

TO: THE ALA MEMBERSHIP
FROM: Leslie Burger, ALA Interim Executive Director & Secretary of the Council
DATE: February 2025
RE: **PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALA BYLAWS**

The following amendment to the ALA Bylaws has been approved by ALA Council on January 25, 2025 for referral to the ALA Membership for ratification in accordance with the ALA Bylaws, Articles XVII.

[RESOLUTION on the ALA Executive Board Composition ALA CD 48](#)

BYLAWS AMENDMENT FOR CHANGING ALA EXECUTIVE BOARD COMPOSITION

ACTION ITEM: Adopt ALA Bylaws Amendment to Change the ALA Executive Board Composition.

- Yes
- No

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

Article V. Executive Board

Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of fifteen (15) members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and ten (10) councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) terms as follows:

- three (3) at-large members;
- two (2) division members;
- one (1) round table member;
- one (1) Rainbow Round Table member;
- one (1) chapter member;
- one (1) American Association of School Librarians member; and
- one (1) member from one (1) of the National Associations of Librarians of Color (NALCo).

PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

Article V. Executive Board

Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of thirteen (13) members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and eight (8) councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) terms.

TRACK CHANGES:

Any text to be **deleted** is shown in **[brackets]**; **new text** to be inserted or substituted is **underlined**.

Article V. Executive Board

Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of **[fifteen (15)] thirteen (13)** members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and **[ten (10)] eight (8)** councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) **[terms as follows:**

- three (3) at-large members;**
- two (2) division members;**
- one (1) round table member;**
- one (1) Rainbow Round Table member;**
- one (1) chapter member;**
- one (1) American Association of School Librarians member; and**
- one (1) member from one (1) of the National Associations of Librarians of Color (NALCo).]**

CURRENT LANGUAGE:	TRACK CHANGES: Any text to be deleted is shown in [brackets] ; new text to be inserted or substituted is <u>underlined</u> .	PROPOSED LANGUAGE:
<p>Article V. Executive Board Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of fifteen (15) members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and ten (10) councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) terms as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. three (3) at-large members; B. two (2) division members; C. one (1) round table member; D. one (1) Rainbow Round Table member; E. one (1) chapter member; F. one (1) American Association of School Librarians member; and G. one (1) member from one (1) of the National Associations of Librarians of Color (NALCo). 	<p>Article V. Executive Board Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of [fifteen (15)] <u>thirteen (13)</u> members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and [ten (10)] <u>eight (8)</u> councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) [terms as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. three (3) at-large members; B. two (2) division members; C. one (1) round table member; D. one (1) Rainbow Round Table member; E. one (1) chapter member; F. one (1) American Association of School Librarians member; and G. one (1) member from one (1) of the National Associations of Librarians of Color (NALCo).] 	<p>Article V. Executive Board Section 1. Composition. The Executive Board of the American Library Association shall consist of thirteen (13) members including: the four (4) officers of the Association, the immediate past president, and eight (8) councilors elected by Council to three-year (3-year) terms.</p>

ALA Councilor Statements

ALA Policy A.5.8 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.”

PRO STATEMENT:

This proposed revision restores ALA’s diverse, democratic, and administratively efficient governance structure. Years of proposed changes to ALA’s governance structure have called for modifying the ALA Executive Board composition. Unfortunately, the changes passed by ALA Council in 2023 are contrary to recommendations of hard-working volunteers and also severed their connection to a coherent set of changes that the Council did not adopt.

Designated seats:

- increase the administrative burden and complexity for the Committee on Committees and ALA Governance Office.
- were not created to address diversity of identity on the Board.
- fail to guarantee authentic representation for member groups.
- position certain ALA units as more important than others.
- pit well-qualified members against each while requiring votes for less qualified candidates.
- increase costs to ALA by an estimated \$32,000 per year.

Board members are elected to represent the *totality* of their professional and lived experiences, not simply to check a box for one specific role or identity. ALA already had the most diverse board in the history of the Association. Returning to a thirteen-member Board will enhance operational efficiency while maintaining robust and diverse leadership.

By simplifying board composition requirements, ALA can focus on selecting the most qualified and committed candidates, regardless of designated categories. This change supports ALA’s commitment to effective governance while ensuring that board service remains accessible to all interested and capable members. The modification reflects careful consideration of lessons learned since the 2023 Bylaws Convention and demonstrates ALA’s willingness to evolve its governance model for optimal organizational effectiveness. –

Andrew Pace, ALA Councilor at Large

CON STATEMENT:

“For many years, ALA Council, through the Committee on Committees (CoC), worked to ensure a broad range of voices were nominated for the Executive Board. However, under the previous Constitution and Bylaws, there was no requirement that nominees represent these varied viewpoints. After extensive deliberation, Council implemented a new system ensuring diversity by designating seats on the Board for members with perspectives representing different units of ALA and different lived experiences. While candidates for these seats will always represent diverse viewpoints themselves, designating seats ensures that those specific perspectives are sought out. This affirms our core values of Diversity and Equity in the Bylaws and leadership.

This change was passed by membership in 2023, and we’ve completed two election cycles under the new system. In both cases, the CoC successfully assembled strong slates of nominees, ensuring representation of the designated perspectives. While it’s early to fully assess the process, initial results suggest it’s working. Respected individuals who hadn’t considered running were encouraged by peers and excited to be nominated. Even though we are drawing from a limited pool of Councilors for these seats, our success presenting diverse slates shows that it’s possible. While two additional seats costs ALA more, there is value in ensuring those additional diverse perspectives, which are critical to the association’s future.

Now is not the time to remove language from the Bylaws that ensures diversity on Executive Board. Until we face insurmountable challenges, reverting to the previous model would undermine our commitment to Diversity and Equity.” – *Nicholas Tepe, Chapter Councilor*