

TO: THE ALA MEMBERSHIP
FROM: Leslie Burger, Interim ALA Executive Director
DATE: February 2024
RE: **PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALA BYLAWS**

The following amendments to the ALA Bylaws have been approved by ALA Council for referral to the Membership for ratification in accordance with the ALA Bylaws, Article XVII. Any text to be deleted is shown in [brackets]; new text to be inserted or substituted is underlined.

ALA Policy states “*Amendments to the Bylaws, when placed on the ballot, will be accompanied by pro and con statements of not more than 250 words each, such statements to be prepared by two Council members (who voted on opposite sides of the issue as indicated by their voting record) appointed by the president.*”

ACTION ITEM #1: Bylaws Amendment on adding a new section “Council Virtual Participation and Observation”

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

This would be an addition, there is no current language.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

“Section 6. Council Virtual Participation and Observation. Meetings of the Council shall be conducted in such a manner as to allow for virtual participation by Councilors. Councilors participating virtually will be required to follow instructions communicated in the notice of each meeting which may include, but not be limited to, prior registration. At each meeting, the Council will adopt rules to manage participation by both in-person and virtual participants as appropriate. Virtual observation methods shall be provided to the Association’s membership during open portions of meetings.”

PRO STATEMENT: “*With this amendment ALA commits itself to supporting full virtual participation in ALA Council. This ensures that members whose lives, schedules or finances do not allow for twice-yearly conference travel can nonetheless run for ALA Council with confidence that they will be able to participate fully in our governance for their entire term. ALA members will also continue to be able to observe the open portions of council meetings online, a level of transparency that seemed impossible just a few short years ago.*

If this amendment passes, it will codify the open governance structure that we created out of necessity in June of 2020. It will ensure that who gets a voice at ALA won’t depend on who can travel to conferences.” – Tara Brady, Social Responsibilities Round Table Councilor

CON STATEMENT: There were no dissenting votes in Council.

ACTION ITEM #2: Bylaws Amendment on adding a new section “Executive Board Participation and Observation”

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

This would be an addition, there is no current language.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

“Section 5. *Executive Board Participation and Observation.* Meetings of the Executive Board shall be conducted in such a manner as to allow for virtual participation by Executive Board members. Board members participating virtually will be required to follow instructions communicated in the notice of each meeting which may include, but not be limited to, prior registration. At each meeting, the Executive Board will adopt rules to manage participation by both in-person and virtual participants as appropriate. Virtual observation methods shall be provided to the Association’s membership during open portions of all regular scheduled meetings and of any additional meetings when scheduling, staffing, and other conditions reasonably allow.”

PRO STATEMENT:

“The language proposed in the new Section extends the virtual governance guarantees, committing ALA to virtual participation and observation options for completing the work of the association. It stipulates that Executive Board meetings of the ALA will always have virtual observation methods available to membership during regular scheduled Executive Board meetings, and will make those options available as much as is practical for impromptu EB meetings.

This gives the executive board and ALA staff more flexibility in time-sensitive situations, while still mandating virtual participation and observation at most meetings for reasons of equity and transparency. Where hybrid methods are found to be cost prohibitive, the executive board will also retain the option to meet fully virtually instead.” – Jessamyn West, Chapter Councilor

CON STATEMENT: *“Based on the comments made by a fellow Councilor about privacy for meetings at this level in the organization (recordings) and trust needed to allow Executive Board to meet and make decisions in the best interest of the organization, I voted no for this amendment. I am in favor of the virtual participation by Executive Board members, but the virtual observation methods to members felt like an unnecessary addition at this time.” - Kelly Sitzman, Chapter Councilor*