



## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS OF THE BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

**Wednesday, August 18, 2021**

**The following proposed bylaw amendments are submitted for consideration of the delegates and members at the 76<sup>th</sup> Virtual National Convention, Alexandria, VA.**

### **PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 1**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention will add a new category of membership referred to as the “**Low Vision Associate Member**” to Section 5 a., b., and c. in ARTICLE III (Qualifications for Membership, Associate Membership and Honorary Membership).

#### **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES to**

ARTICLE III (Qualifications for Membership, Associate Membership....)

Section 5

a. Any person having been, or being, in the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible to be a Low Vision Associate Member if he/she has a substantial Visual impairment or dysfunction as determined by an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist as to requiring Blind Rehabilitation Services. The term "Functional Blindness may be referred to this membership group. This class of Low Vision Associate Members can include those individuals with Night vision blindness (Retinitis Pigmentosa) when that condition effects their quality of life. Dyslexic conditions which inhibit an individual's ability to read can also meet Low Vision Associate Member qualification. Borderline cases shall be referred to the National Board of Directors for consideration. The below are conditions or disorders which in part identify disabilities which can be considered qualifying individuals for Low Vision Associate Membership:

(1) Insufficient visual resolution (worse than 20/60 in the better eye) with blindness in the other eye 20/200 or less or 20 degrees or less field loss.

- (2) Inadequate field of vision (worse than 20 degrees along the widest meridian in the eye with the more intact central field) or homonymous hemianopia.
- (3) Reduced peak contrast sensitivity.
- (4) Insufficient visual resolution or peak contrast sensitivity at high or low lighting within a range typically encountered in everyday life.
- (5) Night vision blindness (Retinitis Pigmentosa) or other degenerative retinal diseases in stages when that condition effects their quality of life.
- (6) Low Vision disability is characterized by problems and task performance difficulties related to vision loss that have a substantial impact on the person's functional independence or personal safety, and that are out of proportion to the degree of visual impairment as measured by visual acuities or visual fields, as documented by licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Veterans whose functional vision is better than legal blindness may have disability due to: (1) sudden and/or traumatic visual disorder (especially related to military service) or Stroke, (2) disabling co-morbidities (e.g., hearing impairments, mobility impairments, vision loss with amputation.), (3) systemic diseases that cause fluctuating visual impairment, such as Diabetes, (4) combined losses of other vision functions (e.g. contrast sensitivity, stereopsis) as diagnosed by eye care professional credentialed in the VA system.

b. Any Member whose sight decreases to such an extent that he/she is found legally blind as defined in Section 1 of this Article can be converted to Membership or Associate Membership if he/she so requests.

c. Low Vision Associate Members shall have the rights, privileges and responsibilities as do all individual members in regional groups, except they shall:

- (1) Not have the rights to hold a National Office.
- (2) Not have the right to hold the position of Regional Group President or Regional Group Vice President or Delegate to a National Convention.
- (3) Have the right as an individual registered at the national convention to vote on National issues.
- (4) Have the right to hold the positions of Regional Group Secretary and/or Treasurer or other lower Regional Group officer positions determined necessary by the regional group, and they may also vote for, and instruct, their respective regional group Delegate.
- (5) Be able to hold the positions of Chapter President, Vice President, Secretary and/or Treasurer within the Chapter of the Regional Group.

If at any time, due to an emergency, a Life Member or Associate Member is unable to fill the positions of Regional Group President or Vice President, that Regional Group may petition the BVA Board of Directors to install a Low Vision Associate Member into these positions on a temporary basis, not to exceed the next election cycle.

Submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committee

## PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 2

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention will add a new category of membership referred to as the “**Low Vision Associate Member**” to Section 5 a., b., and c. in ARTICLE III (Qualifications for Membership, Associate Membership and Honorary Membership). Other changes were made in ARTICLE X (Dues), ARTICLE XV (Discipline of Members and Associate Members), ARTICLE XVI (Trial Procedure) and ARTICLE XIX (Amendments to Bylaws/Petition to U.S. Congress).

### ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES to

ARTICLE III (Qualifications for Membership, Associate Membership...)

#### Section 5

a. Any person having been, or being, in the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible to be a Low Vision Associate Member if he/she has a substantial Visual impairment or dysfunction as determined by an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist as to requiring Blind Rehabilitation Services. The term "Functional Blindness may be referred to this membership group. This class of Low Vision Associate Members can include those individuals with Color or Night blindness when that condition effects their quality of life. Dyslexic conditions which inhibit an individual's ability to read can also meet Low Vision Associate Member qualification. Borderline cases shall be referred to the National Board of Directors for consideration. The below are conditions or disorders which in part identify disabilities which can be considered qualifying individuals for Low Vision Associate Membership:

(1) Insufficient visual resolution (worse than 20/60 in the better eye) with blindness in the other eye 20/200 or less or 20 degrees or less field loss.

(2) Inadequate field of vision (worse than 20 degrees along the widest meridian in the eye with the more intact central field) or homonymous hemianopia

(3) Reduced peak contrast sensitivity.

(4) Insufficient visual resolution or peak contrast sensitivity at high or low lighting within a range typically encountered in everyday life.

(5) Night vision blindness (Retinitis Pigmentosa) or other degenerative retinal diseases in stages when that condition effects their quality of life.

(6) Low Vision disability is characterized by problems and task performance difficulties related to vision loss that have a substantial impact on the person's functional independence or personal safety, and that are out of proportion to the degree of visual impairment as measured by visual acuities or visual fields, as documented by licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Veterans whose functional vision is better than legal blindness may have disability due to: (1) sudden and/or traumatic visual disorder (especially related to military service) or Stroke, (2) disabling co-morbidities

(e.g., hearing impairments, mobility impairments, vision loss with amputation.), (3) systemic diseases that cause fluctuating visual impairment, such as Diabetes, (4) combined losses of other vision functions (e.g. contrast sensitivity, stereopsis) as diagnosed by eye care professional credentialed in the VA system.

b. Any Member whose sight decreases to such an extent that he/she is found legally blind as defined in Section 1 of this Article can be converted to Membership or Associate Membership if he/she so requests.

c. Low Vision Associate Members shall have the rights, privileges and responsibilities as do all individual members in regional groups, except they shall:

(1) Not have the rights to hold a National Office or National District Director.

(2) Not have the right to hold the position of Regional Group President or Regional Group Vice President or Delegate to a National Convention.

(3) Not have the right as an individual registered at the national convention to vote on National issues.

d. Low Vision Associate Members have the right to hold the positions of Regional Group Secretary and/or Treasurer or other lower Regional Group officer positions determined necessary by the regional group, and they may also vote for, and instruct, their respective regional group Delegate.

## **OTHER CHANGES**

### ARTICLE III

Change Section 5 and 6 to 6 and 7, respectively.

Add “Low Vision Membership” to Membership...Associate Membership as applicable to: Article III - Section 2., and the newly renumbered Section 7a. and b.

Replace the following Section:

### ARTICLE X (Dues)

#### Section 2. Life, Associate Life and Low Vision Associate Membership Dues

a. Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws, and Associate Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, shall be \$25.00.

Low Vision Associate Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 5 of these Bylaws shall be \$25.00. If at any time a Low Vision

Associate Member becomes legally blind, upon their request, may convert at no additional cost to either Life or Associate Life, respectively.

Replace at the beginning of Article X, Section 2.d:

“Life and Associate Life Membership...” with “Life, Associate Life and Low Vision Associate Membership...”. Also, near the end of paragraph d. insert after “rata as to the number of life...” the words “Low Vision Associate...”

It shall then read:

## ARTICLE X

Section 2.d. Life, Associate Life and Low Vision Associate Membership dues shall be paid to the National Association with 90% to be placed in the Life Membership Fund and 10% to the BVA General Fund, and the net income earned in dividends and interest from the Life Membership Fund shall be divided among the various regional groups in good standing pro-rata as to the number of life and Low Vision Associate memberships in the regional groups, respectively.

### NOTE:

Following pages attached include sections of administrative changes needed to the BVA Bylaws where the words “Low Vision Associate Member” are relative. The insertions shall follow the terms “Members or Associate Members” or “Life Members or Associate Life Members” respectively and where appropriate. The new terms should read: “Members, Associate or Low Vision Associate Members” or “Life Members, Associate Life or Low Vision Associate Members”.

Need to add "Low Vision Associate Membership" to the following  
(refer to underlined areas)

## ARTICLE III

Section 2. There shall be no discrimination as to race or creed for Membership or Associate Membership in the Association, or for Members or Associate Members holding office or voting for office in the Association.

### Section 6

a. Any person believing himself/herself eligible for Membership or Associate Membership may apply to the Association. Upon verification of the applicant's eligibility and the payment of dues, he/she shall be considered a Member or Associate Member.

b. A Member or Associate Member shall automatically be considered a Member or Associate Member of the regional group in whose jurisdiction he/she resides. Members and Associate Members residing in areas where there are no regional groups shall be Members at-large and Associate Members-at-large.

## ARTICLE V (Duties of Officers)

Section 4.b. (2)(a) Life Membership and Associate Life Membership dues and the Life Membership Fund shall be administered in accordance with Article X of these Bylaws.

## ARTICLE X

### Section 3. Regional Group Dues

a. Payment of dues for membership in the National Association automatically enrolls a Member, Associate Member, Life Member or Associate Life Member into the regional group having jurisdiction over the area of his/her residence without payment of additional dues to that regional group.

b. A regional group shall not levy any additional assessment upon its Members, Associate Members, Life Members or Associate Life Members as a requirement for Membership or Associate Membership in the group.

## ARTICLE XV (Discipline of Members and Associate Members)

Section 1. Any Member or Associate Member may be tried for violations of the provisions of Section 2 of this Article, and if found guilty, may be publicly reprimanded, fined not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), suspended from Membership or Associate Membership, or expelled from the Blinded Veterans Association.

Section 2. Any officer of the Association or officer of a regional group may be removed from his/her office and may be subjected to the sanctions set forth in Section 1 of this Article, and any Member or Associate Member may be subjected to the sanctions set forth in Section 1 of this Article for:

Section 2.b. A willful violation of the Bylaws of the Association or of a regional group, or the rules, regulations, and mandates of the National Board of Directors, or of the governing body of a regional group, or of the Members and Associate Members of the Association or of the Members and Associate Members of a regional group as expressed by majority vote.

Section 2.c. A willful refusal to obey the lawful instructions of a superior officer, resulting in, or threatening to result in, detriment to the Association, a regional group, or its Members or Associate Members or its funds.

ARTICLE XVI (Trial Procedure)

Section 1. Should any officer, Member or Associate Member of the Association be accused of misconduct, such accusation shall be reduced to writing and signed by a Member or Associate Member. Such written charges, before they may be filed or considered, shall bear the following endorsement, signed by some other Member or Associate Member, to wit:

Section 4.c. The Member or Associate Member shall be tried in the vicinity of his/her own regional group, or if not a Member or Associate Member of a regional group, in the vicinity of the nearest regional group.

Section 6. Members or Associate Members against whom charges are pending shall not be permitted to resign their Membership or Associate Membership.

Section 10. If such charges are proved to be false, or are not proved to be true, the committee shall so find and in that event shall determine whether the charges were maliciously made and without foundation in fact; and if they find that such charges were maliciously made, and were not found in fact, then the trial committee may reprimand, fine not more than twenty five dollars (\$25.00) or suspend from Membership or Associate Membership for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days, the person making such charges.

ARTICLE XIX (Amendments to Bylaws/Petition to U.S. Congress)

Section 1.b.(1) A copy of all such proposed amendments shall be made and distributed to the Members and Associate Members no earlier than ninety (90) days nor later than forty-five (45) days before the National Convention.

Submitted by Paul Kaminsky, Life Member

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 3**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention updates Section 1, Section 2 a. and b., Section 3, Section 4 b., Section 5, and Section 6 of Article IV (Officers). Currently Section 1 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 1 - National Officers

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Section 2 Currently Reads:

Section 2

a. Elections for a term of one (1) year for the officers of the Association, except for that of the offices of National Chaplain and National Sergeant-at-Arms, shall be held at the National Convention.

b. Election of officers shall be by a majority of the Members and Associate Members in good standing present or represented by delegate or proxy. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Section 2 - Duration of Officer Positions

a. Elections for a one (1) term, two (2) years for the officers of the Association, including the appointed positions of National Chaplin and National Sergeant-at-Arms, shall be held at the National Convention.

b. Election of officers shall be by a majority of the Members and Associate Members in good standing present or represented by delegate or proxy. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall not serve for more than one (1) term of two (2) years. Once a National Officer leaves his/her position, they must wait 4-years before running for another National Officer position.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

Historically, National Officers have been re-elected for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term after completing their 1<sup>st</sup> term in office. There is considerable time taken at BVA National Conventions that allow for the current Officers to be re-elected. Having National Officers sit for a 2-year term will allow for better time at our national conventions for focusing on other items of benefit to our members. The National Sergeant-at- Arms and National Chaplin will hold the same 1 term, 2-year positions as the National Officers. Once National Officers leave their position, they must wait 4-years before seeking a National Officer position again.

Currently Section 3 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 3 - Election Procedures

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**



Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as being used as a hyper link.

Section 4 Currently Reads:

Section 4

a. The National Board of Directors shall appoint the National Chaplain and National Sergeant-at-Arms from among those duly qualified Members, Associate Members or Honorary Members.

b. Such appointment shall be for a term of one (1) year and shall be effective on the same date as that of the National Officers elected in accordance with Section 2 of this Article.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Section 4 - National Sergeant-at-Arms and National Chaplin

a. The National Board of Directors shall appoint the National Chaplain and National Sergeant-at-Arms from among those duly qualified Members, Associate Members or Honorary Members.

b. Such appointment shall be for one (1) term, two (2) years, and shall be effective on the same date as that of the National Officers elected in accordance with Section 2 - Duration of Officer Positions, these positions may be reappointed for another 2-year term.

Currently Section 5 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 5 - BVA Oath of Office

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 6 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 6 - Officer Vacancies

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committee

## **PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 4**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention will make changes in Section 1 a., Section 2 c., Section 3 f., g., l., m., and n., Section 4, and Section 5 of ARTICLE VI (District Directors).

### Section 1 a. Currently Reads:

#### Section 1

a. The United States and its possessions shall be divided into six (6) Director Districts, to be known as Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the territorial boundaries of which shall be established at the Winter board meeting in 1994 and each three years thereafter by the National Board of Directors on the basis of the number of Members and Associate Members on November 30, 1993 and each three years thereafter, so that each District will contain as nearly as practicable an equal number of Members and Associate Members.

### ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE

#### Section 1 - District Boundaries

a. The United States and its possessions shall be divided into four (4) Districts to be known as District 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each District will have one Director responsible for that District. The territorial boundaries will be established at the Winter Board meeting in 2022 and each three-years thereafter by the National Board of Directors based on the number of Members and Associate Members on November 30, 2021, and each three years thereafter, so that each District will contain as nearly as practicable an equal number of Members and Associate Members.

### REASON FOR CHANGE:

Reduce the number of District from 6 to 4 to reflect our national membership. Clarifies the title of the Director to lead the district. Updates the language to reflect that the territorial boundaries will be established at the Mid-Winter Board meeting of Directors in 2022.

Currently Section 2 addresses the election of District Directors.

### ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES

Move Section 2 down to Section 3 in its entirety so that a new Section 2 is inserted.

The new Section 2 reads as follows:

## Section 2 - District Director Responsibilities

For a complete description of the job responsibilities and requirements of a District Director, please refer to the Policies section in the Regional Group Manual.

### REASON FOR CHANGES:

The new Section 2 addresses the job responsibilities for District Directors and is available in the Regional Group Manual. This will provide specific information to potential candidates for Directors of their responsibilities.

### Section 2 c. Currently Reads:

#### Section 2

c. Each District shall elect a Director every three (3) years; two (2) Districts shall elect Directors one year; two (2) Districts shall elect Directors the following year; and two (2) Districts shall elect Directors the third year.

### **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Move Section 2 to Section 3.

#### Section 3 - Election of District Directors

a. Each District shall elect a Director every three (3) years. In 2022, a special election will be held to elect all four (4) District Directors and every three (3) years thereafter (Refer to Policy 21 D Special (4) District Director Election 2022 in the Regional Group Manual).

### REASON FOR CHANGES:

To help clarify the election time frame for Directors. In 2022, all four (4) Districts will hold elections for their directors and every three (3) years to follow. Refer to Policy 21 D Special (4) District Director Election 2022 in the Regional Group Manual.

### Section 3 Currently Reads:

Elections for Directors from Director Districts shall be conducted by mail by the National Headquarters in accordance with the following procedures:

### **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Section 3 becomes Section 4 with the following change.

#### Section 4 - Election Procedures for District Directors

Elections for District Directors shall be conducted by mail, or in the future, as authorized by the BVA Board of Directors or the BVA Executive Director, via an electronic means such as web-based voting.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

To allow for future voting to be done electronically.

**Section 3 f. Currently Reads:**

Section 3.

f. Ballots shall be sent to individuals who become Members or Associate Members after the date specified for mailing of ballots, provided that marked ballots can be returned by the deadline specified in subsection 3e. above.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Move from Section 3 to Section 4

f. Ballots shall be sent to individuals who are Life, Associate or Low Vision Veteran Associate Members after the date specified for mailing of ballots, provided that marked ballots can be returned by the deadline specified in subsection 4e. above.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

This letter f. is now a part of Section 4 and no longer is in Section 3. To include Low Vision Veteran Associate Members.

**Section 3 g. Currently Reads:**

Section 3

g. Ballot return envelopes shall be held unopened at the Association's Headquarters until thirty-five (35) days before the National Convention.

(1) At that time, all ballot return envelopes for a given Director District shall be opened, the ballots extracted, and the votes tabulated without reference to the return envelopes in which the ballots were received, in order to maintain secret ballot procedures insofar as is possible.

(2) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared elected.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Change Section 3 to Section 4 and add 3 to letter g.:

g. Ballot return envelopes shall be held unopened at the Association's Headquarters until thirty-five (35) days before the National Convention.

(1) At that time, all ballot return envelopes for a given Director District shall be opened, the ballots extracted, and the votes tabulated without reference to the return envelopes in which the ballots were received, to maintain secret ballot procedures insofar as is possible.

(2) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared elected.

(3) In order for a clear and smooth transition for the relationship building between the District Director and the Regional Group they represent, the BVA President may immediately swear in to position the District Director after the election results are finalized. This swearing in may be facilitated by any means available, in person, telephonic, video conference call or conference call.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

To facilitate a timely communications and relationship building with the Director and the Regional Group.

**Section 3 l. Currently Reads:**

Section 3

1. A Member or Associate Member who is a paid employee of the National Organization shall be required to resign from his/her paid position before accepting the office of District Director.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Move Section 3 to Section 4 and changing l. to read:

1. A District Director will hold no more than two consecutive terms. In the event no one from the Regional Group submits his/her name to run for District Director, the current District Director may run for additional terms to represent the District. An appointment of a District Director can be made by the BVA President on an interim basis until a District Director is elected for the position.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

To limit the terms Directors will hold their positions as well as to mentor/foster Regional Group Officers for Director positions. To identify the BVA President being able to appoint an interim District Director until elections are held in the District.

Currently Section 3 l. is stated above.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Section 3 becomes Section 4 and with the new text in l., what was in l. moves down to m. and what was m. moves to n.

Currently Section 4 and Section 5 have no changes.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Move the contents of Section 4 to Section 5 and add the title District Director Vacancies to Section 5.

Move the contents of Section 5 to Section 6 and add the title, Interim District Directors to Section 6.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

With the addition of a new Section 2, the other Sections will cascade down in numbering.

Submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committee

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 5**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention updates Section 1, Section 2 a., b., c., and d., and Section 3 of ARTICLE X (Dues).

**Section 1 Currently Reads:**

Section 1. Annual Membership and Associate Membership Dues

- a. There shall be no Annual Dues.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 1. Annual Membership Dues

- a. There shall be no Annual Dues.

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

To change the title of this Section and to provide a hyper link.

**Section 2 a. Currently Reads:**

Section 2. Life and Associate Life Membership Dues

- a. Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws, and Associate Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, shall be \$25.00.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 2. Membership Dues

a. Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws, and Associate Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, and Article III, Section 5, Low Vision Associate Member, shall be \$25.00.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To include Low Vision Associate Member in this Section.

Section 2 b. Currently Reads:

Section 2.

b. Any Life or Associate Life Member who has died shall have his/her membership continued in memoriam unto perpetuity. A roster of perpetual Life and Associate Life Members shall be maintained at the National Headquarters.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 2.

b. Any Life, Associate Life or Low Vision Associate Member who has died shall have his/her membership continued in memoriam unto perpetuity. A roster of perpetual Life, Associate Life and Low Vision Associate Members shall be maintained at the National Headquarters.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To include the Low Vision Associate Member in item b.

Section 2 c. Currently Reads:

Section 2.

c. Should an application for Membership or Associate Membership be rejected, dues or application fees paid by the applicant shall be refunded and his/her application shall not be entertained again for a period of one (1) year.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 2.

c. Should an application for Life, Associate Life or Low Vision Associate Membership be rejected, dues or application fees paid by the applicant shall be refunded and his/her application shall not be entertained again for a period of one (1) year.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To include the Low Vision Associate Member in item c.

Section 2 d. Currently Reads:

Section 2.

d. Life and Associate Life Membership dues shall be paid to the National Association with 90% to be placed in the Life Membership Fund and 10% to the BVA General Fund, and the net income earned in dividends and interest from the Life Membership Fund shall be divided among the various regional groups in good standing pro-rata as to the number of life memberships in the regional groups, respectively.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 2.

d. Membership dues shall be paid to the National Association with 100% to be placed in the General Fund. The net income earned in dividends and interest from the Life Membership Fund shall be divided among the various regional groups in good standing pro-rata as to the number of members in the regional groups, respectively.

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

The membership application fee will help defray the actual cost of processing a membership application. The remaining cost of membership processing will be absorbed by the General Fund.

Section 3. Currently Reads:

Section 3. Regional Group Dues

a. Payment of dues for membership in the National Association automatically enrolls a Member, Associate Member, Life Member or Associate Life Member into the regional group having jurisdiction over the area of his/her residence without payment of additional dues to that regional group.

b. A regional group shall not levy any additional assessment upon its Members, Associate Members, Life Members or Associate Life Members as a requirement for Membership or Associate Membership in the group.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 3. Regional Group Dues

a. Payment of dues for membership in the National Association automatically enrolls a Life, Associate Life or Low Vision Associate Member into the regional group having jurisdiction over the area of his/her residence without payment of additional dues to that regional group.



b. A regional group shall not levy any additional assessment upon its Life, Associate Life or Low Vision Associate Members as a requirement for Membership or Associate Membership in the group.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To incorporate Low Vision Associate Members in this Section.

Submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committee

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 6**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention updates Article XIV (Regional Groups) in Sections 1 through 13 and creates Sections 15 and 16.

Currently Section 1 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 1 - Creating Regional Groups

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 2 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 2 - Regional Group Charters

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 3 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 3 - Division of Regional Groups

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 4 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 4 - Consolidation of Regional Groups

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 5 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 5 - Incorporation of Regional Groups

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 6 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 6 - Investigation of a Regional Group

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 7 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 7 - Loss of Charter

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 8 has no title.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

## Section 8 - Revocation Procedures for a Regional Group

### REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

Currently Section 9 has no title.

### ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE

## Section 9 - Rules and Regulations for Regional Groups

### REASON FOR CHANGE:

Adding a title will allow our members to quickly identify the information in this Section as well as it being used as a hyper link.

### Section 10 Currently Reads:

#### Section 10

a. Immediately after its organization, each new regional group shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer (provided that the group, in its discretion, may combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer), and other officers from among its Members and/or Associate Members considered necessary for its operation and shall forthwith adopt and forward to BVA National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) bylaws for its government and control.

(1) Such bylaws shall not be effective unless or until approved by the National Board of Directors.

(2) No bylaws, or provisions thereof, not required of all regional groups under the same or similar circumstances, shall be required of any one regional group.

b. To facilitate efficiency and good communications, a regional group shall submit an up-to-date listing of its officers (to include name, office held, address and telephone number with area code) to BVA Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) immediately after its initial organization, and thereafter within thirty (30) days after an election of officers or any change of officer(s) for any reason.

### RECOMMENDED CHANGES

#### Section 10 - Officers and By Laws of Regional Groups

a. Immediately after its organization, each new regional group shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer (provided that the group, in its discretion, may combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer), and other officers from among its Members and/or Associate Members considered necessary for its operation, to

maintain its good standing and shall forthwith adopt and forward to the District Director and to the BVA National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) bylaws for its government and control. Regional Group Officers shall be in a good standing status with the BVA.

(1) Such bylaws shall not be effective unless or until approved by the National Board of Directors.

(2) No bylaws, or provisions thereof, not required of all regional groups under the same or similar circumstances, shall be required of any one regional group.

### **ADDING PROPOSED SECTION**

(3) The Regional Group, based on its discretion, may establish Chapters/Districts within the geographic boundaries of the Regional Group. The Chapters/Districts will follow the same Officer positions as the Regional Group. The Chapters/District will abide by and be subordinate to the Regional Groups Bylaws as well as the BVA National Bylaws. If the Chapters/Districts elect to create their own By Laws, these By Laws shall not be effective unless or until approved by the BVA National Board of Directors.

b. To facilitate efficiency and good communications, a regional group shall submit an up-to-date listing of its officers (to include name, office held, address, telephone number with area code and email address (if applicable) to the District Director and to the BVA Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) immediately after its initial organization, and thereafter within thirty (30) days after an election of officers or any change of officer(s) for any reason.

### **REASON FOR CHANGES:**

To ensure the Regional Group Officers as well as the Regional Group continues to maintain their good standing. Providing the email addresses for the Regional Group Officers will allow current as well as future BVA members better opportunities to communicate with the Regional Group Officers. The District Directors should receive this important information directly from the Regional Groups within their Districts to ensure they have timely information on their Regional Group Officers. Create Number 3 so that Chapters/District created within the Regional Groups recognize they are within the responsibility of their Regional Group and must abide by the Regional Groups as well as the BVA National Bylaws.

### **Section 11 Currently Reads:**

#### Section 11

All meetings at which regional group business is conducted, including the election of regional group officers, the election and instruction of delegates to the National Convention, the establishment of regional group policies and programs, and the spending of regional group funds, must be held in a location within the regional group's territorial

boundaries as set forth in the regional group's Charter, issued pursuant to this Article XIV.

### **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

#### Section 11 - Regional Group Business Meetings

All meetings at which regional group business is conducted, including the election of regional group officers, the election and instruction of delegates to the National Convention, the establishment of regional group policies and programs, and the spending of regional group funds, can be held in person, with an electronic means such as a teleconference call (to include an internet-based communications platforms), or a combination of both. In person meetings will be held within the territorial boundaries of the Regional Group. Members attending the meeting via an electronic means, need not be within the territorial boundaries of the Regional Group. A quorum of at least 5 members must be present, two will be Regional Group Officers, one being the President or Vice-President. Regional Group Members must be notified in writing of the Regional Group business meeting(s), with Membership mailing labels provided by the BVA Headquarters. Meetings will be held in accordance with what is set forth in the regional group's Charter, issued pursuant to this Article XIV.

#### **REASON FOR CHANGE:**

To clearly identify the different methods of conducting Regional Group business meetings, ensuring a quorum is present with at least two Regional Group Officers, one being the President or Vice President and if attending via an electronic means, members can be outside of the territorial boundaries of the Regional Group. Regional Groups must use Membership mailing labels provided by the BVA Headquarters.

#### **Section 12 Currently Reads:**

##### Section 12

a. Each regional group shall be entitled to elect a delegate to the National Convention from among its Members and Associate Members in good standing and to instruct that delegate as to voting for or against any given subject, or for or against any particular candidate or candidates for office.

b. All regional groups are required to inform their Members and Associate Members, in writing, of the date/time/location of all regional group meetings. This specifically includes the meeting at which balloting will take place for the purpose of electing a delegate to the BVA National Convention and instructing said delegate as to candidates for National office and other issues.

(1) A copy of the notice of meeting to elect and instruct delegates shall be sent to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) at the same time it is mailed to the Members and Associate Members. Failure to submit subject notice to the

National Headquarters may result in the regional group's delegation not being seated at the National Convention.

(2) In no instance shall notice be less than forty (40) days prior to the National Convention, or less than ten (10) days prior to that regional group meeting.

c. Credentials, certifying to the election of the regional group delegate, and instructions to him/her shall be in writing, signed by the regional group president, authenticated by the secretary, and in triplicate.

d. When such delegate has been so instructed, he/she must vote in accordance with his/her instructions; and if he/she refuses to do so, the National Secretary shall cast a ballot for him/her in the name of the regional group issuing such instructions.

## **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

### Section 12 - Election of Delegate(s) for a Regional Group

a. Each regional group shall be entitled to elect a delegate and at the discretion of the Regional Group, an alternate delegate (to serve as a back up to the delegate), to the National Convention from among its Members and Associate Members in good standing and to instruct that delegate(s) as to voting for or against any given subject, or for or against any candidate or candidates for office.

b. The Regional Group may conduct their business meeting in person, with an electronic means such as a teleconference call (to include an internet-based communications platforms), or a combination of both.

c. All regional groups are required to inform their Members and Associate Members, in writing, of the date/time/location of all regional group meetings. If the meeting is held via teleconferencing or an internet communications platform, the Regional Group members shall be notified by mail of the time, date, and the conference call number for the meeting with no fewer than 15 days of advanced notice prior to the Regional Group business meeting. The Regional Group President and Secretary shall do a roll call of all members participating in any teleconference business meeting to ensure that only members of that Regional Group are voting. This specifically includes the meeting /teleconference call at which balloting will take place for the purpose of electing delegate(s) to the BVA National Convention and instructing said delegate(s) as to candidates for National office and other issues.

(1) A copy of the notice of the meeting/teleconference to elect and instruct delegates shall be sent to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) at the same time it is mailed to the Members of the Regional Group. Failure to submit subject notice to the National Headquarters may result in the regional group's delegation not being seated at the National Convention.

(2) In no instance shall notice be less than forty (40) days prior to the National Convention, or less than fifteen (15) days prior to that regional group meeting/teleconference.

(3) If the business meeting is being held via teleconferencing, Regional Group officers can decide to mail out the ballots with clear instructions on voting and

instructions with the deadlines for returning all ballots to the Regional Group Secretary as an option to conference call voting. Those nominated for all officer positions will have their names on the ballots.

d. Credentials, certifying to the election of the regional group delegate(s), and instructions to him/her shall be in writing, signed by the regional group president, authenticated by the secretary, and in triplicate.

e. When such delegate(s) has been so instructed, he/she must vote in accordance with his/her instructions; and if he/she refuses to do so, the National Secretary shall cast a ballot for him/her in the name of the regional group issuing such instructions.

f. Please refer to the Regional Group Manual for additional information.

### REASON FOR CHANGES:

To clearly define in our Bylaws that an alternate delegate can represent the Regional Group at our national convention. This is consistent with what is in our Regional Group Manual. To provide a procedure for conducting Regional Group business meetings via teleconferencing or other electronic means. Reference is made to the Regional Group Manual for additional information.

### Section 13 Currently Reads:

#### Section 13

a. In order to be recognized by the Blinded Veterans Association as a regional group in good standing, a regional group shall:

(1) Meet at least once during each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

(2) Submit a copy of the minutes of its meeting(s) to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) within sixty (60) days of such meeting(s).

(3) Submit an annual financial statement to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) on the forms provided for that purpose within three (3) months following the end of the fiscal year (not later than September 30).

(4) Comply at all times with the BVA National Bylaws, as amended.

(5) Comply with all written directives and other communiqués of the National Headquarters in a timely manner.

### ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES

#### Section 13 - Requirements for a "Good Standing" Status

a. To be recognized by the Blinded Veterans Association as a regional group in good standing, a regional group must provide the below 3 items in the following order:

(1) Submit an annual financial statement to the District Director and the National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) on the forms provided for that purpose within sixty days after the close of the fiscal year. no later than August 30.

This report is from the previous year (for example, 2018 - 2019 finance report is the start of the 2020 fiscal reporting).

(2) Meet at least twice during each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

(3) Submit a copy of the minutes of its meeting(s) to the District Director and the BVA National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) within thirty (30) days of such meeting(s).

(4) Participate in at least one community event during the year to bring awareness to the Regional Group and the BVA (for example, White Cane Day or Veterans Day activities). Report participation in this event within thirty (30) days of the event to the District Director.

(5) Comply at all times with the BVA National Bylaws, as amended.

(6) Comply with all written directives and other communiqués of the National Headquarters in a timely manner.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

Provide a timelier schedule for reporting of the regional group minutes from its meeting. Our Regional Group Manual requires Regional Group notify the BVA Headquarters within 30 days of the election of its Officers and this will maintain a 30-day consistency. To include the District Director with the minutes from the Regional Groups meeting. Engaging in community events will allow for name recognition of the Regional Groups and the BVA.

**Section 13, Item c. Currently Reads:**

c. Regional group program activities shall be left to the discretion of the individual regional groups.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Delete Item c. from Section 13

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

The proposed change for Section 13, Item a. will identify the Regional Groups participating annually in at least one community event. The Regional Groups will decide which event it will participate in.

**Section 13, Item d. Currently Reads:**

d. Regional groups shall establish bank accounts in the name of the regional group and are encouraged to bond the account signatories.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**



## Create a new Section 14 - Financial Responsibility

- a. The Regional Groups financial account should have at least two signatories, at all times, on the account to ensure the accuracy and security of the account. Generally, the signatories are the President of the regional group and the Treasurer or the Secretary/Treasurer if the group has both a Secretary and Treasurer.
- b. Regional groups shall establish bank accounts in the name of the regional group.
- c. Refer to the Regional Group Manual for additional information.

### REASON FOR CHANGES:

Currently Section 13, Item d. has an extremely limited amount of information regarding the financial responsibility of the Regional Group. Creating this new Section 14 removes the financial responsibility information from the current Section 13, which addresses the “Good Standing” status of a Regional Group, as well as other aspects of Regional Groups. The new Section 14 adds more information on the Regional Groups financial responsibility. In addition, reference is given to the Regional Group Manual which contains more financial information for the Regional Group.

### Section 13, Item e. Currently Reads:

e. In advance of undertaking any fundraising, other than fundraising conducted within the regional group involving no outside party and as described in subparagraph f. below, regional groups shall submit a program budget, and plan of fundraising activities to the National Board of Directors for approval.

(1) Written approval from the National Board of Directors shall be required before such fundraising activities are initiated.

(2) The regional groups shall be notified of the action of the National Board of Directors within sixty (60) days of submission of the fundraising plan.

(3) The advice of the Executive Director or the Administrative Director of the National Organization shall be obtained before submitting such fundraising plans.

f. As specified in this subparagraph, regional groups planning limited, within group fundraising projects, may by letter or telephone, obtain approval of the fundraising project from the Executive Director or the Administrative Director of the National Organization.

(1) Fundraising activities authorized under this sub-paragraph would include only those projects carried out by members of the regional group and which involve no outside party in any manner.

(2) In carrying out fundraising projects covered by this subparagraph, the words 'Blinded Veterans Association' or 'BVA' shall be used only as they appear in the official regional group name.

(3) Examples of fundraising projects covered by this subparagraph would be:

- (a) soliciting the regional group membership for cash and equipment donations to support regional group volunteer programs.
- (b) selling raffle tickets at regional group meetings.
- (c) auctioning donated items at regional group meetings.
- (d) holding yard sales or garage sales of donated items; and
- (e) selling tickets to regional group picnics, dances and similar events conducted solely by the regional group.

## **ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Create a new Section 15 within Article XIV Regional Groups to read:

### Section 15 - Regional Group Fundraising Activities

a. A Regional Group will submit a developed proposal for all fundraising activities involving outside companies/corporations through the District Director to the National Board of Directors for approval. The Regional Group will include how donated funds will be utilized.

(1) The advice of the Executive Director or the Administrative Director of the National Organization shall be obtained, if necessary, before submitting any fundraising proposals.

(2) The regional group shall submit any proposals through the District Director for forwarding to the BVA Board of Directors. A copy will be sent to the BVA Administrative Director.

(3) The District Director and the BVA Board of Directors shall review the proposal and respond within fifteen (15) days with approval or rejection of the fundraising proposal.

(4) If the District Director and the BVA Board of Directors reject the proposal as is, the regional group may appeal the decision with any additional information to support their fundraising proposal. The appeal will be forwarded to the BVA Board of Directors through the District Director. The BVA Board of Directors will take fifteen (15) days to make a decision on the fundraising appeal.

(5). The District Director has the responsibility of notifying the Regional Group with any decision made by the BVA Board of Directors.

(6). The words 'Blinded Veterans Association' or 'BVA' shall be used only as they appear in the official regional group name contained within the charter approved by the National Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors reserve the right to enact disciplinary actions against a regional group that have been found in violation of any part of Article XIV, Section 15.

b. It is not necessary for Regional Groups to receive approval for any internal fundraising activities.

c. Refer to the Regional Group Manual for additional fundraising information.

## **REASON FOR CHANGES:**

Provide Regional Groups with a timelier decision regarding their external fundraising activities by first involving their District Director and the BVA Board of Directors. Additional information will be provided in the Regional Group Manual.

Section 13, Item g. Currently Reads:

g. Regional groups shall obtain prior approval from the National Board of Directors before acting on Federal legislation.

h. Regional groups may work for legislation in their state legislatures, provided that all regional groups in a state agree on the action to be taken.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGES**

Create a new Section 16 to read:

Section 16 - Regional Group Legislative Advocacy

a. Regional groups shall obtain prior approval from the BVA National Director of Government Relations and/or Executive Director, with a copy to the District Director, before acting on Federal legislation, unless advocacy activities correspond with BVA national official requests for action by the regional group membership.

b. Regional groups may engage in legislative advocacy within the state, county, municipality, or regional level within their geographical territory without the approval from the National Board of Directors or National Organization that abides by state and federal regulations and statutes concerning political activities of not-for-profit membership organizations.

c. In carrying out legislative advocacy covered by any part of Article XIV, Section 16, the words 'Blinded Veterans Association' or 'BVA' shall be used only as they appear in the official regional group name contained within the charter approved by the National Board of Directors.

d. Legislative advocacy must always focus on the best interest of the BVA and its mission.

**REASON FOR CHANGES:**

Allow Regional Groups greater flexibility to advocate for legislation on their behalf especially on the state and local levels.

Submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committee

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 7**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention will replace Section 6 a. of ARTICLE VII (National Board of Directors).

Section 6 a. Currently Reads:

a. The National Board of Directors is authorized to delegate its powers to an Executive Committee of its own members which in its discretion could and would operate for the welfare of the Association, said Committee to consist of at least three (3) members of the National Board of Directors.

**ADDING PROPOSED CHANGE**

Section 6.

a. The National Board of Directors is authorized to delegate its powers to an Executive Committee of its own members which in its discretion could and would operate for the welfare of the Association. Any actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the full National Board.

(1) The Executive Committee to consist of three (3) members of the National Board of Directors. These shall be the National President, Vice-President, and National Secretary.

(2) In addition to delegated powers noted above, standing responsibility shall be to review staff salaries and review staff hiring and report recommendations to the full National Board.

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

The National Bylaws Article V, Section 1.d. give authority to the National President to appoint committees as may be necessary for the successful operation of the BVA. The Executive Committee (EC) although called a committee is by Robert's Rules a Board within the Executive Board and therefore not a committee appointment of the National President. According to BVA National Bylaws, the powers of the EC are delegated from the National Board of Directors. The size of the EC has varied from 3 to sometimes 6 members basically at the wish of the National President. At six members, this would constitute a majority of the National Board, and as such could cause the EC to overreach its authority. The EC is mostly necessary only when decisions need to be made without the need for the full Board's participation. During such times, the full National Board would defer limited authority to the EC, and the EC then reports back to the full National Board. Currently the National President assigns Board members to the EC and assembles and task the EC without consent of the full National Board. Often the full National Board is unaware of the decisions or actions caused by these tasks. Additionally, the makeup of the EC should be the organization's most experienced and should not expose the newest and least experienced to the perplexities of the mission and legalities. This proposed amendment establishes the most experienced Officers to be in position to make the immediate decisions tasked to the Executive Committee. The full National Board has failed to ensure that the EC fills its requirements outlined in the BVA Bylaws. If the National Board is decided by the members assembled in

Convention, then too should be the makeup of the Executive Committee, the Board within the Board. According to Robert's Rules of Order (Page 485) "it is usual for the bylaws to establish an executive committee composed of a specified number of board members". This proposed amendment establishes the proper guidance noted in Robert's Rules of Order.

**NOTE:**

To designate the persons assigned to the Executive Committee (EC) and to limit the appointees to three (3).

Submitted by Dennis O'Connell (DD1) and Darryl Goldsmith (DD5)

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT NO. 8**

This proposed amendment, if passed by the Convention will add a new Article XXIII (Emergency Powers) to the National Bylaws.

**PROPOSED BYLAW:**

**EMERGENCY POWERS**

When a national emergency has been declared by the President of the United States; or, when an unknown and unforeseen event occurs of such grave magnitude that it threatens the continued existence and viability of this organization, the board may invoke the provisions of this article by a unanimous vote of the board and a two-thirds (2/3) concurring majority vote of the Presidents of regional groups in good standing.

This article permits the board to temporarily freeze, extend, suspend, nullify, or modify any provision or combination of provisions in these bylaws that preclude the ability to conduct normal business. These powers may continue until external factors allow for the resumption of normal operations. Any action taken under this article will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the board members voting.

**REASON:**

For example, the federal incorporating charter law requires us to hold an annual convention.

Submitted by Robert L. Smith, Life Member