

September 8, 2022

To the Members of the National Board:

At the 2020 National Council Session, a proposal titled "Constitutional Amendment on Consistency in Delegate Terms" passed with an 80% majority. This proposal amended the GSUSA Constitution to state that councils should elect their National Delegates in the previous year of a National Council Session. Prior to this amendment, many councils did not hold elections until the spring before a NCS. One of the purposes of the amendment, in the supporting council's words, was to give National Delegates enough time to serve so that "they would become familiar with their role, [and] constituency and issues or concepts to bring to the National Council by participating in the Proposal/Discussion topic submission process." The National Board at the time supported this proposal and stated in its rationale that "this would provide more opportunities for delegates to engage in the planning process for NCS and to engage on the topics that would be presented."

Recently, it came to the attention of the organizers of the GirlScoutGovernance.com (GSG) website that engagement of National Delegates during proposal season apparently did not happen in at least some councils. Regardless of the reason, GSG saw that the voice of the membership by way of National Delegates was likely once again left out of the decision-influencing process. We set out to see if we could measure delegate involvement and gather information regarding the membership's beliefs about proposals circulated by councils.

Attached are results from a survey that we created in order to capture this data. The survey, created in Google Forms, was distributed between July 8, 2022 and August 31, 2022 among a variety of Facebook groups, GSG, and via email to various delegate bodies. While it is not a certified survey by any means and had a lower participation rate than we had hoped, we feel that it does have value and serves as an assessment tool that, as far as we know, has not been attempted in any formal way by GSUSA either among outgoing delegates, incoming delegates, or the membership-at-large. We submit it to the members of the National Board for consideration before their decision on items for the 2023 NCS agenda. We hope the results of this survey are helpful and will be thoughtfully considered as a part of the decision-influencing role of the membership base.

We are believers in democratic processes in Girl Scouting, and we established the GirlScoutGovernance.com website to help support good governance in the Girl Scout Movement. We encourage the National Board to take steps to implement its promises to the membership regarding involvement throughout the triennium by formally surveying the 2023 National Council Delegates regarding agenda items prior to making a final decision on the agenda for the NCS.

Please reach out to us if you have any further questions.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Amy Brown
Penelope Echo Reardanz
Marty Woelfel

GirlScoutGovernance.com Organizers

GSG's 2023 National Council Session Proposal Survey Results

The survey had a total of 136 respondents.

The first question asked respondents what roles they serve in Girl Scouting. They could select more than one role. The breakdown was as follows:

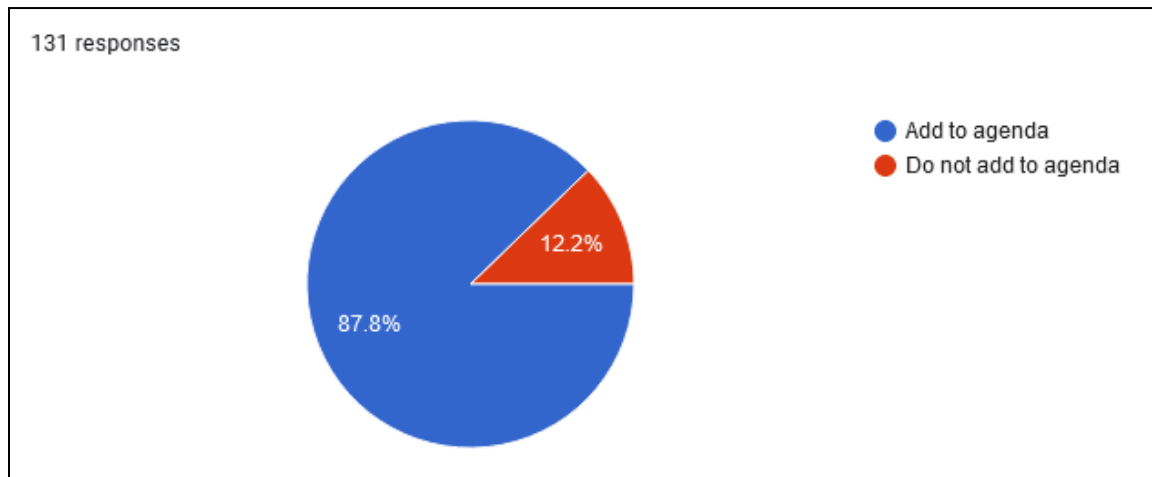
Operational Volunteer	73%
Service Unit/Council Delegate	37%
Former National Delegate or Alternate	35%
Current National Delegate or Alternate	24%
Council board member (or other governance related)	4%
GSUSA National Volunteer	4%
Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador	3%
Council staff member	2%
GSUSA staff member	2%

Sixty-five percent of the respondents were Lifetime Members.

Next, the survey presented seven proposals that were submitted by councils and asked respondents to decide whether or not each one should be added to the 2023 NCS agenda. The text of the proposal in its entirety was linked in the description so that it could be referenced directly. Respondents could also leave comments if they wished. For each of the seven proposals, the survey also asked a question of those who served as National Delegates between April 2022 (when the first council proposal was submitted) to June 2022 (with June 30th as the proposal deadline). National Delegates during that time frame were asked if they were consulted by their council about that specific proposal as a part of the decision-influencing process to help determine if the council should send in an endorsement.

Here is how each proposal fared. Included are a few pro and con comments along with the question asked specifically of National Delegates.

Proposal 1: Constitutional Amendment on Credentials and Amendment to Credentials Section (submitted by the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana council):



Comments:

I'm not sure that this is broader than the tech platform issue, but I do agree that the Councils need to do what is best for them, while assuring a consistent experience for the girls. I am more concerned with the disparity in fund development which each Council raises, because that loss of revenue is put on the girls and families.

Volunteer Systems/VTK has been a disaster; national has been overstepping their boundaries.

It would provide clarity where there is currently a difference of standards between the issuer of those standards and the enforcing agency.

It is important to observe the rules and regulations of the National Council, made of elected Members from each council.

It is beyond the duties of a membership organization to require use of a certain product. They may have reporting requirements but how those reporting requirements are met should be up to the local council.

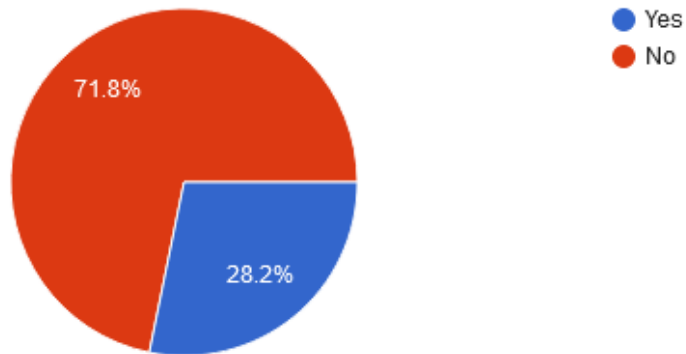
It would raise the awareness to the National Board that members are concerned and want the National Council to do their diligent duty and be involved with creating/amending standards that the National Board is administering.

We need the National and Local Councils to retain their appropriate roles and for the National Board to perform duties as appropriate.

This protects the intention that it is the National Council and not the Board that retains the power and authority over the movement.

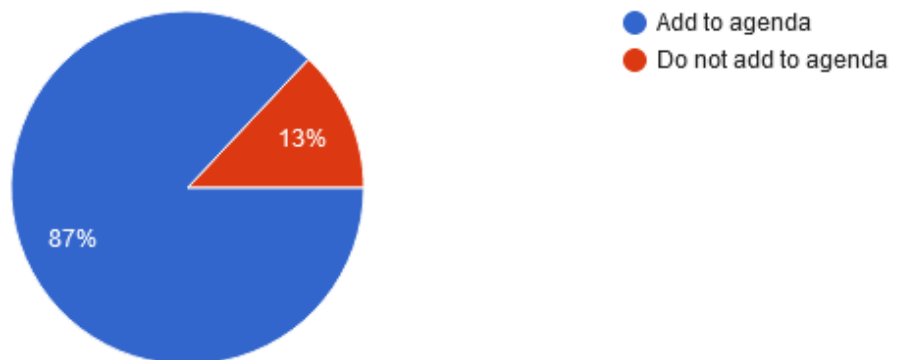
If you served as a National Delegate or Alternate at any point between April 2022 and June 2022, were you consulted by your council about Proposal 1?

39 responses



Proposal 2: Constitutional Amendment on Council Representation on the National Board (submitted by the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta council):

131 responses



Comments:

Yes, but not all Council CEO's are top notch. I would hope that the best CEOs are selected, because they can relay the challenges, their solutions, best practices and hopefully spread the competencies to the lesser performing Councils. I would love to see the Councils held to stricter standards.

Yes, this local, operational perspective is important.

It surprises me that we haven't had representation on the board from the CEOs of our councils, who are often closest to the issues our service units and troop leaders are facing. This would be a net positive impact.

Should not be on the agenda - GS should be governed by member volunteers - not paid staff.

Extra 'hierarchy' is NOT needed.

I don't think we need more Staff on the National Board. We need more Volunteer members.

I think that the 100+ CEOs really know which ones of their sisterhood are there for the mission and would benefit the organization as a whole.

A specified level of CEO inclusion is important to drive dialogue. It should not, however, dictate the outcomes by having a majority of Board members as CEO/paid employees.

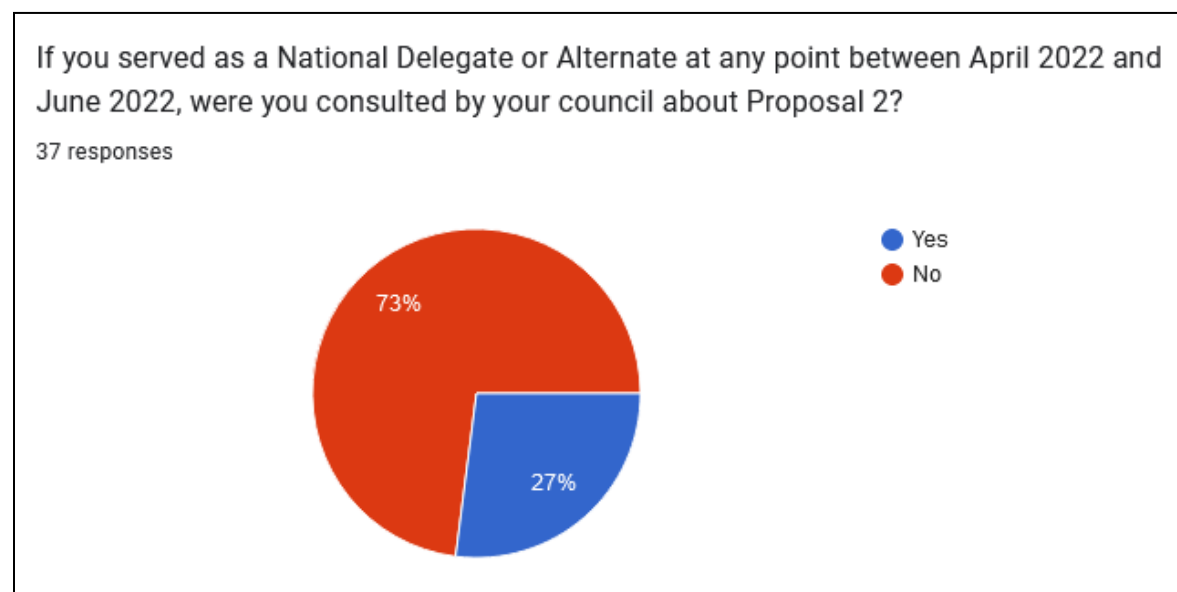
This creates a conflict of interest. CEOs should be managing their own councils and members should refer and recommend candidates.

1) There is already a process for CEO feedback to NB 2) the CEOs that would be added to the slate would just be those that support NB 3) those 3 execs would be splitting their time/support between council vs NB, leaving their home council with less support.

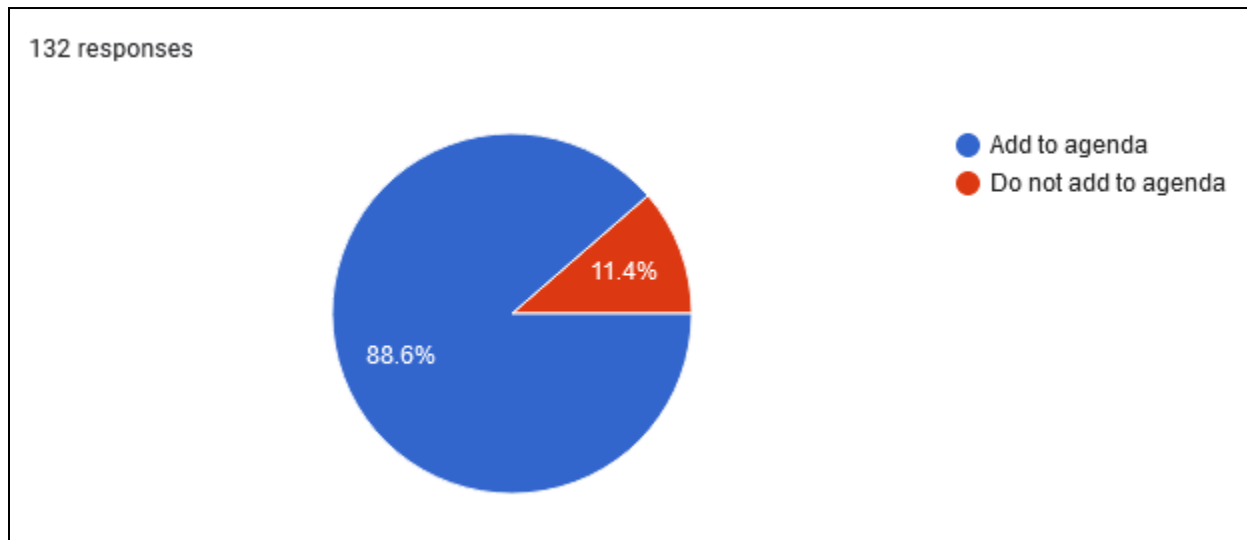
Great idea to maximize council representation.

This is a conflict in the finest form and flies in the face of good governance. Are you then to consider placing three staff members on each council's board of directors? What happened to being a "volunteer led" organization?

CEOs will bring a current understanding of individual Councils' memberships and will provide the valuable perspective of those girl and adult members to the Board and its decisions.



Proposal 3: Ensuring the Importance and Effectiveness of the Democratic Process in the Movement (submitted by the Girl Scouts of South Carolina - Mountains to Midlands council):



Comments:

When I was an alternate in 2017, I was very disengaged, and after the Council Session, the delegates NEVER interacted with the membership. It was like it never happened. Most of the membership does not even know about the NCS and why it exists. I fully support this to be conducted in the most financially responsible and prudent and efficient way possible.

If GSUSA is to thrive the voice of membership needs to be heard - members are the lifeblood of the GS movement.

A task force takes too much time and resources. I feel that a big collaborative meeting might be a better method of how to restart and refine each boards mission.

I think that this Proposal could be very expensive. If members of the Task Force use Zoom, they will not reach those who are currently complaining and feel disenfranchised. If the Task Force sends members in person to every Council to meet with those who are aggrieved, it will be very expensive.

I think that this Committee could make a very positive difference for our Movement.

Task Force are always a great idea - we did one in my council with over 100 members and most of those involved grew to love and devote more efficient and effective time to the organization with the knowledge they gained.

It is not clear to me what Mountains to Midlands is trying to describe by "democratic process". It would seem that this recommendation to the agenda is coming from a local grievance that is not described as "background". At best, this item should be re-written for clarity to be considered.

The democratic process should always be evaluated. This would raise awareness that the members want to have an effective democratic process in our movement.

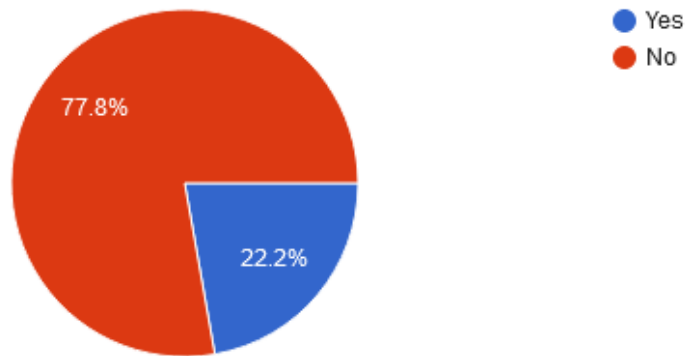
Volunteers need a bigger voice in the decision process at both the local and national level.

I support this as we definitely need more operational volunteer involvement in the governance process.

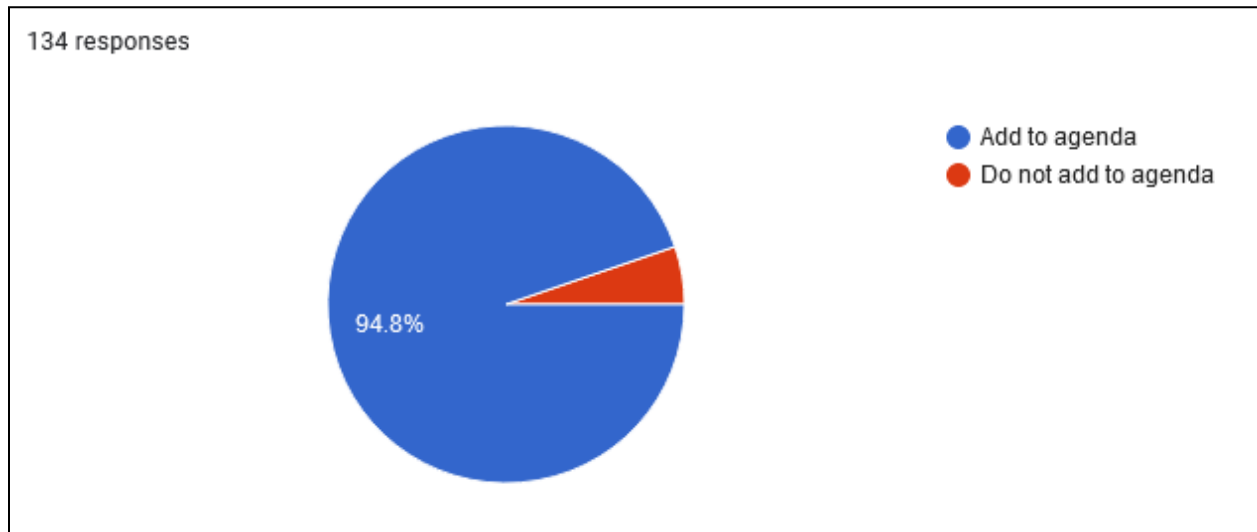
Long overdue based on recent events, in our and other Councils, where decisions were made and presented as fait accompli without any input from the affected membership. The negative impact on the relationship between the Council Leadership and the Council membership has been significant. We need to get back to a more transparent, democratic process, as the Founder intended.

If you served as a National Delegate or Alternate at any point between April 2022 and June 2022, were you consulted by your council about Proposal 3?

36 responses



Proposal 4: Constitutional Amendment on Formula for Delegates (submitted by the Farthest North Girl Scout council):



Comments:

In order to have a functioning delegation this change is necessary.

I think this will give a more fair overall representation of the councils.

GSUSA needs a health and strong delegate body to have diversity of thought - this will help foster that goal.

Possibly modify to 1,500 but would not accept the low level of 1,000. COVID pandemic has impacted every area, including GS membership. There is plenty of growth potential as the USA (and the world) 'recover' from the pandemic.

Being part of the national delegates that voted on the change in formula, I remember that we never wanted the number to be less than 1,500 and really wanted the delegate body to grow as the membership grows.

Too few delegates is a problem for our democratic process.

Proposal should either specify a "target number", or the ideal ratio, but not both. If the desire is to have as close to, but not more than 1500 total delegates, then specifying any ratio is extraneous information and not used in the calculation.

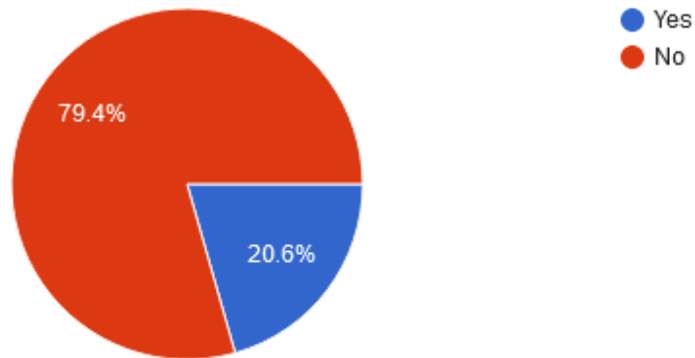
This issue should be incorporated into the discussion about the democratic process. This should be some sort of percentage and not a set number and should be structured so very large councils don't have so many more national delegates than all of the rest of the councils.

Should be discussed especially if new mergers are being considered in the future.

This amendment is needed due to the decline in membership. We are making a similar change to our Council Service Unit Delegate calculation for the same reason.

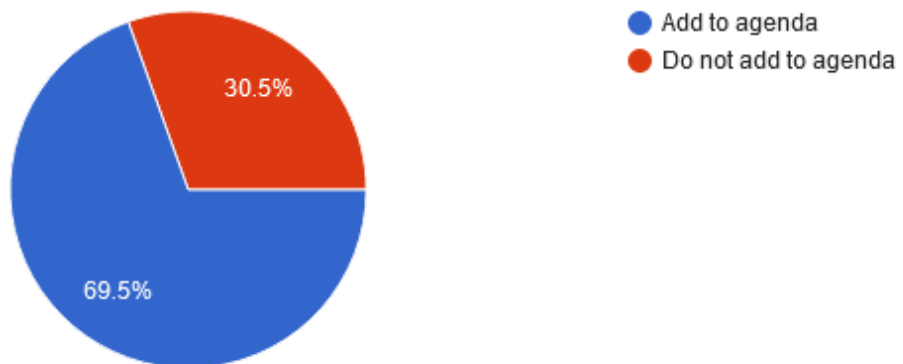
If you served as a National Delegate or Alternate at any point between April 2022 and June 2022, were you consulted by your council about Proposal 4?

34 responses



Proposal 5: Discussion Topic - Joining Together to Maximize Girl Scout Resources
(submitted by the Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana council):

128 responses



Comments:

Did not feel it was specific enough.

This proposal feels a bit thin.

While this sounds like a good idea, it should not be added to the agenda unless further detail is added.

Having a session or two outside of the agenda would likely be better. I am concerned with the time for items that need to be voted on versus time spent on general discussion. Over the last few conventions, the time spent exceeded what was planned.

This is an excellent use of our time I hope some council tries to add it back in.

It is good to know the collective resources available within/across the organization. It is prudent to see them used to greatest potential. That being said, GS should maintain first option for use of all resources, programs, property, etc.

Agree that the proposal needs to be fleshed out more detailing some specifics etc. Each Council should maintain its autonomy, but I see no reason why resources couldn't be pooled to enhance girl experience, lessen individual council and girl costs, and make the best use of the resources. We don't want to have to continue to sell of GS camp property, etc.

I think that the lack of discussion at these conventions is why we are not growing. I think we need to have at least 30 smaller workshops (discussions) and that a delegate can attend four or five of them, depending on their interest. That would help the national board hear about what is working in different councils and the direction we need to be heading to expand our sisterhood.

It is not clear how sharing of resources would be operationalized. It's great to share resources, and councils should work together to support activities and programs for the girls -- doing so should not require a national convention decision. At times, it feels that Girl Scout councils, service units and troops are too competitive -- they are reluctant to share ideas and resources. National needs to encourage partnership and cohesiveness across the movement. If we don't we are going to see membership further decline.

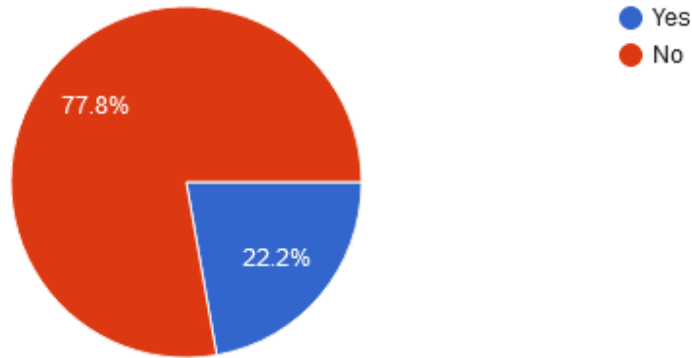
Wonderful topics but they should be handled in breakout sessions. Is there any way to do that for 2023, and highly recommend a member of the National Board (and appropriate staff person) be in attendance.

Seems too vague and I'm not sure how this would be part of the agenda. Maybe a breakout group of some sort.

It is an important topic and deserves to be included on the agenda, but having been a Delegate to the 2020 NCS, I am concerned that the format of the NCS is not conducive to a meaningful discussion due to the parliamentary procedures followed (cutting off speakers, closing discussions before they get started, etc.). I hesitate to suggest it but a Task Force comprised mostly of Volunteers, with a few Council CEOs representing S/M/L-sized Councils, one or two Board members, and the GSUSA CFO, might be better suited to address the topic and brainstorm useful ideas.

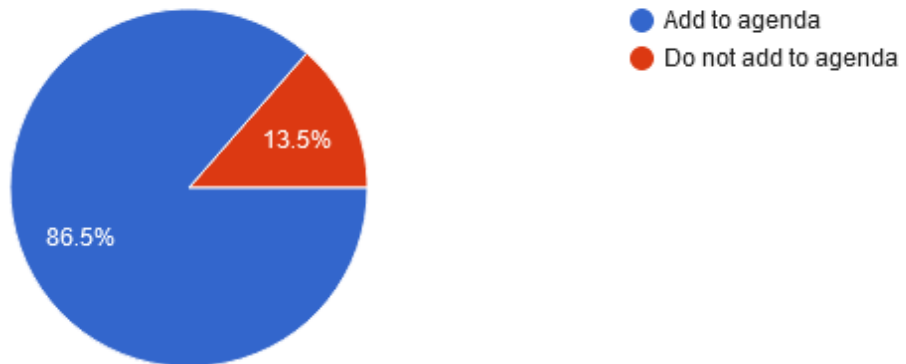
If you served as a National Delegate or Alternate at any point between April 2022 and June 2022, were you consulted by your council about Proposal 5? Note: It is possible your council didn't receive this one.

36 responses



Proposal 6: Update to Internet Sales Policy and Fundraising Methods (submitted by the Girl Scouts of Connecticut council):

133 responses



Comments:

We need to stay updated. It is also important to bring attention to internet safety. I continue to see girls' last names used in social media. More training and attention to detail is needed.

It is extremely frustrating that there are so many different rules between councils on what is and is not allowed. When a council allows parents to run "paid" ads or other aggressive online

marketing it is unfair to girls who cannot access those kinds of resources. Making it worse is that there are rarely any real consequences for those who break the rules.

This is an important update for the 21st century - our girls are using digital platforms for cookies and fall sales, why prevent them from doing that for fundraising for their awards or other purposes?

Internet sales is not a good option for girl members. They do not have the financial prowess or skill. No amount of Internet Safety Guidelines would cover the safety level required. Girls do not have credit cards, etc. This would become adults selling instead of girls. Adults selling via the internet should also not be allowed. Sales need to be kept 'local'.

Agree it is time to begin to ensure that GS can keep up with the increase of online/internet sales to enhance money making opportunities and enhance girl experiences.

We live in a technology-enabled world and the movement needs to update language on this topic to give councils more lee-way to fundraise.

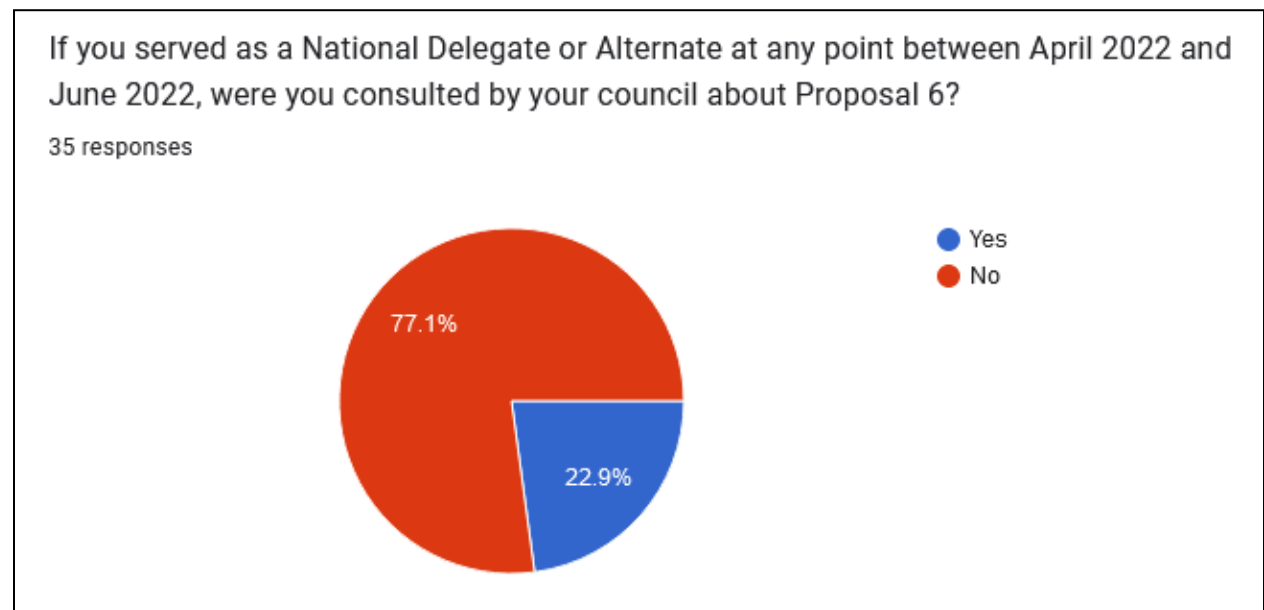
I'm not personally in favor of this one because I think it will lead to more differences across councils but it should get a vote.

Too operational. Probably should be part of a larger discussion about cookie sales and other fundraising options.

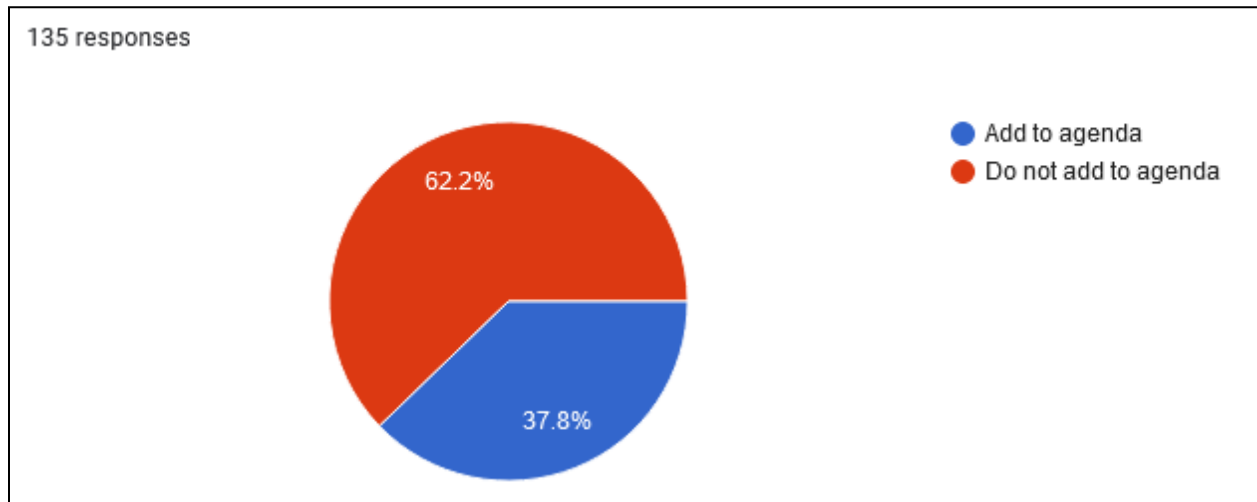
Since there may be significant regional differences, this should always be considered; as should summary of, individual opinions at all levels . . . if we support the 'values' of Girl Scouts.

This does not seem to be a governance topic.

This truly needs to be clarified and consistent across the movement.



Proposal 7: Amend the Girl Scout Promise and Law (submitted by the Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey council):



Comments:

Much more important issues need to be addressed with the time and bandwidth of the Movement.

I think is unnecessary to keep changing the promise and the law. How many times do we "beat a dead horse"?

I dislike this motion and believe the promise and the law should remain unchanged, particularly as there are more important changes for inclusion that could be made.

Not in favor - but this keeps coming up so it should be heard and voted upon.

I agree that changes need to be made, but changes suggested are not significant enough to warrant being included. Work on wording and changes that better reflect current Girl Scouts.

Love that this proposal started with the girls, is thinking about the girls of the future and what they will accomplish with the momentum of what they say and live

While I respect the girls who have studied empowerment through language and action, I do not support making changes to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. We should not modify the basic tenets of the organization to require girls to always 'take action'. We should encourage girls to feel personally empowered to speak up and make change, and we should always support girls to "try"! Failure is a critical component to learning, and it affords humans the best opportunity to improve ourselves. We should not make the Promise and Law absolute, and we should not expect that Girl Scouts are going to solve the societal problems that adults have created and have politicized in the legislative process and in the media. Adults have to lead first!

While seemingly a small change, this wording change makes a big difference in the intent.

This one is hard to decide, but Not on the agenda wins for me.

I believe that it is important that we ask girls to do their best and also to help them understand that sometimes we fail. Leave space for the failure and have meaningful conversation about how to deal with failure.

I really want to hear from the girls on this! I know adults believe we are setting girls up to fail. However, more recently with STEM thinking we are encouraging girls to learn from failure and mistakes. Failing forward. You do not fail, you make your first attempt in learning.

The proposed changes to these phrases in the Promise and Laws - make them declarative statements rather than intentions - an important distinction.

I'm told that this proposal was originated by girls. It defines what a GS stands for instead of what she is trying to accomplish (which seems to say it's ok if you don't).

