



Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2798

PROPOSAL FOR 2020 NATIONAL COUNCIL AGENDA

Name of Girl Scout Council

Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana Board of Directors

City

Louisville

State

Kentucky

Write the following information exactly as the council wishes it to appear in the *Workbook* if accepted for the agenda.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL

Engaging National Delegates throughout the Triennium

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL (in the form of a motion)

THAT

The National Council direct the GSUSA Board of Directors and GSUSA staff to engage National Delegates in decision-influencing throughout the triennium between regular sessions of the National Council. National Delegates shall be consulted at least once a year throughout the triennium between regular National Council sessions on substantive topics such as the following:

1. For Movement-wide input into Movement's strategic planning processes
2. For Movement-wide input into strategic marketing and branding strategies
3. For Movement-wide input on strategic ways to increase membership
4. For Movement-wide discussion and feedback on any proposed major changes in program direction
5. For Movement-wide evaluation of the effectiveness of GSUSA's provision of services to councils
6. For National Delegate input into draft proposals being prepared by the National Board for any regular or special sessions of the National Council, and
7. For other issues where the National Board or national staff determine that input of National Delegates is needed to give guidance on general lines of direction for the Movement and its program.

(over)

REASONS

The Constitution of Girl Scouts of the United States of America includes the following statement in its Preamble:

“RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MOVEMENT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The ultimate responsibility for the Girl Scout Movement rests with its members. We govern by an efficient and effective democratic process that demonstrates our leadership in a fast-changing world.”

Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America states: “The National Council shall have all the powers conferred by the Congressional Charter and by other applicable laws, and shall exercise these powers with due regard for its position as the coordinating head of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States.”

The current practice of engaging National Delegates to give strategic guidance to the Movement **for only a few days once every three years** is neither democratic, efficient, nor effective. Certainly that practice does not give due regard to the National Council’s position as the coordinating head of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States, nor does it recognize the collective wisdom and knowledge of the Movement possessed by National Delegates. This proposal’s intent is to ensure that, between regular triennial sessions of the National Council, the Movement uses its human resources wisely and that National Council members are engaged throughout their term to assist the GSUSA Board in strategic planning and in directing the movement. To do so will greatly improve democratic processes in the Movement and will allow for full utilization of the collective wisdom and experience of National Council members to provide valuable input and feedback in significant issues facing our Movement. Technologies already in use by GSUSA, such as surveys, message boards, the existing delegate webpage, and electronic meeting capabilities, allow for efficient, timely consultation with National Council members and will give our Movement valuable insights into the thoughts of our membership prior to taking action rather than after the fact, making our governance processes more effective.

Expected positive outcomes of adopting this proposal include the following: increases in transparency within the Movement, better knowledge of what our membership desires from the national organization, more informed decision-making on the part of the National Board and national staff, and increased member confidence in democratic processes used by the Girl Scout Movement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Indicate the projected expenditures and impact on resources for councils and the national organization, for a five (5) year period.

Financial impact in terms of expenditures on the national organization of engaging National Council members throughout the triennium should be minimal, as GSUSA already possesses the technologies needed and uses them in other ways. GSUSA has surveying capacity, professional expertise and capacity via Girl Scout Research Institute personnel, an existing delegate webpage and forum (which has gone unused since the 2017 NCS session through December 2018), and adequate electronic meeting capabilities that can be used as needed for focus groups, webinars, and other means of real-time electronic communication with National Council members.

Although there will be shifts in financial and personnel resources needed to be able to engage National Delegates regularly if this proposal is adopted, the financial value of the input and feedback from National Delegates is potentially quite high. Regular and timely consultation with National Delegates should help GSUSA avoid potentially costly errors as have sometimes happened in the past with major programmatic shifts (e.g. Studio 2B, the shift away from skill-building badges, the shift away from

outdoor programming, and similar strategic programming decisions). After costly development of new materials, the Movement abandoned Studio 2B after only a few years in the face of resistance from the membership. After near abandonment of skill-building badges and outdoor programming from 2008 to 2014, the Movement is now returning to include skill-building badges as Girl Scout Leadership Experience program options and has once again recognized the importance of outdoor programming to our brand (especially following the discussion on outdoor programming at the 2014 National Council Session where National Delegates made it very clear that outdoor programming was essential to the Girl Scout brand). These past strategic programming errors, made without adequate member input and corrected only after grass-roots membership efforts made the errors obvious to GSUSA leadership, caused significant membership dissatisfaction--resulting in a loss of membership and making our Movement more vulnerable to competition from other youth-serving organizations. In recent National Council Sessions, unpopular governance proposals, such as proposals by the National Board to eliminate geographic representation in 2008 (printed in the delegate workbook mailed to delegates but then withdrawn at the convention by the National Board after consultation with incoming delegates) and the 2017 attempts to reduce total numbers of board members and to make the National Board Development Committee a committee of the board (both defeated at the NCS session), may possibly have been avoided had the National Board consulted with National Delegates **prior** to adopting proposals which were, in the opinion of delegates, not viable. Regular consultation with National Delegates throughout the triennium will help our Movement avoid such costly errors in the future, will increase collaboration, and will improve relationships between members, councils, and the national organizations. Increases in member satisfaction will result in increased membership (and therefore increased income) and potentially increase donations.

Signature and Printed Name of chair, or secretary, council board of directors

Date of council board meeting

On or before August 31, 2019, email to: BoardOffice@girlscouts.org

Or mail form to: Office of the National Board of Directors, Girl Scouts of the USA, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2798.

Submission Deadline: August 31, 2019

If additional space is needed, please attach a separate page.