average height in Board Member roles leads to a sense of segregation in a community that relies on the talents of all its members. Limiting the participation to someone's physical appearance seems to contradict the purpose of the organization. If this suggestion was to be put in place throughout the organization, we would find the organization in a different place today. Limiting a person to just lower positions due to their height when the organization is only as strong as our brightest, our most passionate and our most driven could limit the possibilities of the organization as a whole. LPA has come so far yet has so far to go in order for the LP community to fully prosper. Sending a message that height is a restriction in guiding this endeavor is misleading when our community strives on the fact that your height makes no difference at all in this world. People of average height offer a different perspective in the LPA community. A perspective that is different yet important and should be respected for the overall goals of the LPA community. Limiting leadership in any manner in such a small community can hinder the possibility of the organization and the members it supports.

James and Darlene Korpai, District 2 Members

Prior to 1996 average-height members in LPA were designated as "auxiliary" and did not have the right to vote for officers or hold office at the higher levels of LPA. In the twenty-five years since a handful of average-height members have served as District Directors or District Regional Representatives, and two have served in other Board of Director positions, both as Treasurer, a job requiring very specific financial knowledge and skills. So, I question what exactly is the point of this Bylaw? What are the motives behind it? If the membership of LPA desires to have a structure whereby average height parents are "auxiliary", or "ally's" in today's common wording, as opposed to full participating members, then let's talk about that. Let's frankly discuss, debate and consider making that potential organizational positional shift including all its ramifications. Fundamentally altering the membership make-up of LPA should be a task that is undertaken transparently and thoughtfully by all the stakeholders of LPA, not hurriedly pushed through in governance documents and based on a survey open for 2 weeks with participation of less than 250 respondents out of a 7000+ membership.

Joanna Campbell, District 12 Director 1996-1998, National Executive Director 2006-2017, Conference Management Committee 2005-2014

This proposal makes me incredibly sad to think that this is where we are; proposing divisions in the rights between short-stature and average-stature members **of our community**, when one of our primary goals is inclusion.

This amendment *conveys a message of exclusion* to our AH members; it's not actually addressing a problem. Since the early 1990s, when average-stature members could serve on the board, there have been only five AH national officers, serving a total of 19/233 (collective) years (8%). Attacking those active, supportive volunteers of our community should not be our road to inclusion.

As babies with dwarfism are born, AH parents will decide whether LPA feels welcoming. There's nothing more vulnerable than being a parent and trying to decide what's best for your child. Am I doing it right? Will they be happy, productive, kind, healthy, successful... there's a never-ending list of worries. If the message portrayed is that we exclude AH families, we will never get to meet, mentor, help, befriend the LP children born to AH parents. They won't get the opportunity to walk into the door because their parents feel their voice doesn't matter, therefore LPA is not their "home". I lose sleep over the orphaned LP children in other countries that we haven't found. This is the same concept. If they don't walk in the door, then they never get to experience the dwarf pride that comes from chapter, district, national events. Let's keep the door wide open for all of our members.

Colleen Gioffreda, National Adoption Coordinator, SWAT Program Co-Chair

I feel it is imperative to have a "town hall" ASAP on this. Many people don't read bylaws and vote yes (thinking the Board is 100% in favor)... Numerous AH members have devoted their lives to LPA. AH members deserve to know the reasoning behind this proposal. Is it fear of AH's who support Biomarin? That certainly isn't the majority. AH members support LPA on many levels: financially with memberships for 18 years or more, and creating fundraisers for LPA; physically volunteering at all levels; emotionally/mentally providing as role models for their LP's as leaders in LPA; etc. I have consistently volunteered for 24 years. This proposal insinuates that AH members don't take the time to get to know LP's and their perspective on issues both inside/outside of LPA. Some of my best friends are adult LP's, and I value their opinions more than I could ever express. I have personally heard the Board praise AH members for all they do for LPA at all levels and find it hard to believe that the Board would be in favor of this proposal. LPA has much to lose by alienating/antagonizing a very integral part of LPA. I pray with all my being that this does not come to fruition.

Gaill Blackburn, District 10 Director 2016-2021

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #5

National Board of Directors Eligibility - Household

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A-E [Unchanged]

F. Two people from the same household may not hold National Board of Directors positions at the same time.

F-J [Incremented and Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Michael Petruzzelli, Eastern Regional Representative

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

This amendment is being submitted to fairly safeguard the impact of each elected board member's vote, and out of caution to ensure that the IRS good governing practices for a tax-exempt organization are being followed. The IRS considers related board members to "not be completely independent", and LPA is required to acknowledge family members on the board to the IRS in annual filings. Due to the nature of the organization, there could be several instances where board members from the same household could be elected for positions within the same board cycle, creating a possible "less independent" board in the eyes of the IRS. In order to conduct an official board meeting, where board members are voting on motions, it is important to be able to form a quorum of directors. The IRS regards two family members as "one mind", so there is one less person to fill the quorum requirement if two board members are related. Even if the quorum of six is met, (which would require seven people if two are related), two of the same family could potentially hold 28.5% of the entire board vote. Also, if there is an event in the board members' household in which they cannot attend the board meeting, then it could be more difficult to proceed with board business due to two people missing the meeting at once. Finally, LPA's goal of striving for more diversity and more inclusion is negatively impacted by members of the same household voting on the policies of the organization.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT:

I am in agreement with all statements that suggest two people holding a leadership position should not be related or living in the same household. Two people in the same household would

usually be of like minding and thinking and not creating diversity. It is also pretty evident in the submission of these proposals since many are submitted and supported by two people who are married.

Mary Ellen Little, District 2 Member and Co-chair of Bereavement Committee

Board members bring a very diverse set of perspectives and experiences to the table. Family members are apt to share too much commonality, such as socio-economic status, geographic location, and ethno-racial background. A reduction in diversity could harm the quality of decision making and leadership as well as create a conflict of interest.

For the reasons listed above, I support amendment proposal #5.

Deana Harris, District 11, Puget Sound Chapter President 2017-Current

It is so important to maintain the integrity of the organization by not having two people from the same household hold National Board of Directors positions at the same time.

George J. Rossitto, District 12 Member

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I am in opposition to Bylaw Amendment Proposal #5. Given LPA's fluctuating size as an organization, it is natural that there may be circumstances where more than one member of a household may sit on the National Board of Directors. This is particularly common in disability organizations that center issues of families. It is perfectly reasonable that if there are conflicts of interest members remove themselves. This amendment would be reasonable if it centered specifically on a relationship between the treasurer (a role responsible for the finances of the organization) and another board member. This would also be consistent with another proposed amendment in this package and existing policy regarding Chapters. However, as currently stated, this amendment would create needless hurdles to stop individuals from running for office.

Rebecca Cokley, District 2 Member

This bylaw doesn't solve a current problem that LPA has or has had in the past. With 11 Executive Officers, having two in the same household does not pose a majority risk for decision making or for making quorum. The IRS completely allows spouses, siblings, and two board members to be from the same household as long as it does not interfere with disrupting business and quorums. There are countless corporations, 501c3's and other IRS recognized entities that have

boards that happen to have two individuals in a household on them, they operate seamlessly and effectively and fair. This bylaw also does not align with the chapter and district bylaw which specifically says a Treasurer and President cannot be in the same household. This caveat if applied to Bylaw 5 would make more sense from a fiduciary standpoint. LPA's 501c3 status is not at risk at all due to the number of board seats we currently have (11). Due to virtual meetings, board members can take board calls from the convenience of their phone no matter where they are, so there are very few dire emergency situations where both members would not be able to make a meeting. For these reasons, you should oppose this Bylaw as it is written.

Clinton Brown III, District 2 Treasurer

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #6

National Board of Directors Eligibility – Experience Requirements

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

A-E [Unchanged]

F. The following experience qualifications will be required for candidates starting with the 2023 election cycle. Board members who may not meet these requirements will finish their term, and all future vacancies following 2022 must be filled by candidates who meet these qualifications:

a. President

1. Must have previous experience with nonprofit board service outside of LPA
2. Must have knowledge of ethics and nonprofit governance

b. Finance Director

1. Must have at least 10 years of nonprofit finance experience and/or a relevant financial advanced degree and/or certification

c. Membership Director

1. Must have experience with member and community engagement outside of LPA

d. Inclusion Director

1. Must have training and/or relevant experience with diversity and inclusion work

e. Programs Director

1. Must have experience building and creating programs

f. Public Relations Director

1. Must have experience working with the media, creating social media and messaging, and have strong verbal and communication skills

g. Advocacy Director

1. Must have knowledge and connections in the disability and social justice spaces.
2. Must be knowledgeable about public policy and disability policy.

h. Development Director

1. Must have experience creating and implementing fundraising strategy.

F-J [Incremented and Unchanged]

SECTION 4-12 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee: Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

The Board of Directors is responsible for so much of LPA's success. It is critical that experienced individuals hold the Board positions with the necessary skills to succeed and best represent LPA's interests internally and externally.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

- During my volunteer time, I've seen the most successful, impactful Board members are those who are willing to learn, put in the hours, and listen to our members – not those with ten years of related experience, or work-related contacts.
- The proposed requirements are exclusionary and will prohibit many interested people from volunteering: those unable to get degrees, or people with enthusiasm but don't have related experience yet. LPA should be inclusive: interested passionate people should be able to volunteer, and gain experience.
- This proposal would reduce eligible candidates, could result in open positions and therefore unintentionally require those positions be filled by Board appointment, not voters.
- Board compositions should be blended: those with lots of experience, and those with less experience but fresh ideas. This proposal will result in only people with the privilege of experience.
- LPA has staff and mentorship opportunities to provide the technical support for newer Board members.
- LPA should give people opportunities for experience, not create barriers to entry.

Jon North, Programs Director

I am in disagreement with requiring any professional or educational requirements for board positions that are voluntary and unpaid. These are elected positions if someone has a personal professional or educational background that would help in these volunteer positions all the better but should not be required.

Mary Ellen Little, District 2 Member and Co-chair of Bereavement Committee

I am opposed to this change because while having experience with other non-profits is nice to have, requiring specific involvement in outside organizations is arbitrary, and will exclude many, if not most, of our members from running for our highest offices.

The proposed requirement for President is a good illustration of this. “The President...Must have previous experience with a nonprofit board service outside of LPA”. This means that a person who grew up in LPA and spends all their free time supporting LPA and LPA events, could NOT run for president. This is a nonsensical requirement that I suspect would have excluded many of our past, and best presidents.

The requirements for the other board members are all things that we should look for as voting members of the organization, but rejecting candidates on the subjective criteria proposed seems like a bad idea.

Lee Uniacke, Western Regional Representative

As a community seeking diverse voices, we should not place barriers to having access for our voices being heard. We are a democratically run organization; voting by the membership is the best arbiter of a worthy candidate. We would love to have a board full of perfectly qualified members, but to require such specific experience is too much for a grassroots, volunteer organization. Encouraging mentorship, collaboration, and teamwork may serve us better to ensure that the board is working at its full potential and capacity.

Colleen Gioffreda, National Adoption Coordinator, SWAT Program Co-Chair

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #7

National Board of Directors Term of Office

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-5 [Unchanged]

SECTION 6 – TERM OF OFFICE

Board Members shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive full terms in a specific role on the Board of Directors. Starting with the 2023 election cycle, board members other than the President must take a break after serving for two consecutive terms for at least one election cycle before running for a new position. Members may hold more than one office on the Board of Directors, consecutively or at different times in their life.

SECTION 7-12 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee: Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

LPA will be a stronger and more sustainable organization when more little people are able to run for leadership positions. We must create a structure that supports the regular transition of leadership, invites more people to run for positions, and puts a cap on how long anyone can be in leadership. With the exception of the President, Board members should only be able to serve two consecutive terms (max of 6 years) before taking a break for at least one election cycle. The President is exempt from taking a break as the President has to serve in another position before becoming President, it is expected they already will have been an active board member on the national, district, or chapter level for the two years before running.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION: None received.

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #8

National Board of Directors – Removal

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-8 [Unchanged]

SECTION 9 – REMOVAL

A [Unchanged]

B.
1-2 [Unchanged]

3. Board members may be removed if petitioned by and voted by no less than-one-tenth (1/10) of all members authorized by these Bylaws to vote.

C [Unchanged]

SECTION 10-12 [Unchanged]

ARTICLE VIII – DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-6 [Unchanged]

SECTION 7 – REMOVAL

A [Unchanged]

B.
1-2 [Unchanged]

3. District Directors may be removed if petitioned by and voted by no less than-one-tenth (1/10) of all members authorized by these Bylaws to vote.

C [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, Inclusion Director and Inclusion Committee: Risa Rifkind, Lakshmi Shyamakrishnan, Maria McClellan, Rhonda Mendoza, Cara Reedy

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

Membership needs to have the option to remove board members they feel are not reflecting the values of LPA. This needs to be possible on both the local and national levels.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I oppose this bylaw amendment wholeheartedly. We currently have a fair and equitable election system in LPA in which members have the opportunity to vote in and vote out officers when their current term expires based on the person's performance and fidelity to the position and organization.

1. I understand what it takes to hold office. It took time to get my feet wet, adjust, and settle into the position. There is a learning curve that one goes through which deserves patience. Allowing petitioning for someone to be removed at any point during their term is imprudent and counterproductive.
2. This amendment, as it is written, is vague. What constitutes "not reflecting the values of LPA" - this line reads very subjectively, can be based on how the person's conduct, or on a petty matter with little or no relevance to serving in the position.
3. Collecting names for a petition to get someone out of office is counter to a collaborative problem-solving approach. It can become vitriolic, non-democratic, and would create a popularity contest-like culture. If the person is genuinely not appropriate to serve in the position and their actions and opinions go against the organization's values, I would rely on the other board members under the president's leadership to identify the problem and remedy it.

Please vote against bylaw amendment proposal #8.

Michelle Kraus, Public Relations Director

The wording of this amendment causes it to be very unclear on what the protocol would look like. Prior to submitting this statement, clarification was requested from the originators with no response.

“District Directors may be removed if permitted by and voted by no less than one-tenth (1/10) of all members authorized by these Bylaws to vote”

Does this mean that a District Director can be voted out of their position if 1/10th of the membership vote to have them removed, thus disregarding the other 90%? Or is it saying that a vote to have them removed must have participation of at least 1/10th of the authorized voters in order to be considered a valid vote? If it is the latter, would it then be a simple majority to vote them out?

This amendment is extremely vague, lacks clear direction and could allow for conjecture upon execution. Due to the lack of concise verbiage and clear direction as to what this process would look like, I am in opposition of this amendment.

Deana Harris, District 11, Puget Sound Chapter President 2017-Current

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #9

District Officers – Same Household

ARTICLE VIII – DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS

SECTION 1-2 [Unchanged]

SECTION 3 - ELECTION

The District Director, Assistant Director and District Treasurer shall be elected positions. The District Director and District Treasurer shall not be the same person nor shall be from the same household.

Election by a simple majority vote of those present at a district meeting held between August 1 and December 1 shall determine the elections. At the discretion of the District Director and LPA National Election Committee, a district may choose to conduct the election using mail-in ballots. Additional officers may be appointed by the Director, including, but not limited to: Secretary, Parent Coordinator, and Young Adult Coordinator. Electronic balloting may be used if the Board of Directors obtains or identifies an acceptable and secure system, and non-profit laws allow electronic balloting.

SECTION 4-7 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Eastern Regional Representative Michael Petruzzelli, Central Regional Representative Joseph Tateoka and Western Regional Representative Lee Uniacke.

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

This amendment prevents a District Director and District Treasurer being from the same household, consistent with the restriction on Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer. This is good political and financial policy in an organization.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I am not in favor of Amendment 9. Sometimes just to find people to run, they may be in the same household. This is the case for District 10 currently. We tried everything possible to find a District Director and a District Treasurer. But when no one would step up, as is common in LPA, Carol agreed to stay in this role. To think qualified LPs are all the sudden going to start to run for more offices is unlikely. While I do see it as a best practice to not have this same household, it should not be an amendment.

Mark Trombino, District 10 Director

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #10

Chapter Officers Eligibility - Stature

ARTICLE IX – LOCAL CHAPTERS

SECTION 1-9 [Unchanged]

SECTION 10 – OFFICERS

The Chapter shall elect a President and Treasurer. If there is no President or Treasurer elected to run the Chapter, the District Director overseeing the Chapter may appoint these positions to complete a term. The Chapter may also elect a Vice President and Secretary and other positions; if there are no candidates and the Chapter wants the positions filled, these positions may be appointed by the Chapter President.

One person may hold two positions except the Chapter President and Treasurer shall not be the same person nor shall be from the same household.

At least two of the Chapter Officers must be of short stature, as defined by Article V, Section 1 of these Bylaws.

Chapter officer terms shall be for two years. Officers may serve up to three consecutive terms, more if there is no other member willing to run for election to the position.

SECTION 11-18 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Clinton Brown III, District 2 Treasurer

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

This ensures that we as an organization at a chapter level continue to promote and encourage short statured members to run for local positions of leadership to build their skill set as future leaders of LPA. This proposal encourages that there's a good mix of both short stature and average height point of views and representation at a local level. The local level is also where the LP role model relationship is built best, and this bylaw helps to ensure that those relationships will and can grow in every corner of America within LPA.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

I would like to officially voice my deep concern regarding Bylaw Amendment Proposal #10. I am currently the Average Height Parent Coordinator for LPA.

Please look at the demographics of the officer pool throughout LPA. There were many years in the Houston Chapter, that if the Average Height Parents hadn't been officers, there would not have been a Chapter. At no point in time were the people of Short Stature in our Chapter discouraged from running for office. I would also like to point out that mentoring and being a role model is not limited to Officers. Leigh Ann Cutting was a Mentor for my daughters for years, and she was not an Officer at that time.

Remember what the Mission Statement of LPA is: LPA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives while celebrating with great pride Little People's contribution to social diversity. LPA strives to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature **and their families.**

Nicole Nastasi – National Parent Coordinator

I would like to voice my opposition to Proposal 10 for stature. It should not make a difference if the person running for LPA office is average height or a little person. We need to find the best qualified candidate to fill each position.

Mark Trombino, District 10 Director

As written this proposal would exclude an average sized person from holding office if the chapter only has a President and Treasurer.

Angela Van Etten, District 4, Chapter Treasurer, and past national President (2005-2006)

At times at the District level, and much more often at the Chapter level, we have very few members step forward to run for officer positions. In our Chapter for instance, the officer positions have been filled by a small group of members that have rotated in and out of officer positions for many years. As an example, I have been a member of our local chapter for 25 years and I am on my fourth two-year term (only two were consecutive) as Chapter President during that time. Within those terms, my wife and I were Co-Presidents for one term and my son and I currently fill the Chapter officer positions of President and Vice-President. During our last election period, my son and I elected to fill the positions because we had no candidates. In addition, due to a lack of candidates, we have had the same Chapter Treasurer for over 20 years. That person will be relocating, and the Treasurer position will soon be vacant, and I anticipate a very difficult time backfilling.

What we experience, as I am sure many other Chapters experience, is a few families being willing to fulfill these positions. Based on that, I think that it would be very detrimental to limit officer eligibility based on people residing in the same household. In addition, requiring at least two of the officers be people of short stature, further limits the Chapter's ability to fill the positions.

For the aforementioned reasons, I am opposed to the proposed restrictions on officer eligibility.

Dennis Otsuka, President, Chapter 36

As current Puget Sound Chapter President, I'm honored to serve with three LP officers. During the 8 years I've served as a chapter officer the makeup has been very diverse but always effective. The bylaws state to have a valid chapter there must be a President and Treasurer, that's it. What if there are only 2 people who are willing to serve, and they are both AH? Does that mean the chapter will discontinue existence and the community will no longer be served by the local LPA chapter? The goal should always be to have a diverse group serve as chapter officers but that isn't always feasible or attainable. This amendment provides no provision for what would happen should there be no LP willing to serve or if there is only one LP and one AH willing to serve. LP role model relationships cannot and will not grow on every corner of America for LPA if there is no chapter because they do not have 2 LPs to serve.

If approved, this amendment along with amendment #4 would create a lack of consistency throughout LPA. This amendment requires at least 2 LPs be chapter officers, there are no definitions for quantity of LP members at the district level and Amendment #4 states only LPs may serve on the national Board of directors. It seems as though there should be consistency at the Chapter, District, and National levels.

Due to the reasons listed above, I am in opposition to this amendment.

Deana Harris, District 11, Puget Sound Chapter President 2017-Current

I understand the desire to have LP voices heard and respected throughout this organization. After all, we are the ones living this unique, amazing, and awesome experience of being an LP within LPA.

When thinking about these bylaw proposals, I read several research articles about the deaf community and their responses to cochlear implants. And what seemed to be the overall message was that if parents choose cochlear implants for their child, they could also benefit greatly from learning ASL and still remaining in the deaf community, even if the cochlear implants were considered successful. There have been many comparisons over the years between LPA and the deaf community, and I think the general conclusion may be the same. Whatever LP children and their parents decide to pursue as a healthcare option, the overall health of the child can only be improved by being included and welcomed into LPA, the largest support organization for people with dwarfism and their families.

What does this have to do with chapter officers? We struggle **now** with filling all chapter positions, let alone making more rules which highlight exclusion of one group of people. Everyone now has the opportunity to run for chapter or district office – if an LP would like to run for office, they should do so. There is so much to do within LPA, and there aren't enough volunteers. Let's allow our elections to determine who we vote for, rather than having to abide by restrictions which dictate officers' height.

Colleen Gioffreda, National Adoption Coordinator, SWAT Program Co-Chair

Unfortunately, there are many LP's who don't step up in leadership roles for one reason or another. That's their choice and they should not be made to feel guilty because the Chapter will fold if they don't step up. Also, many chapters are small and may not have that option if most of the members are AH parents to minor LP's. The Board needs to seriously consider the ramifications of this proposal.

Gaill Blackburn, District 10 Director 2016-2021

Bylaw Amendment Proposal #11

Chapter Funds

ARTICLE IX – LOCAL CHAPTERS

SECTION 1-9 [Unchanged]

SECTION 10 – OFFICERS

The Chapter shall elect a President and Treasurer. If there is no President or Treasurer elected to run the Chapter, the District Director overseeing the Chapter may appoint these positions to complete a term. The Chapter may also elect a Vice President and Secretary and other positions; if there are no candidates and the Chapter wants the positions filled, these positions may be appointed by the Chapter President.

One person may hold two positions except the Chapter President and Treasurer shall not be the same person nor shall be from the same household.

Chapter officer terms shall be for two years. Officers may serve up to three consecutive terms, more if there is no other member willing to run for election to the position.

However, if after three consecutive terms of the current Treasurer a new Treasurer is not elected or appointed, then the Chapter Funds will be moved to that Chapter's District Treasurer to be managed until a new Chapter Treasurer is named.

SECTION 11-18 [Unchanged]

PROPOSED BY:

Clinton Brown III, District 2 Treasurer

REASON FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

This provides a safety net for chapters to allow activities such as meetings, regionals, and other general business to continue in the event of a sudden departure or gap in volunteerism at the treasurer level.

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT: None received.

STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION: None received.