

# Bylaws Committee - October Report & Motion

## **Motion:**

Alter and maintain SCCI's Bylaws to be and stay gender neutral.

The Bylaws Committee recommends the following changes be made to Santa Cruz County Intergroup's Bylaws, removing 6 instances of he/she, to be replaced by a specific role or title.

### **(1)**

#### **ARTICLE VII - Steering Committee Section 4: Quorum**

197 (d) No member of the Steering Committee may cast more than one vote regardless  
198 of the number of service offices ~~he/she~~ **the member** may hold.

### **(2)**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - Responsibilities and Functions of Elected Officers Section 1: Chairperson**

273 (d) The Chairperson shall remain completely impartial at all monthly and special  
274 meetings and shall not vote except to break a tie vote. ~~He/she~~ **The chairperson** may summarize,  
275 without bias, the pros and cons of all issues and motions presented for decisions  
276 at the meetings.

### **(3)**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - Responsibilities And Functions Of Elected Officers Section 1: Chairperson**

280 (f) The Chairperson is authorized to appoint committees for Special one-time  
281 functions, as ~~he/she~~ **the chairperson** may deem necessary and to appoint such other committees  
282 as the membership or the monthly Intergroup Council meeting may direct

### **(4)**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - Responsibilities And Functions Of Elected Officers Section 1: Chairperson**

290 (i) The outgoing Chairperson, with the approval of the Steering Committee,  
291 becomes the Delegate-At-Large when the new Chairperson is elected. As such  
292 ~~he/she~~ **the Delegate-At-Large** will hold office for a period of one (1) year.

### **(5)**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - Responsibilities And Functions Of Elected Officers Section 2: Delegate-At-Large\***

298 (a) The outgoing Chairperson, with the approval of the Steering Committee,  
299 becomes the Delegate-At-Large when the new Chairperson is elected. As such  
300 ~~he/she~~ **the Delegate-At-Large** will hold office for a period of one (1) year.

*\*Note: this is not a typo. The same paragraph, word-for-word, is repeated in the chairperson description as well as the delegate-at-large description of the by-laws.*

### **(6)**

#### **ARTICLE VIII - Responsibilities And Functions Of Elected Officers Section 2: Delegate-At-Large**

303 (c) The Delegate-At-Large should attend all meetings of the Steering Committee and  
304 the Intergroup Council, where **he/she the Delegate-At-Large** will have both a voice and a vote.

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### Background

It was requested that the committee review the by-laws to see if there is a way to make them gender neutral. The committee took up this issue during its regular meeting during the month of May. In order to inform the discussion, a few things were prepared in advance:

1. An audit of the current Santa Cruz County Intergroup (SCCI) by-laws to see how many times gendered pronouns appeared in the text
2. A similar text was found that successfully communicated what was essential without needing to use gender (AA's World Service By-Laws).

A copy of the SCCI by-laws, along with a complete copy of AA's World Service By-Laws was made available to the committee members present for the conversation.

We found the following:

1. There are 6 places in SCC AA's by-laws where gendered pronouns are used. The form appears as "he/she".
2. 5 of the 6 references are in Article VIII, Sections 1 and 2, describing the responsibilities and functions of the chairperson and delegate-at-large. The only other pronoun is used in Article VII Section 4, discussing the number of votes a steering committee member has.
3. The exemplar by-laws we used for reference did not use pronouns of any kind. Instead, people were referred to by their role. For example, when describing the responsibilities of the chairperson, it reads as follows: "The Chair shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as may be assigned to the Chair, from time to time, by the Board of Directors."

In having a discussion, we covered the following:

Whether or not this was a good idea. It was unanimous that this was a good idea in theory.

- It addresses what is happening in the world around us, according to the experience of one person on the committee.
- It brings us in line with what is being done at the General Service level, noting that by-laws for general service are gender neutral and done in a very eloquent and graceful manner.

It turns out that there are 6 places in the by-laws where gendered pronouns appear, mainly in the description of duties of chairperson and delegate-at-large. The committee reviewed all 6. We also reviewed how the Bylaws of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (The A. A. Service Manual, p. 139) handled wording of similar sections, noting that the World Service by-laws simply state the name of the role being described without using pronouns. Reading them seemed simple and straightforward.

In turning to SCCI by-laws, we were able to discuss and agree on how to adapt the wording in similar ways for each of the 6 appearances of he/she in the SCCI by-laws. Example:

**[original]** The Chairperson shall remain completely impartial at all monthly and special meetings and shall not vote except to break a tie vote. **He/she** may summarize, without bias, the pros and cons of all issues and motions presented for decisions at the meetings.

**[amended]** The Chairperson shall remain completely impartial at all monthly and special meetings and shall not vote except to break a tie vote. **The chairperson** may summarize, without bias, the pros and cons of all issues and motions presented for decisions at the meetings.