



## PROPOSAL FOR 2020 NATIONAL COUNCIL AGENDA

Name of Girl Scout Council

City State

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

### TITLE OF PROPOSAL

Reestablishing the National Council as the Authority to Determine Membership Dues Amounts

### STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL (in the form of a motion)

This is a three part amendment to the *Credentials* section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* relating to membership dues.

#### PART A:

THAT the *Credentials/Certificate of Membership* section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* be amended by inserting the sentence "Membership requirements and membership dues amounts shall be established solely by the National Council."

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
<p><b>A certificate of membership</b> is issued to each girl or adult who meets the requirements for membership. Credentials that the National Board of Directors issues, other than the certificate of membership, include the Girl Scout council charter, the Girl Scout license, and the federation certificate (not in use at present).</p> <p>Girl Scouts of the United States of America authorizes USA Girl Scouts Overseas in communities outside the U.S.A. where there is no chartered Girl Scout council. These troops are known collectively as USA Girl Scouts Overseas.</p>	<p><b>A Certificate of membership</b> is issued to each girl or adult who meets the requirements for membership. Credentials that the National Board of Directors issues, other than the certificate of membership, include the Girl Scout council charter, the Girl Scout license, and the federation certificate (not in use at present).</p> <p><b>Membership requirements and membership dues amounts shall be established solely by the National Council.</b></p> <p>Girl Scouts of the United States of America authorizes USA Girl Scouts Overseas in communities outside the U.S.A. where there is no chartered Girl Scout council. These troops are known collectively as USA Girl Scouts Overseas.</p>	<p><b>A Certificate of membership</b> is issued to each girl or adult who meets the requirements for membership. Credentials that the National Board of Directors issues, other than the certificate of membership, include the Girl Scout council charter, the Girl Scout license, and the federation certificate (not in use at present). Membership requirements and membership dues amounts shall be established solely by the National Council.</p> <p>Girl Scouts of the United States of America authorizes USA Girl Scouts Overseas in communities outside the U.S.A. where there is no chartered Girl Scout council. These troops are known collectively as USA Girl Scouts Overseas.</p>

**PART B:**

THAT the provisions in the *Credentials/Certificate of Membership/Membership Requirements* section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* be amended as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
<p><b>Membership Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout</b> is granted to any girl who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has made the Girl Scout Promise and accepted the Girl Scout Law;</li> <li>• has paid annual, or other applicable membership dues;</li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid annual, lifetime, or other applicable membership dues;</li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lifetime membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person (18 years of age or older or a high school graduate or equivalent) who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid lifetime membership dues;</li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Membership Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout</b> is granted to any girl who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has made the Girl Scout Promise and accepted the Girl Scout Law;</li> <li>• has paid annual, or other applicable membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new girl members pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement;*</li> <li>• continuing girl members pay \$25 when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid annual, lifetime, or other applicable membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new adult members pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement;*</li> <li>• continuing adult members pay \$25 when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lifetime membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person (18 years or age or older or a high school graduate or equivalent) who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid lifetime membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new lifetime members pay \$400 at the time they become lifetime members;</li> <li>• discounted lifetime membership dues of \$200</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Membership Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout</b> is granted to any girl who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has made the Girl Scout Promise and accepted the Girl Scout Law;</li> <li>• has paid annual, or other applicable membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new girl members pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement;*</li> <li>• continuing girl members pay \$25 when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid annual, lifetime, or other applicable membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new adult members pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement;*</li> <li>• continuing adult members pay \$25 when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lifetime membership as a Girl Scout adult</b> is granted to any person (18 years or age or older or a high school graduate or equivalent) who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;</li> <li>• has paid lifetime membership dues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new lifetime members pay \$400 at the time they become lifetime members;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>shall be offered to anyone who was a registered Girl Scout member before the age of 18 and is under the age of 30 at the time of becoming a lifetime member;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p>*Effective May 1, 2018, new girl and adult members who sign up on or between May 1-September 30 of a membership year may elect to pay \$35 and their membership will start immediately and continue through the end of the following membership year. This discount (comprising the tail of an existing membership year and the full following membership year) is available on a one-time basis for new girl and adult members only; upon renewal, such individuals pay \$25 for a regular membership year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discounted lifetime membership dues of \$200 shall be offered to anyone who was a registered Girl Scout member before the age of 18 and is under the age of 30 at the time of becoming a lifetime member;</li> <li>meets applicable membership standards.</li> </ul> <p>*Effective May 1, 2018, new girl and adult members who sign up on or between May 1-September 30 of a membership year may elect to pay \$35 and their membership will start immediately and continue through the end of the following membership year. This discount (comprising the tail of an existing membership year and the full following membership year) is available on a one-time basis for new girl and adult members only; upon renewal, such individuals pay \$25 for a regular membership year.</p>
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**Proviso:** If Part B fails, Part C will NOT be considered.

## PART C

THAT the provisions in the *Credentials/Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration* section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* be amended by striking and adding as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
<p><b>Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration</b> In order to be a member of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States of America, a person must register with and pay annual, lifetime or other applicable membership dues to Girl Scouts of the United States of America. This is done locally through the Girl Scout council or USA Girl Scouts Overseas committee with which she or he is affiliated or through national headquarters if she or he has no council affiliation. Girl Scout councils account for membership dues in the custodian fund and transmit to GSUSA within two months of receipt all monies received for membership dues. These funds are not to be invested by the council for the purpose of generating income for the council.</p>	<p><b>Membership <del>Dues</del> and <del>Procedures for Registration</del> Procedures</b> In order to be a member of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States of America, a person must register with and pay annual, lifetime or other applicable membership dues to Girl Scouts of the United States of America. This is done locally through the Girl Scout council or USA Girl Scouts Overseas committee with which she or he is affiliated or through national headquarters if she or he has no council affiliation. Girl Scout councils account for membership dues in the custodian fund and transmit to GSUSA within two months of receipt all monies received for membership dues. These funds are not to be invested by the council for the purpose of generating income for the council.</p>	<p><b>Membership and Registration Procedures</b> In order to be a member of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States of America, a person must register with and pay annual, lifetime or other applicable membership dues to Girl Scouts of the United States of America. This is done locally through the Girl Scout council or USA Girl Scouts Overseas committee with which she or he is affiliated or through national headquarters if she or he has no council affiliation. Girl Scout councils account for membership dues in the custodian fund and transmit to GSUSA within two months of receipt all monies received for membership dues. These funds are not to be invested by the council for the purpose of generating income for the council.</p>

The **Girl Scout Membership year** is October 1 through September 30.

**New girl members** pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement.\*

**New adult members** pay \$25 when they initially become members of the Movement.\*

**Continuing members**, both girls and adults, pay \$25 when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year.

**Lifetime members** pay \$400 lifetime membership dues at the time they become lifetime members; discounted lifetime membership dues of \$200 shall be offered to anyone who was a registered Girl Scout member before the age of 18 and is under the age of 30 at the time of becoming a lifetime member.

\*Effective May 1, 2018, new girl and adult members who sign up on or between May 1-September 30 of a membership year may elect to pay \$35 and their membership will start immediately and continue through the end of the following membership year. This discount (comprising the tail of an existing membership year and the full following membership year) is available on a one-time basis for new girl and adult members only; upon renewal, such individuals pay \$25 for a regular membership year.

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~~**Lifetime members** pay \$400 lifetime membership dues at the time they become lifetime members; discounted lifetime membership dues of \$200 shall be offered to anyone who was a registered Girl Scout member before the age of 18 and is under the age of 30 at the time of becoming a lifetime member.~~

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## REASONS

By moving the dues amount to the *Certificate of Membership/Membership Requirements* section in the Credentials, this proposal reestablishes the National Council as the sole authority over membership dues as has historically been the case and as set forth in the GSUSA Constitution.

Prior to 2012, the National Council was recognized as the body that approved membership dues amounts.<sup>1</sup> Membership dues increases were presented by the National Board as proposals at National Council Sessions, and in-depth rationale was made available so that the delegate body could consider and debate the raise. Additionally, the GSUSA Constitution in the *Article VII/Credentials/1. Membership* section specifically states, "The National Council shall establish requirements for certificates of membership, local council charters, and all other credentials."

In an attempt to establish shared membership dues authority between the National Council and the National Board, a proposal was submitted at the 2008 National Council Session to amend the Constitution, removing the provision in Article V, Section 5 that stated, "decisions on annual membership dues require a majority of votes cast by the National Council." That proposal was rejected by the National Council.

The National Board had the opportunity to propose a membership dues increase to the 2011 National Council Session but did not take the opportunity to do so. Instead, the National Board approved and instituted a membership dues raise of its own accord in 2012, skipped the opportunity to bring a dues increase to the 2014 National Council, and raised the dues again in 2016 by claiming this duty was part of "managing the affairs of the organization between National Council Sessions" as worded in Article X of the GSUSA Constitution and ignoring the National Council's role in setting dues as the coordinating head of the Movement. These actions led to confusion over who held authority over determining membership dues amounts and led to GSUSA having to expend significant resources to defend itself against a lawsuit filed after the 2016 raise.

As a part of its original rationale on pg. 51 in the 2008 National Council Session Workbook as to why it would be setting membership dues amounts going forward, the National Board stated "...[it] would make a prudent adjustment in membership dues based on sound financial research, and with input from Girl Scout councils in advance of any action." The National Council, not local councils, is the voice of the membership and is who should be consulted. In 2016, the National Board instituted a \$10 raise from \$15 to \$25. The largest increase that had ever been approved until that point was \$3. This \$10 hike surprised and caused considerable discontent among the general membership who understood \$10 was too much for volunteers and families to absorb so quickly. Councils faced upset volunteers and parents who asked pointed questions as to what this \$10 was going toward. Many volunteers stated their troops' families could not afford this raise. This unrest could have been avoided if the National Council was given the opportunity to consider the need for a dues increase, and based on the rationale, either approve or disapprove such a significant raise in dues.

Additionally, the National Board stated in the 2008 NCS Workbook on pg. 51 that the practice of bringing membership dues amounts to the National Council is slow and outdated due to the custom of raising them every six years. The National Council Session is held every three years, and there is nothing stating that dues cannot be discussed less than six years apart. Currently, GSUSA releases a national strategy every three years which lines up with the National Council Session. The National Board is tasked to oversee the organization's finances and to act in the Movement's best interest as one of its fiduciary responsibilities. It should be able to foresee potential costs as a part of this three year strategy and plan accordingly. If it is deemed that raising dues after only three years is too soon but waiting six years is too lengthy of a time, then a proposal could be passed by the National Council after three years with a proviso for the amount to be instituted until a later membership year.

The National Board also claimed via the 2008 NCS Workbook on pg. 52 that there is a check and balance system in place due to the election of National Board members by the National Council. It also stated the National Council retains the right to act upon a dues proposal during a National Council Session. This reasoning is flawed. It is highly unlikely the National Council would reject the entire Board slate based on a single issue. Furthermore, if the National Council exercised its right to change membership dues at a National Council Session by lowering them after every increase by the National Board, the organization would be caught in a dangerous power struggle. As stated before, the National Council, made up of staff, volunteers, and girls, is the direct line to the membership and who can best validate if a raise in dues is warranted based on the information the National Board provides and by directly surveying the overall membership.

<sup>1</sup> The National Council established all nine membership dues increases at the National Council Sessions in 1941, 1947, 1969, 1978, 1984, 1990, 1996, 2002, and 2008.

Per this proposal and rationale, it is clear the Credentials section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* should be amended to clarify and reestablish the National Council as the single entity to determine membership dues amounts and to reaffirm the National Council as the “coordinating head of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States” as authorized in the GSUSA Constitution in Article IV.

To do this, Part A adds a sentence in the *Certificate of Membership* section of the Credentials specifically stating that the National Council will solely establish membership dues amounts.

In Part B, language from the *Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration* section of the Credentials is moved to the *Certificate of Membership/Membership Requirements* section in order to make it clear that membership dues amounts are considered requirements. According to *Article VII/Credentials/1. Membership* of the Constitution, “The National Council shall establish requirements for certificates of membership, local council charters, and all other credentials.” The National Board is only authorized to “administer the requirements for the credentials established by the National Council” in *Article VII/Credentials/2. Administration* of the Constitution.

In Part C, the language referenced in Part B is struck from the *Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration* section in the Credentials. The title is also modified to reflect this change.

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## **FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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

There would be no additional financial expenditures due to this change unless GSUSA and the National Board needed to call a special session to raise dues in less than three years.

However, this proposal would potentially save money by knowing exactly what “the market can bear” due to direct feedback from National Delegates. Overestimating how much of an increase members will accept could negatively affect membership numbers, and therefore, income from membership dues would be impacted.

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

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Date of council board meeting

On or before August 31, 2019, email to: [BoardOffice@girlscouts.org](mailto: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.