

Proposed Bylaw Amendments 2025-2026

ISSUE 1: INABILITY TO ADOPT NEW OPTIMIST SLOGANS

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: The “Friend of Youth” slogan is one of many we have had. While our slogans may change from time to time being imbedded in the Bylaws makes it more difficult to adopt new slogans. Moreover Policy ICD-1 already protects our slogan along with other titles, emblems, seal, insignia or other adopted or registered trademarks of Optimist International.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article I.
SECTION 4. Official Slogan

The official slogan of OI shall be “Friend of Youth”

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article I.
SECTION 4. Official Slogan

~~The official slogan of OI shall be “Friend of Youth”~~

ISSUE 2: OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CORE VALUES ADOPTED IN 2024 BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ARE CURRENTLY NOT IN OUR OI BYLAWS

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: Our Identification and Purposes should include our Core Values.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article I.
SECTION 4. Official Slogan

The official slogan of OI shall be “Friend of Youth”

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article I.
SECTION 4. Core Values

Our commitment to bringing out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves is guided by the following core values:

- Optimism
- Respect
- Integrity
- Global Community

ISSUE 3: MAINTAINING INFORMATION IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: In trying to clean up and simplify our Bylaws, it would be beneficial to remove duplicate information that is provided for in Policies. This includes any details pertaining to dues and fees as all of this information is already included in the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees. Maintaining information in multiple locations increases the risk of errors and confusion.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 A(i)(iv). Life Membership

Life Membership is granted to any Club Member in good standing, except for college members, upon payment to OI of the Life Membership Enrollment Fee as detailed in Article IX (2)(D)(3).

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 D(c). Processing Fees

Any member in good standing may secure a Life Membership upon payment to OI of a fee equal to ten times the existing annual dues multiplied by a factor of ten (10) with a period of two years. Such life membership shall be in force for only one Optimist Club as long as the individual is a member of an affiliated Optimist Club.

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 A(i)(iv). Life Membership

Life Membership is granted to any Club Member in good standing, except for college members, upon payment to OI of the Life Membership Enrollment Fee as detailed in ~~Article IX (2)(D)(3)~~. **the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees.**

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 D(c). Processing Fees

Any member in good standing may secure a Life Membership upon payment to OI of a fee **in accordance with the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees.** ~~equal to ten times the existing annual dues multiplied by a factor of ten (10) with a period of two years.~~ Such life membership shall be in force for only one Optimist Club **and may be transferred upon request to OI.** ~~as long as the individual is a member of an affiliated Optimist Club.~~

ISSUE 4: CONFUSION REGARDING AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR JOI CLUBS

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: With the review of this Bylaw and after discussion with the JOI leaders, it was determined that the intent of the program is to accommodate students still enrolled in school. The current Bylaw created confusion around the age limitation with the wording “less than 19 years of age prior to September 30th of the current administrative year”. Recognizing that there may be students graduating from high school at different ages based on academic ability or differences between countries, we felt it was more accurate to state “currently enrolled in elementary, middle or high school or equivalent education systems.” This would also allow us to be inclusive of those being home schooled. In addition we are removing the reference to Alpha, Junior and Octagon clubs as the JOI organization does not differentiate clubs by age anymore.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 C. Youth Club-Junior Optimist
International (JOI) club

Membership in this class of OI shall consist of affiliated Junior Optimist International Clubs (JOI). JOI Clubs shall consist of young people less than 19 years of age prior to September 30th of the current administrative year and not yet a member of an Adult Optimist Club (to include College Clubs). Special consideration may be made for students with disabilities. JOI Clubs shall consist of Alpha, Junior Optimist or Octagon youth clubs, the requirements of which shall be set forth in JOI Policies of OI (the “JOI policies”). JOI Clubs shall meet all requirements for affiliation as prescribed in the JOI policies. New Club formation and Club revocation procedures must also be consistent with JOI policies. JOI Districts and the JOI Board of Directors (herein “JOI Board”) shall have direct supervision over JOI Member Clubs under the auspices of the Board. JOI policies shall be established by the JOI Board with the approval of the Board.

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 C. Youth Club-Junior Optimist
International (JOI) club

Membership in this class of OI shall consist of affiliated Junior Optimist International Clubs (JOI). JOI Clubs shall consist of young people **currently enrolled in elementary, middle, secondary or equivalent education systems** less than 19 years of age prior to September 30th of the current administrative year and not yet a member of an Adult Optimist Club (to include College Clubs). ~~Special consideration may be made for students with disabilities. JOI Clubs shall consist of Alpha, Junior Optimist or Octagon youth clubs, the requirements of which shall be set forth in JOI Policies of OI (the “JOI policies”).~~ JOI Clubs shall meet all requirements for affiliation as prescribed in the JOI policies. New Club formation and Club revocation procedures must also be consistent with JOI policies. JOI Districts and the JOI Board of Directors (herein “JOI Board”) shall have direct supervision over JOI Member Clubs under the auspices of the Board. JOI policies shall be established by the JOI Board with the approval of the Board.

ISSUE 5: DIRECTORS ARE NOT DEFINED AS INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS WHILE VICE PRESIDENTS ARE ASSIGNED LEGAL LIABILITY FOR DECISIONS THEY ARE NOT PARTY TO MAKING

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: The elected Directors of our Board are not listed as officers of the organization even though this position was created close to 20 years ago. It is imperative that we recognize these members as Officers so they are covered by our Officers Liability Insurance and to bring our Bylaws up to date. Additionally it is recommended to update the wording for the role of the Vice Presidents as they are no longer members of the Board.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article VII.
SECTION 1. Officers

The Officers of OI shall be the President, the Immediate Past President, the President-Elect, the Vice Presidents and the Secretary-Treasurer. The Vice Presidents shall be elected as forth in these Bylaws. Except for the Secretary-Treasurer the term of office shall be one year.

Bylaws Article VII.
SECTION 5. Vice Presidents

The Vice Presidents shall perform such duties as ordinarily incumbent upon Vice Presidents and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President of the Board. Vice Presidents shall meet as a council with the Board at the International Convention.

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1. Officers

The Officers of OI shall be the President, the Immediate Past President, the President-Elect, the Vice Presidents, **the Directors-At-Large** and the Secretary-Treasurer. ~~The Vice Presidents shall be elected as forth in these Bylaws. Except for the Secretary-Treasurer the term of office shall be one year.~~

Bylaws Article VII.
SECTION 5. Vice Presidents

The Vice Presidents shall perform such duties as are **assigned to them by the President or Board and shall meet annually as a council with the Board at a time to be determined by the President or Board.** ~~ordinarily incumbent upon Vice Presidents and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President of the Board. Vice Presidents shall meet as a council with the Board at the International Convention.~~

Bylaws Article VII.
SECTION 7. **Directors-At-Large**
The Directors-At-Large shall perform such duties as are ordinarily incumbent on a Director and such other duties that may be assigned to them by the President or the Board.

ISSUE 6: MAINTAINING INFORMATION IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

(Submitted by The International Board of Directors)

EXPLANATION: In trying to clean up and simplify our Bylaws, it would be beneficial to remove duplicate information that is provided for in Policies. This includes any details pertaining to dues and fees as all of this information is already included in the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees. Maintaining information in multiple locations increases the risk of errors and confusion.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 B(f). Revenues and Dues

Friends of Optimist. Members recognized as “Friend of Optimist” will be required to pay an annual membership fee as established by the Board and published on the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees. OI will receive 60 percent of the fee and 40 percent of the fee will be sent to the Sponsoring Club or to the District if there is no Sponsoring Club. The Friend shall be billed directly by OI and payment will be sent to OI for distribution to either the Club or District.

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 D (a). Processing Fees

Upon enrollment of each new Member except a former Member or College club Member by a Club, the Club shall pay to OI a processing fee of \$15. Upon enrollment of each new College Member by a Club, the Club shall pay to OI a processing fee of \$5

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 B(f). Revenues and Dues

Friends of Optimist. Members recognized as “Friend of Optimist” will be required to pay an annual membership fee as established by the Board and published on the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees. ~~OI will receive 60 percent of the fee and 40 percent of the fee will be sent to the Sponsoring Club or to the District if there is no Sponsoring Club.~~ The Friend shall be billed directly by OI and payment will be sent to OI for distribution to either the Club or District **as published on the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees.**

Bylaws Article IX.
SECTION 2 D (a). Processing Fees

Upon enrollment of each new Member ~~except a former Member or College club Member by a Club,~~ the Club shall pay to OI a processing fee **as outlined in the Master Schedule of Dues and Fees.** ~~of \$15. Upon enrollment of each new College Member by a Club, the Club shall pay to OI a processing fee of \$5~~

ISSUE 7: DECLINING MEMBERSHIP

(Submitted by Optimist Club of Paso Robles)

EXPLANATION: With the decline of membership over the past several years and taking into consideration the effects of the COVID pandemic, we feel there is a need to grow our current clubs and foster new clubs so that our organization can continue to thrive now, and in the years to come. We feel this may be a temporary fix to help solve our diminishing membership and respectfully submit this proposal to the Optimist International Governance Committee for consideration.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 E (c). New Clubs

The Board approves affiliation to OI. Clubs shall submit a written application for affiliation in the form and manner prescribed by the Board and Board policies, and each applicant shall be subject to the acceptance and approval of the Board. Except for Clubs in an officially designated interim District, the procedures for affiliation include:

- a. Adoption of the standard from of Club bylaws prescribed by OI.
- b. Payment of such charter fees as may be established by the Board for Member Clubs.
- c. Submission of a list of Charter Members numbering not less than 15, each of whom shall have paid the full membership fee as established in the Club's bylaws.
- d. An authorized representative of OI shall be present at the official organization meeting and the first Club Board of Directors meeting of the applicant Club, and copies of the minutes of such meeting shall become part of the Club's application.
- e. Compliance with all requirements for affiliation as prescribed by these Bylaws and by the Board and agreement and abide by the Bylaws of this organization now and hereinafter in force.

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article III.
SECTION 1 E (c). New Clubs

The Board approves affiliation to OI. Clubs shall submit a written application for affiliation in the form and manner prescribed by the Board and Board policies, and each applicant shall be subject to the acceptance and approval of the Board. Except for Clubs in an officially designated interim District, the procedures for affiliation include:

- a. Adoption of the standard from of Club bylaws prescribed by OI.
- b. Payment of such charter fees as may be established by the Board for Member Clubs.
- c. Submission of a list of Charter Members numbering not less than ~~15~~**10**, each of whom shall have paid the full membership fee as established in the Club's bylaws. **This will be in effect for a term of no less than 1 year, but no more than 3 years at the discretion of the OI Board of Directors.**
- d. An authorized representative of OI shall be present at the official organization meeting and the first Club Board of Directors meeting of the applicant Club, and copies of the minutes of such meeting shall become part of the Club's application.
- e. Compliance with all requirements for affiliation as prescribed by these Bylaws and by the Board and agreement and abide by the Bylaws of this organization now and hereinafter in force.

ISSUE 8: Candidate Qualification Selection for Vice Presidents

(Submitted by The Kitchener-West Optimist Club 45-932, Optimist Club of Riverside (Windsor) 45-178)

EXPLANATION: While current Optimist International Policy I-130 states “In its discretion, the Committee may nominate a candidate whose membership is in a club outside the region for which they are nominated.”; slates of officers submitted by the Candidate Qualifications Committee year after year appear to demonstrate an inherent bias to nominate one Vice-President-Elect candidate that is a member of a club in each region. Concern exists amongst the co-sponsor clubs that qualified - or potentially more qualified - candidates are not receiving due consideration, or are being passed over, simply due to geography of their club. It is in the best interest of Optimist International that the best candidates receive due consideration for leadership positions, and the seven most qualified candidates for Vice-President-Elect should be nominated each year. Instead of proposing a resolution requesting that the OI Board consider a change in wording in the applicable policy, the co-sponsors of this amendment propose instead placing this requirement in the Bylaws. This will ensure that membership provides proper guidance to the Candidate Qualifications committee to implement such immediately and without exception.

CURRENT:

Bylaws Article V.

SECTION 1 G(b).Elections of Vice Presidents-Elect

b. Elections of Vice Presidents-Elect. The number of Vice Presidents-Elect shall be equal to the number of Regions. Vice Presidents-Elect shall be elected to serve a term of one year. The Candidate Qualifications Committee shall seek and receive the names and qualifications of prospective Vice President-Elect Candidates and announce its nomination(s) no later than March 1. Any person desiring to be placed in nomination for Vice President-Elect shall be nominated no later than April 1 by two Clubs. Those two Clubs must be in two different Districts within the Region. Nominations shall be designated for one of the specific Regions and such nominations shall be of an individual(s) residing within the Region. Clubs shall vote for the Vice President-Elect nominee by Region, with each Club President, or Club designee as approved by the Club Board of Directors, casting the Club’s votes for a Vice President-Elect nominee by Region in which the delegate’s Club is located. The individual receiving the highest number of votes cast in the Region shall be elected. If there is only one candidate, the individual shall be elected by acclamation.

PROPOSED:

Bylaws Article V.

SECTION 1 G(b).Elections of Vice President’s-Elect

b. Elections of Vice Presidents-Elect. The number of Vice Presidents-Elect shall be equal to the number of Regions. Vice Presidents-Elect shall be elected to serve a term of one year. The Candidate Qualifications Committee shall seek and receive the names and qualifications of prospective Vice President-Elect Candidates and announce its nomination(s) no later than March 1. **The Committee’s primary mission shall be to ensure the most qualified candidates are nominated for each office, without regard or consideration to the nominee’s home club or region.** Any person desiring to be placed in nomination for Vice President-Elect shall be nominated no later than April 1 by two Clubs. Those two Clubs must be in two different Districts within the Region. Nominations shall be designated for one of the specific Regions and such nominations shall be of an individual(s) residing within the Region. Clubs shall vote for the Vice President-Elect nominee by Region, with each Club President, or Club designee as approved by the Club Board of Directors, casting the Club’s votes for a Vice President-Elect nominee by Region in which the delegate’s Club is located. The individual receiving the highest number of votes cast in the Region shall be elected. If there is only one candidate, the individual shall be elected by acclamation.

Any person desiring to be placed in nomination for Vice President-Elect must file an intent to run by April 1 of the year the election is to occur and have supporting letters of nomination from two clubs in two different Districts within the Region. Nominations shall be designated for one of the specific Regions. Clubs shall vote for the Vice President-Elect nominee by Region. The individual receiving the highest number of votes cast in that Region shall be elected. If there is only one candidate, the individual shall be elected by acclamation.