

## Allowing the possibility of virtual attendance for National Council Sessions and for Special Sessions of the National Council

### Originated by

Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania

### Proposal

To amend the Constitution and Bylaws of GSUSA as follows:

Update Article V Sections 1, 3, and 4 of the Blue Book of Basic Documents, page 9, by inserting the bolded, green wording, as follows:

#### **Section 1**

There shall be a regular session of the National Council held triennially at such time and place as determined by the National Board of Directors. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of such session shall be mailed **or delivered electronically** not less than 60 days before the session to each local council, to each USA Girl Scouts Overseas committee, and to each member of the National Board of Directors and National Board Development Committee.

#### **Section 3**

Notice of the special session, stating the time, place, and specific purpose, shall be mailed **or delivered electronically** not less than 30 days before the session to each local council, each delegate from USA Girl Scouts Overseas, each member of the National Board of Directors and the National Board Development Committee, each Past President, and each member elected by the National Council who is entitled to vote at such session.

#### **Section 4**

Two hundred members of the National Council present in person shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at sessions of the National Council, provided, however, that delegates are present from one or more local councils in a majority of the geographical areas of the country as defined in the Bylaws. **At the sole discretion of the National Board, any National Council session may be held in whole or in part by means of the Internet or other electronic communications technology pursuant to which the members of the National Council have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the members, pose questions, and make comments. Attendance through such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting for quorum and voting purposes.** In the absence of a quorum, a majority of

those present at the time and place set for a session may take an adjournment from time to time until a quorum shall be present.

### **Rationale**

In advance of the 2020 NCS, two proposals were submitted for constitutional amendments to allow virtual or electronic special sessions of the National Council. At that time, the National Board opted not to include this proposal in the slate for NCS 2020. Here are a few of their remarks on this topic.

- The concept of adapting to and incorporating modern technology-based ways of communication to enhance the democratic process resonated strongly with the board.
- After further research, it became clear that an electronic special session would not work at this time, given the technology required, the cost, and the size of the delegate body.
- Electronic sessions would not create the same experience for dialogue, communication, and interaction with other members.
- Parliamentarians expressed that it is not currently possible to hold an electronic meeting that would be compliant with Robert's Rules of Order NR.
- Managing electronic debate and decision making under RONR for a group of this size would be extremely difficult, if not impossible
- Parliamentarians were unaware of any technology that could satisfy the requirements of an NCS (verify identity of delegates, confirm a quorum, safeguard votes, etc.)
- The costs of the technology would be significant and there could also be additional costs for Councils and potentially delegates.

Then COVID happened, and rather than cancel the 2020 NCS, GSUSA found a way through these obstacles and objections to make our groundbreaking first virtual session a reality. Delegates, Councils, and members agree that, while not ideal, the virtual session was successful. Here are a few positive outcomes:

- An electronic session did work; the technology does exist.
- Technology is ever evolving; better ways and more cost-effective ways will become available.
- GSUSA is one of many organizations and corporations that can and will incorporate this technology into everyday business.
- GSUSA was able to follow RONR on a virtual platform.
- *Robert's Rules 12th edition* now includes four sets of sample rules for electronic meetings designed to meet various needs, along with bylaw provisions sufficient to authorize such meetings.
- It is possible to manage electronic debate, identification of participants, reach a

- quorum, and safeguard votes virtually.
- GSUSA managed the cost of holding a virtual NCS.

Plus, the National Board of Directors already allows their members to have a virtual presence in their meetings; per the Blue Book, Bylaws Article I, Section 3: “A majority of the National Board must be present (in person *or linked by telecommunication or by means such that all members participating in the meeting are able to hear one another* [italics added for emphasis]) to constitute a quorum.” We believe offering this same option to the National Council illustrates understanding and equity and therefore, should be allowed.

- Implementing virtual access and participation in National Council Sessions and special sessions of the National Council promotes inclusivity within our membership by eliminating the need to travel in order to attend, a cost barrier for some.
- Eliminating the need for travel also accommodates other circumstances that may affect our members such as school and work obligations, weather-related issues, and medical issues.
- This proposal supports and encourages the use of technology, aligning with concepts we promote in our program.
- This proposal allows our organization to be nimble under any circumstances that may come up.
- We have already done virtual; we can continue to do virtual, and it’s time we bring our Constitution up to date to account for this.

### **Financial Impact Statement Submitted by Originating Council**

Without having access to actual budget amounts for the 2020 NCS, we have hypothesized impacts on income and expenses in the chart below. Evaluation of these factors implies that in-person meetings have a greater financial impact than virtual meetings for both GSUSA and Councils. For 2020, we assume that money not spent on in-person expenses was invested in technology to make the virtual meeting a reality.

Virtual meetings are estimated to be less expensive for both the host and participants; however, there is a different dynamic. Given the current state of technology and the current state of the world, allowing the National Board to make an informed decision offers the best of both worlds in terms of flexibility, timeliness, and equitable access.

Expense or Income Item:	In-person Increase	In-person Decrease	Virtual Increase	Virtual Decrease
Rental of convention center	X			X
Hall of Experiences	X			X
Video broadcast within site	X			X
Security	X			X
Printed materials	X		X	
Swag	X			
Food	X			X
Transportation around site	X			X
GSUSA Volunteer, Board, Staff costs	X			
Entertainment/keynote costs	X			
Voting tabulation system	X			
Credentialing - virtual		X	X	
Income - sponsorships	X			X
Income – ticket sales	X			X
Income – exhibitor fees	X			X
Income – retail merch	X			X
Contract w/virtual platform vendor		X	X	
Virtual voting platform			X	
Expanded tech support			X	
Councils – transportation, hotel, food for delegates	X			X
Councils – registration fees	X			X
Members at large – upgraded tech & Internet access		X	X	
Members at large – cost of attendance	X			X
Tabulation:	18	3	6	13

**Amend the Girl Scout Promise and Law to use more potent, actionable language.**

**Originated by**

Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey

**Proposal**

THAT the Preamble of the Constitution of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America be amended to delete the words “try”, “to”, do my best”, and to insert the work “will”.

Proviso: this change would take effect with the 2024 Membership Year and be incorporated into the grand GSUSA Rebrand timeline, with printed items to be fully refreshed by the start of the 2025 Membership Year.

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
<p>THE GIRL SCOUT PROMISE: On my honor, I will try: To Serve God and my country, To Help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law</p>	<p>THE GIRL SCOUT PROMISE: On my honor, I will <del>try</del>: <del>To</del> Serve God and my country, <del>To</del> Help people at all times, And <del>to</del> live by the Girl Scout Law</p>	<p>THE GIRL SCOUT PROMISE: On my honor, I will: Serve God and my country, Help people at all times, And live by the Girl Scout Law</p>
<p>THE GIRL SCOUT LAW: I will do my best to be Honest and fair, Friendly and helpful, Considerate and caring, Courageous and strong, and Responsible for what I say and do, And to Respect myself and others, Respect authority, Use resources wisely, Make the world a better place, and Be a sister to every Girl Scout.</p>	<p>THE GIRL SCOUT LAW: I will <del>do my best to</del> be Honest and fair, Friendly and helpful, Considerate and caring, Courageous and strong, and Responsible for what I say and do, And <del>to</del> <u>will</u> Respect myself and others, Respect authority, Use resources wisely, Make the world a better place, and Be a sister to every Girl Scout</p>	<p>THE GIRL SCOUT LAW: I will be Honest and fair, Friendly and helpful, Considerate and caring, Courageous and strong, and Responsible for what I say and do, And will Respect myself and others, Respect authority, Use resources wisely, Make the world a better place, and Be a sister to every Girl Scout</p>

**Rationale**

Girl Scouts is an organization committed to providing a safe space for young people while encouraging sampling, civil discourse, social-emotional growth, and grit, all to produce sensitive, successful change makers of the next generation. Yet Generation Z, current teens and young adults, is the most cynical generation of our lifetime [according to The New York Times](#). Growing up in social turmoil--unrepentant mass shootings in schools, racially motivated violence, alarming climate change, a bungled response to global pandemic, unprecedented uncertainty--Gen Z's disaffection for legacy

institutions is justified. As Sofia Chang was welcomed as National CEO, [she noted that](#) “as Girl Scouts [enters] its 110<sup>th</sup> year of service, the mission to develop and create opportunities for all girls is more critical than ever.” If Girl Scouts wishes to “grow, become more inclusive, and positively impact the lives of all girls and young women,” then the Movement must take bold steps to modernize—beginning with our core values: the Promise and Law.

The proposed change to the Girl Scout Promise and Law is [inspired by Troop 20923](#) when they learned of the teachings of [Dr. Cindy Wahler](#), a psychologist and expert in human behavior. Dr. Wahler posits that individuals who use more potent, actionable language are more successful. In September 2021, Dr. Wahler offered a virtual session on Impactful Communication to 120 council leaders, which may be viewed [as a recording](#) (passcode: GSHNJ#IWill). In her lecture, Dr. Wahler points out that American women tend to diminish the power of their own communication through word choices like “It’s just my opinion, but…” Further, women’s habitual resistance to self-promote leads them to interject phrases like “I hope to…” or “I would like to…” as opposed to using declarative, deliberate language like “I will…” Individuals who use impactful language to clearly articulate ideas and goals are more likely to receive an interview, be promoted, and find success. Troop 20923 instinctively understood this, noticing that even in their fourth-grade class differences in behavior— and resulting outcomes—were a reflection of divergent communication styles. If the line between childhood self-identity and future ambition is clear, then Girl Scouts plays a key role in teaching one million of tomorrow’s leaders to express themselves with authority and assurance.

Girl Scouts’ recent rebrand is already demonstrating impactful communication [principles](#): “To move our story forward, we use a voice that’s encouraging, emotive, thoughtful, inclusive, and bold. As Girl Scouts, we speak and show up distinctly.” Our brand tenets include being emotive and substantive, speaking thoughtfully but unreservedly, with bold determination. Removing “try” from the Promise and Law is all that is necessary to transform them into potent, motivating calls to action, fully embracing and internalizing Girl Scouts’ aspirational brand. Removing “try” signals Girl Scouts’ willingness to examine traditions, remaining faithful to customs that serve our members and doing away with those that are no longer relevant to this generation.

“Trying” remains the key inspiration for Girl Scout programming at all levels: exploring, experimenting, failing, innovating, growing. The Girl Scout Law, however, describes foundational behaviors—a moral compass—instilled into every member who promises to live by them. They are universal values, evolving over time, meant to affirm every Girl Scout’s potential and ambition regardless of culture, religion, or family history. There is no space for “trying” when it comes to morality or core values.

In the increasingly competitive youth development market, there is no space for disregarding the impact of today’s social chaos on our youth. Over the four years that Troop 20923 has been advocating for this change, they’ve discovered an increasing appetite for participating in traditions while adapting them for modern self-expression. [A national survey](#) following national delegates’ discussion of this topic during the 2020 National Council Session suggests a high tolerance for this change, and an agreement on its timeliness within the context of our current political and social climate.

Gen Z is a nuanced, politically motivated group, seething with moral passion and ready to create cultural transformation. Girl Scouts can lead the charge. Girl Scouts *will* lead the charge.

**Financial Impact Statement**

GSHNJ is not in a position to calculate exact budgetary costs for a change of this type as we do not have access to GSUSA's vendor agreements. However, we offer that in the digital age, Girl Scouts are being encouraged to forgo printed materials or provided "print on demand" resources rather than consuming expensively produced printed materials that minimize the need for retroactive editing of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

If Girl Scouts makes a change of this type on the national stage, a collective call to the media will result in a net positive impact on the Movement by boosting the visibility of the brand and offering another opportunity to address the "scout" confusion in the marketplace. Local councils could leverage increased national media attention to generate more membership and volunteer leads, provide dynamic corporate partnership opportunities, and explore new avenues of revenue and program diversification.

**Constitutional Amendment: Formula for Delegates**

**Originated by**

**Farthest North Girl Scout Council**

**Proposal**

To amend Article IV, National Council, Section 5, by striking the number 3,500 in every place where it occurs and replacing it with the number 1,000 and by striking the word “no” and replacing it with the words the words “as close to but not” in the last sentence.

<b>Current Wording</b>	<b>Proposed Amendment</b>	<b>If Adopted, Will Read</b>
<p>FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 girls thereafter.</p> <p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p> <p>The prescribed figure of 3,500 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no larger than 1,500.</p>	<p>FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to <del>3,500</del> <u>1,000</u> girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every <del>3,500</del> <u>1,000</u> girls thereafter.</p> <p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p> <p>The prescribed figure of <del>3,500</del> <u>1,000</u> girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council <del>no</del> <u>as close to but not larger than</u> 1,500.</p>	<p>FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 1,000 girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every 1,000 girls thereafter.</p> <p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p> <p>The prescribed figure of 1,000 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council as close to but not larger than 1,500.</p>

Proviso: That this action become effective for the 2026 National Council Session.



## **Rationale**

The formula for the delegate body of council delegates was amended at the 2008 National Council Session, during the implementation of the Core Business Strategy. In 2008, the girl membership was 2,495,812. The number of councils was being reduced from 312 to 109. At the 2008 National Council Session, the delegates established the optimal size of the National Council body at 1,500 council delegates. Therefore, the formula was established to add council delegates accordingly using 3,500 girls as the threshold.

However, that formula did not hold up for even one National Council Session, because girl membership was on a steep decline. The girl membership has continued to decline every year. The National Board of Directors used a modified formula of 2,000 girls in 2011, 2014, 2017; and 1,500 girls in 2020 and 2023. This resulted in the following number of delegates for those respective years:

2011- 1,296 National Council delegates, 7.6% decrease in membership since 2008

2014 - 1,195 National Council delegates, 13% decrease in membership since 2011

2017 - 1,027 National Council delegates, 12.1% decrease in membership since 2014

2020 - 1,158 National Council delegates, 16.9% decrease in membership since 2017 (formula change)

2023 - 846 National Council delegates projected, 27.3% decrease in membership from 2020-21

With the dramatic decrease in membership from 2019-2022, using the same girl formula of 1,500, would result in a delegate body of approximately 846 delegates for the 2023 National Council Session. It is safe to assume the girl membership will never recover to its former days of 2.5 million. Therefore, a Constitution change to the formula is long overdue.

Assuming the girl membership levels-off at its current amount of approximately 1,100,000 girl members, and no further decreases occur, an adjusted formula to add council delegates for every 1,000 girls would result in a delegate body of 1,320 for the 2026 National Council Session.

Finally, the wording change to add the phrase "as close to but not" larger than 1,500 council delegates is important because the GSUSA Board of Directors has interpreted the phrase "no larger than 1,500" to mean any number smaller than 1,500. However, the National Council in 2008 rejected the proposal by GSUSA to reduce the size of the National Council to 1,000 council delegates. An amendment was passed to increase the council delegate body to 1,500, where it stands today. Therefore, it is understood that the 2008 delegates did not want to allow the delegate body to shrink smaller than 1,000.

The size of the delegate body at 1,500 members is important because it represents the voices of the membership across the Movement. Despite the declines in membership, the delegate representation at the National Council Session is important to maintain at 1,500 delegates, respecting the decision of the 2008 NCS Delegates, and the importance of many voices.

## **Financial Impact Statement**

No expenditures are anticipated as the total number of delegates to the National Council Session will remain unchanged.

## Constitutional Amendment on the Timing of Delegate Allotment

### Originated by:

**Girl Scouts of the USA National Board of Directors on recommendation of the National Council Session Advisory Team**

### Proposal

THAT Article IV (The National Council), Section 5 (Formula for Delegates) of the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA be amended by striking “of the year,” and inserting the words, “two years” before the word “preceding.” If approved the text would read as follows:

<b>Current Wording</b>	<b>Proposed Amendment</b>	<b>If Adopted, Will Read</b>
<p>Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. two (2) delegates;</li> <li>b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 girls;</li> <li>c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 girls thereafter.</li> </ul>	<p>Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30, <b>two years of the year</b> preceding the regular session of the National Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. two (2) delegates;</li> <li>b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 girls;</li> <li>c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 girls thereafter.</li> </ul>	<p>Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30, two years preceding the regular session of the National Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. two (2) delegates;</li> <li>b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 girls;</li> <li>c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 girls thereafter.</li> </ul>
<p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p>	<p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p>	<p>USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.</p>
<p>The prescribed figure of 3,500 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no larger than 1,500.</p>	<p>The prescribed figure of 3,500 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no larger than 1,500.</p>	<p>The prescribed figure of 3,500 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no larger than 1,500.</p>

## **Rationale**

### **Proposal Summary**

This proposal amends the Constitution to adjust the membership year on which delegate allotment is based. The change will allow GSUSA to confirm the number of delegates to which each council is entitled before any delegate election occurs, avoiding the need to conduct elections based on preliminary data and potentially adjust after receiving final numbers. The time when councils elect delegates is not affected by this proposal. In proposing this Constitutional amendment, it is the intent of the National Board to lessen the administrative burden on councils when selecting their National Council delegates.

### **Current Practices/Background**

In 2020, the National Council amended the Constitution to require national delegates be elected in the calendar year preceding the National Council Session. Implementation of this change has been generally positive. Under the Constitution, the number of delegates to which each council is entitled is based on membership numbers as of September 30 of the calendar year preceding NCS. Those numbers are not finalized and released until November 30. Since many councils elect their delegates at annual meetings between January through April (e.g., for NCS 2023, from January through April 2022), they must estimate how many delegates they will have and adjust if needed after receiving their official membership numbers.

Timeline for 2023 NCS:

- Councils elected their delegates in the calendar year 2022.
- However, official girl membership numbers for MY 2022, which currently dictate the number of delegates allotted to a council, were not available until November 2022.
- The councils who elected delegates January 2022 through November 2022 estimated their delegate allotment and elected a ranked list of alternates.
- When final allocations were known, councils adjusted their data, if necessary.

This proposal eliminates the need for preliminary data to be adjusted by changing the timing of the delegate allotment. If approved, councils will know their delegate allotment number before any delegate elections occur.

### **Financial Impact Statement**

This proposal has a positive financial impact by streamlining the National Council delegates election process allowing staff resources to be focused on other initiatives.

## Council Representation on the National Board

### Originated by

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta

### Proposal

To amend Article X, Section 2 of the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA to insert “at least three (3) of whom shall be Council Executives.” After the words “members-at-large,” and to insert the definition of “Council Executive” after the word “country.”

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
<p>COMPOSITION</p> <p>The National Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the Vice Presidents, the Secretary, and the Treasurer; and 25 members-at-large. The Chair of the National Board Development Committee, if not already elected to the National Board, shall be ex officio a member of the National Board. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex officio member without vote. The National Board shall at all times be representative of the various geographical areas of the country.</p>	<p>COMPOSITION</p> <p>The National Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the Vice Presidents, the Secretary, and the Treasurer; and 25 members-at-large <b>at least three (3) of whom shall be Council Executives.</b> The Chair of the National Board Development Committee, if not already elected to the National Board, shall be ex officio a member of the National Board. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex officio member without vote. The National Board shall at all times be representative of the various geographical areas of the country.</p> <p><u>Council Executive</u></p> <p><b>A Council Executive shall be defined as a person currently employed as the Chief Executive Officer of a chartered Girl Scout Council who meets the criteria for service as a member of the National Board. A Council Executive who ceases to be employed as the Chief Executive Officer of a chartered Girl Scout Council shall be deemed to have automatically resigned as a member of the National Board, and such vacancy shall be filled by a new Council Executive.</b></p>	<p>COMPOSITION</p> <p>The National Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the Vice Presidents, the Secretary, and the Treasurer; and 25 members-at-large at least three (3) of whom shall be Council Executives. The Chair of the National Board Development Committee, if not already elected to the National Board, shall be ex officio a member of the National Board. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex officio member without vote. The National Board shall at all times be representative of the various geographical areas of the country.</p> <p><u>Council Executive</u></p> <p>A Council Executive shall be defined as a person currently employed as the Chief Executive Officer of a chartered Girl Scout Council who meets the criteria for service as a member of the National Board. A Council Executive who ceases to be employed as the Chief Executive Officer of a chartered Girl Scout Council shall be deemed to have automatically resigned as a member of the National Board, and such vacancy shall be filled by a new Council Executive.</p>

Proviso: This provision takes effect no earlier than the 2026 National Council Session.

## **Rationale**

The purposes of this proposal are to (1) improve communication, transparency, accountability and trust between the National Board, GSUSA, councils, and the membership at large and (2) facilitate better decision making by the National Board with respect to movement priorities.

The addition of Council Executives to the National Board addresses a missing perspective that elevates the experiences and needs of current volunteers, girls, and councils. While the National Board typically includes one or more individuals who formerly served as Council board chairs, these individuals lack a real-time connection to the experiences of current girls and volunteers in our movement, as well as the experiences of local councils. Council Executives would serve as advocates for local Girl Scouting to allow the National Board to better understand and prioritize initiatives that impact the member experience and address critical pain points like the national technology platforms (e.g., VS 2.0, GSEvents, Digital Cookie) that have hindered the achievement of strategic movement goals. Council Executives can provide a valuable perspective to the National Board with respect to sensitive issues such as dues increases and gender expression and assist the National Board in better understanding how their decisions will be perceived at the local level. The addition of council voices to the National Board will facilitate better alignment of our movement behind our national strategy in the area of operational excellence, which seeks to transform our culture, operations, funding model, and governance in visible and impactful ways.

## **Financial Impact Statement**

There is no financial impact to local councils or the national organization.

## DEIRJ Language Proposal

### Originated by

Girl Scouts of the USA National Board on recommendation of the DEIRJ Board Advisory Committee

### Proposal

To amend the Preamble of the Constitution by inserting the words “and anti-racism” after the word “pluralism” in both places where that word occurs. If approved the test would read as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM Girl Scouts advance diversity and pluralism in our Movement and in the communities in which we live.	DIVERSITY, PLURALISM <u>AND ANTI-RACISM</u>  Girl Scouts advance diversity, pluralism, and anti-racism in our Movement and in the communities in which we live.	DIVERSITY, PLURALISM AND ANTI-RACISM  Girl Scouts advance diversity, pluralism, and anti-racism in our Movement and in the communities in which we live.

### **Proposal Summary**

This proposal amends the Preamble to our Constitution to emphasize our existing commitment to “diversity” and “pluralism,” as Girl Scout values. It underscores our dedication to the work of anti-racism as a fundamental principle of the Girl Scout Movement and its sustainability.

Understanding that racism involves addressing institutional policies and practices of society that shape the cultural beliefs and values that directly and indirectly exclude communities based on race<sup>1</sup>, the updated language will create a comprehensive approach to not just attract and *include* people of different backgrounds in our Movement (“diversity” and “pluralism”), but to actively work to dismantle the structures that preclude their full participation (“anti-racism”).

The amendment strengthens and updates the references to “diversity” and “pluralism,” while naming and reflecting the contemporary language, actions, and priorities of Girl Scouts to actively work in opposition of racist structures (“anti-racism”).

As we prepare to develop the leaders of tomorrow, our success will be determined by the ability to create pathways towards full inclusion and belonging across the Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Anti-Racism Resources. (2022). Retrieved from Projects at Harvard  
<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/antiracismresources/allies>

Dedicating this line in our Constitution not only to reinforces our anti-racist values but signals our sustaining commitment to this work and paves the way for girls in all historically excluded communities to be a part of this Movement. As we know, the structural barriers created by racism are the foothold and foundation for societal effects experienced by other marginalized communities. Within those communities, race is one—in many cases the primary—factor, in determining how individuals are affected.

This amendment is urgent, timely, and important as it seeks to support the sustainability of decades long Movement-wide efforts made by our colleagues, volunteers, and Girl Scouts.

In proposing this Constitutional amendment, it is the intent of the National Board to codify in governing documents our commitment to racial equity. In our Anti-Racism Pledge, Girl Scouts of the USA has stated:

We will do our part to dismantle systemic racism. We recognize that this is far from easy or fast work, but we are Girl Scouts—we believe in sisterhood, justice, and fairness—so we are in it for the long haul. We take action when we see a need and we live by our Girl Scout Law, which demands we seek racial equity for everyone.<sup>2</sup>

**Background:**

As a century-old institution with traditions woven into the fabric of every residential zip code, we have a complex historical relationship of race and equity within the Girl Scout Movement.

In the early years of our Movement, girls and women of color faced the same limitations in our Movement as they did in the rest of society. Our troops were segregated until the Movement took a step in dismantling the system of inequity that existed for Black and brown girls in the organization.

The very first African American Girl Scout troupe assembled in 1917, just five years after Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low started the organization in Savannah, Georgia. It remained segregated until the 1950’s, when the organization made a national effort to desegregate *ALL* Girl Scout troops. This non-compromising attitude and commitment to that mission is what made Dr. King describe these brave young women as “a force for desegregation” in 1956.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> GSUSA Anti-Racism Pledge

<sup>3</sup> Ebony Magazine, March 9, 2012

In the 1950s Dr. Gloria Dean Randle Scott served as the President of the Negro Girl Scout Senior Planning board and in 1975 she became the first Black National President of the Girl Scouts. One year later, 1976, Ms. Frances Hesselbein became CEO of GSUSA. Ms. Hesselbein served as CEO until 1990. During that time, she was a champion for inclusivity and diversity and the strength it brought to our Movement.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Hesselbein spearheaded the creation of groundbreaking programmatic resources on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for the Movement. Partnering with the National Urban League, Ms. Hesselbein was able to engage consultants to support our diversity journey. She not only wanted any girl—of any background—to be able to find herself in our handbooks but took the work further to ensure equitable spaces so that girls of color felt included in every facet of the Movement. As a result of Ms. Hesselbein’s efforts, *membership for girls of color* tripled during her tenure as CEO.

Over the course of the next three decades, our equity work has continued. GSUSA and councils across the Movement have established diversity, equity, and inclusion teams, engaged in programmatic and process updates, and have provided staff and volunteer trainings.

In 2020, Girl Scouts responded to the call for racial justice in communities across the country by reinforcing that diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued by the Girl Scout Movement. Through [our Anti-Racism Pledge](#), GSUSA vowed to take action to support Black girls, their families, and their communities making Girl Scouting one of the first youth serving organizations to publicly commit to becoming an anti-racist organization. Our pledge then and now is to ensure all girls and their families have a place in Girl Scouting and our commitment to anti-racism will enable this.

In 2020, GSUSA formed a Board Advisory Committee and a Movement-wide Steering Committee, comprised of national board members, GSUSA staff, and Girl Scout council CEOs. This group is helping guide and prioritize how we embed diversity, equity, inclusion and racial justice (DEIRJ) in everything we do. Experts were commissioned to conduct a comprehensive audit of programs, policies, and practices as well as understand the Girl Scout experiences of members across the country. The results of this audit will inform our collective long-term DEIRJ objectives as we work to unite as one around this work. We have the opportunity to extend the work that has been done by each facet of the Movement and co-create a unified approach to which all members can contribute.



Research shows<sup>4</sup> that organizations equipped with a wide range of voices and perspectives are better able to innovate, take risks, solve problems creatively, and turn challenges into opportunities. Therefore, given the ever-increasing diversity of our communities, creating a culture that embraces equity through the lens of anti-racism will be vital for us to continue to exist, grow, and be relevant to all girls in the nation.

This proposal is the next step in our Movement's journey to achieving our highest aspirations as a place to nurture all girls and their ambitions. Our ardent support to advance diversity, pluralism, and anti-racism in our Movement and in the communities in which we live demonstrates our commitment to make the world a better place. In doing so, we take heed to our former national CEO's call to action:

"We must take steps to address these inequalities. I have worked my entire life as a passionate advocate for inclusion and diversity, and we as a society still need to change."

Frances Hesselbein  
Leader to Leader Fall 2020  
"Battling Racial Injustice"

### **Financial Impact Statement**

While this proposal does not have an immediate financial impact, future decisions based on activating our Movement's commitment to anti-racism may require financial investments that will be considered during the normal planning and budgeting processes.

### **Recommendation of the National Board**

The board recommends approval of this constitutional amendment for the reasons stated above. The NCS Advisory Team supports the proposal.

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<sup>4</sup> Tsusaka, M., Krentz, M. Reeves, M. "The Business Imperative of Diversity." Boston Consulting Group. June 19, 2019

## **Girl Scouts Gold Award Scholarship Fund**

### **Originated by**

**Girl Scouts of the USA National Board on the recommendation of the Movement Gold Award Scholarship Foundation Task Force.**

### **Proposal**

THAT the National Council hereby affirms the recommendation of the Movement Gold Award Scholarship Foundation Task Force to create a permanent donor-restricted fund in support of Gold Award scholarships; and

THAT that in recognition of its importance, the existence of such Fund shall be reflected in the Blue Book in the Fundraising Policies section of the Blue Book (or any successor section of the Blue Book as may be appropriate from time to time).

### **Rationale**

At the 55th National Council Session, held in October 2020, the National Council voted that the GSUSA Board should appoint a task force to study the feasibility of establishing a foundation to provide Gold Award Girl Scouts scholarships, with such task force to report back for a vote on its recommendation at the 2023 National Council Session. More specifically, the National Council passed the following proposal:

THAT the National Council establish a task group overseen by GSUSA and 2 council representatives, that includes volunteers, council staff, GSUSA Board members, and GSUSA representatives, charged with examining the feasibility of developing a college scholarship foundation to benefit Gold Award Girl Scouts. The task group will report back for a vote at the 2023 NCS on the feasibility, recommendation and timeline for potential establishment of the foundation by the 2023 National Council Session. All members of this task force shall be appointed by the GSUSA Board of Directors.

Accordingly, a Task Force of Girl Scout council representatives, GSUSA, and Girl Scout volunteer representatives was convened to study the feasibility of a Gold Award scholarship foundation.<sup>1</sup>

The Task Force, to fulfill its charge, met from September 2021 through April 2022, during which time it examined the strategic goals of the proposal and the various legal, operational, fundraising, and programmatic aspects of establishing a foundation that could support Gold Award scholarships, as well as additional scholarship structuring options. The Task Force completed its work in June 2022 and delivered its findings to the National Board. As set forth in greater detail in the report, as a result of its study, the Task Force concluded that although a foundation would be technically feasible, a permanently donor-restricted scholarship fund would be the most efficient and nimble way to support the goals of the 2020 proposal, and recommended that in recognition of the fund's significance and to retain visibility of the fund, that the existence of such fund be reflected in the Blue Book.

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<sup>1</sup> The appointment and composition of the Task Force and its approach to its work is set forth in greater detail in the accompanying report from the Task Force.

After considering such recommendations, and to move quickly to further the impact of the Gold Award on behalf of girls, in September 2022 the National Board established a permanently donor-restricted fund, that is known as the Girl Scouts National Gold Award Scholarship Fund. All monies raised for such donor-restricted Girl Scouts National Gold Award Scholarship Fund are designated to be used for the development and support of a Girl Scout Gold Award scholarship program. The Gold Award Scholarship Foundation Task Force has also agreed to continue until the first annual report on the fund is provided to the Movement to provide assistance and implementation of its recommendations.

This proposal would affirm the desire of the Movement to continue to support Gold Award scholarships in this manner and would implement the Task Force's recommendation that the existence of the fund be reflected in the Blue Book in recognition of its significance.