

House of USA Bylaws and Standing Rules

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BYLAWS OF THE HOUSE OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ARTICLE I HOUSE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This organization shall be known as the House of United States of America (herein referred as “the House of USA”) and shall work under the BYLAWS, STANDING RULES, and the Articles of Incorporation of THE HOUSE OF PACIFIC RELATIONS INTERNATIONAL COTTAGES, INC. (herein referred as “the HPR”) and any rules and regulations of the City of San Diego and the State of California. The purpose of the HPR and the House of USA is:

- (a) To bring into closer acceptance the people of the various national groups represented in this membership, in order to foster and cultivate a spirit of understanding, tolerance and goodwill among them.
- (b) To present, through said national groups represented in this membership, programs of an educational and cultural nature which will be beneficial to the community.
- (c) To provide to schools and other organizations devoted to educational or cultural objectives the opportunity to take advantage of the physical facilities and other cultural and educational resources of the ~~corporation~~ House of USA.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE OF THE HOUSE OF USA

Purpose

The purpose of the House of USA shall be to educate and to promote before the general public the history, traditions, and culture of the United States of America.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Classes

Classes of Membership in the House of USA shall consist of:

- (a) ACTIVE MEMBERS: Members who are interested in furthering the purpose of the House of USA and are in good standing which includes staying current on their membership dues.

To maintain active status, Active Members must host the House of USA Cottage (herein referred to as “the Cottage”) upon request of the hosting chairperson (2nd Vice President) at least 3 times and volunteer 1 out of 3 main cultural events in a 12-month period. Active members shall have the privilege of voting and holding elective office.

- (b) HONORARY MEMBERS: Persons elected to membership without applying or without having the usual qualifications. Honorary members may be active members who have contributed to the House of USA in such an exemplary way. Honorary members may also be those individuals who have benefited the House of USA in a profound way with a significant contribution in the form of monetary or product. Honorary Members shall have the privilege of voting.

- (c) SUPPORTING OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Supporting or associate members are those associated with professional associations, trade associations, voluntary associations, corporate associations, clubs, and a wide range of others. To maintain supporting or associate status, Supporting Members shall donate monetarily, food items for cultural events, the Cottage hosting, and/or professional advice, services and/or skills as the Board of Directors deem valuable in furthering the purpose of the House of USA.

For Supporting or Associate Members who are also members of other member houses of the HPR, a minimum number of the Cottage hosting, annual cultural events participation, and monthly membership meeting attendance are on a BEST EFFORT basis. For the Supporting or Associate Members who are permanently homebound due to health/medical reasons, physically challenged and/or disadvantageous are EXEMPT from the Cottage hosting and volunteering in cultural events *in exchange for* dues determined by the Board of Directors’ discretion and/or donations for talents/skills, professional opinions/advices, and/or other services the Board of Directors deem valuable in furthering the

purpose of the House of USA. Supporting or Associate Members shall have the privilege of voting.

Section 2. Applications

(a) ALL APPLICANTS for ACTIVE and SUPPORTING/ASSOCIATE members must be in “good standing” in the community and within the HPR.

“Good standing” shall be defined as a person who is in agreement with the purpose of the House of USA: One who represents the House of USA positively in accordance with the mission statements of the HPR when dealing with the general public and/or the mass media.

(b) ALL POTENTIAL APPLICANTS for ACTIVE members are encouraged to attend a few regular monthly meetings BEFORE a membership is considered.

(c) At the following regular monthly meeting after an application is submitted, the APPLICANT by simple majority of at least 11 members in attendance may be confirmed an ACTIVE or SUPPORTING/ASSOCIATE member in accordance with the provisions of the BYLAWS.

ARTICLE IV DUES

Section 1. Active and Associate Members

Membership dues shall be paid annually in the month of January. Members joining after October 1st, their membership dues shall be covered through the end of next year. Any changes in the amount of dues shall be established by making amendment to the Standing Rules. Any changes in dues will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the electorate. Members who host at least 5 times in the current 12-months, shall have their annual dues waived for the next year.

Section 2. Supporting Members

Supporting members shall pay those dues set forth in Standing Rules

#10.

Section 3. Delinquency

Members with delinquent dues of the current calendar year past 90 days shall be considered not in good standing. All members with delinquent dues shall be notified and their membership shall be suspended unless payment is made on or before April 30th.

Section 4. Reinstatement

A suspended Active or Supporting/Associate member may be reinstated upon payment of all dues owed at the time of suspension, within the current year, and upon approval by a simple majority of the members.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular

Regular meetings shall be held on the second Sunday of each month at the House of USA or the Hall of Nations under otherwise ordered or designated by the Board of Directors. All new Active members need to attend at least 2 monthly membership meetings. At the third meeting, a voting right shall be granted to the new Active member.

Section 2. Special

Special meetings may be called by the Board of Directors, or any seven (7) Active members in good standing. The Secretary shall notify all members in good standing of any special meetings at least seven (7) days in advance, starting time, place, and purpose.

Section 3. Quorum

A simple majority of 51% of the members present shall constitute a quorum or at least thirteen (13) members need to be present to constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall hold meetings at such time and place as they may designate or as directed by the President. Four (4) members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. Only one member per family shall hold office on the Board of Directors at the same time, unless overridden by a simple majority of the members' votes.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

The Offices of the House of USA shall be a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President (the Cottage Hosting Chair), Secretary, Treasurer, and the Elected Delegates to the HPR.

Section 1. Board of Directors

The Officers and immediate past president of the House of USA shall constitute the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Delegates to the HPR

This organization shall have a minimum of one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate delegate to the regular monthly Delegates Assembly of the HPR, who shall be the President or the Vice President and one delegate who shall be elected by the Active members or one (1) alternate appointed by the President.

ARTICLE VII NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

Section 1. Officers

All Officers of this organization and the delegate(s) to the HPR shall be elected

by a simple majority voice vote or written ballot at the Annual Meeting (October), and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected and installed. No member of the House of USA Board of Directors is eligible to be a member of the Board of Directors of another House within the HPR.

Section 2. Nominating Committee

At the August meeting, the members shall elect Three (3) members in good standing to serve as the Nominating Committee. NOMINATIONS SHALL BE FROM THE FLOOR. The first one nominated shall serve as chairperson, two (2) persons from the same family should not be on the committee.

Section 3. Election

At the Annual Meeting, the election of officers and delegates shall take place in October. The general membership shall vote on the Nominating Committee(s) slate and/or any nominations received from the floor. The vote takes place in order and each vote is taken before the next nomination.

Section 4. Majority Votes

Nominees receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected to the respective offices.

Section 5. Eligibility

No person shall be eligible for Office in the House of USA who is not, at the time of election or appointment, an Active member in good standing for at least six (6) months.

Section 6. Voting Privileges

Active members whose dues are current, who have attended at least two (2) regular meetings, and who are in good standing, shall have the right to vote for election, suspension/termination of officers or members, or amending the Bylaws. The only exception for eligibility to vote is a qualified illness, hospital stay, or vacation of which the Board of Directors has been notified by email or postal mail.

Section 7. Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the First Vice President shall succeed the office for the unexpired term. Any other vacancy shall be filled by an Active member appointed by the Board of Directors with ratification of a simple majority of members at a regular meeting.

Section 8. Inactive Officers

Any Officers of this organization who shall be absent from three (3) successive regular meetings of the membership shall forfeit the office, unless in the opinion of the Board of Directors, such absence has been unavoidable or excusable. In the event of a vacancy occurring by inactiveness of the officer(s), the Board of Directors shall fill the vacancy by appointment, with ratification of a simple majority of the members.

Section 9. Office Tenure

No member shall be eligible for the same office for more than two (2) consecutive years, unless permitted by vote of a simple majority of the Board of directors and members at a regular meeting.

Section 10. Installations

The elected officers of the House of USA shall be installed with appropriate ceremonies at a regular meeting after their election generally at the December dinner meeting. The President and the Treasurer of the House of USA, at minimum, shall also attend the HPR Installation Dinner in addition to the Presidents and Treasurers Meeting sponsored by the HPR in the ensuing month of January.

Section 11. Review and Removal

Recommendation to review the status or remove any officer or member for cause may be made by a two-thirds majority secret vote of Active members present and in "good standing" at the regular meeting, provided a notice of such meeting has been given to each Active member, and a notice by registered mail to the member or members in question, at least ten (10) days prior to this meeting. The cause for such review and/or removal must be stated in writing, and final action

shall be taken by a two-thirds majority secret vote of the Active membership.

ARTICLE VIII COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

Within thirty (30) days after the election and installation of Officers, the President shall appoint the chairpersons of the following committees and two other persons to assist each chairperson, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, who shall render reports at each monthly meeting, Membership; Publicity & Social Events; Auditing, Standing Rules.

Section 2. Special (AD-Hoc) Committees

The President shall, from time to time, appoint chairpersons of such other committees as he/she may consider necessary. The Chairperson of each committee shall select Active members in "good standing" for his/her own committee, and be responsible for completion of committee activities.

ARTICLE IX DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

Section 1. President

The President shall fulfill the usual duties of such office, call and preside at all regular and special business meetings of the members and be an ex officio member of all committees, except the nominating committee.

The President or his/her designee, is to oversee the weekly or special events set up, security and closing of the House of USA.

The sum of not more than \$200.00 per month shall be allowed to the President for emergency expenses upon presentation of itemized statements to the Treasurer.

The President or Vice President or Active member designee in "good standing" shall represent the House of USA at all HPR events. Where tickets are required, two (2) shall be provided at Cottage expense.

Section 2. First Vice President

The First Vice President shall fulfill the usual duties of such office, call and preside at all regular or special business meetings in the absence of the President.

Section 3. Second Vice President

The Second Vice President shall be the House of USA Cottage Hosting Schedule Chair. The Second Vice President will oversee and maintain the weekly serving list and buying of material provisions for the House of USA endeavors.

The Second Vice President shall obtain from among the membership persons to act as host at the various functions of this organization, to expend and receive such funds as authorized and report the same upon request to the Treasurer. Those selected shall assist in the year's special programs, i.e., HPR Ladies Auxiliary Luncheon, Lawn Program, HPR Socials, International Christmas Festival (ICF), Ethnic Food Fair, or other special programs convened during the year.

Section 4. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all regular or special business meetings and keep an accurate record of members in good standing and record in the minutes that the Treasurer's Report was given.

Section 5. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall: (a) Be the custodian of all the monies and assets of the House of USA; (b) Disburses the same pursuant to the authorization of the Board and the membership; (c) Maintain a record of all income, disbursements, and receipts; (d) Comply with any and all tax requirements; (e) Give an account of all financial transactions including discretionary funds or disbursements at the monthly voting membership meetings. The accounting must be listed in detail in the Minutes that are sent out monthly or in the Minutes that are to be presented at the beginning of the next regular monthly business meeting.

One signature is required for all disbursements which are within the approved annual budget amount. At least two signatures are required on transaction(s) that are NON-RECURRING in excess of \$200. Transactions that are within the \$200 can be approved by at least two additional members of the Board other than Treasurer. All disbursements must be made and executed by the Treasurer and President, or Vice President, or Secretary. All of the four officers must be authorized by a signed bank signature card ~~in~~ ~~turn~~ which is kept on file at the financial institution holding the funds. An annual internal audit shall be conducted.

Section 6. Assistant Treasurer(s)

In absence of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer(s) to resume the duties of Treasurer and/or the House of USA shall have an option to hire a qualified, independent third-party ("Bookkeeper"), whose reasonable service fee previously approved by a simple majority of membership votes, to perform all necessary bookkeeping services, including disbursing and/or reimbursing funds for expenses incurred on behalf of the House of USA. In case of outsourcing bookkeeping service, the Assistant Treasurer(s) make deposits of all donations, provide all receipts and/or support documents to the Bookkeeper and report the monthly treasury statement to the membership at the monthly membership meeting.

Section 7. Delegates

It shall be the duty of the delegate(s) to attend and represent the House of USA at the monthly Delegates Assembly of the HPR. An alternate delegate shall serve in the absence of any delegate. The delegate shall give a "Delegates Report" at the following meeting of the House of USA.

Section 8. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors, herein sometimes referred to as "Board" shall consider and recommend to the members, general policies, transact business(es), and direct the administration of the purposes of the House of USA under the authority granted by the membership and the Bylaws.

ARTICLE X DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Membership

It shall be the duty of this committee to stimulate the widest possible interest of the entire membership in all of its affairs. This includes the promotion of attendance, the promotion of a spirit of friendship and fellowship, maintain a working role of the members and induct new members into the fellowship and activity of the organization, maintain contact with the sick, shut-ins, or bereaved members, and consider and make recommendations for all applications for membership by those who have filled out an established form. The membership committee chair will maintain the membership files and keep the membership listing available to the Secretary and the members.

Section 2. Publicity & Social Events

It shall be the duty of this committee to properly publicize and coordinate all social activities of this organization. This committee shall maintain contact with the sick, shut-ins, or bereaved members. The "Sunshine Person" of this committee shall coordinate the matters of those in need. The membership shall inform the "Sunshine Person" of those in need of any assistance.

Section 3. Auditing

This committee shall consist of three (3) Active members in "good standing." Their responsibility will be to audit the financial books and records of the House of USA at the end or first part of the calendar year or before a new Treasurer is appointed or elected.

Section 4. Budgeting

This committee shall consist of the Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer in case of vacancy/absence of the Treasurer and two (2) Active members in "good standing." Their responsibility will be to budget for the next fiscal year based on the current fiscal year's actual revenues and expenditures, upcoming scheduled, special events, and COLA (cost of living adjustment) and CPI (consumer price index) published by the Office of the Director of California Department of Industrial Relations. Budget to be completed at the end or first part of the fiscal year.

Section 5. Standing Rules

This committee shall consist of three (3) Active members in good standing, This committee shall go over the Standing Rules of the House of USA at least two times per year and make their recommendations to the general body.

ARTICLE XI GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section 1. Should the House of USA choose to elect its own Grievance Committee, the ensuing procedure is to be followed:

The Committee shall consist of three (3) or more voting members of the House of USA in good standing and shall be elected by the total House voting membership. Any disagreement within the House of USA should be initiated and resolved through the House of USA Grievance Committee and by a two-thirds confirmation tally of the House voting membership.

The House Grievance Committee shall act as mediator following due process in accordance with HPR, local, state, and federal entities who follow recognized Constitutional, statutory, and common law. A report with recommendations shall be submitted to the House voting membership. A two-thirds of confirmation or denial secures either decision.

Section 2. Should the House of USA chooses to settle grievances during their monthly membership meeting(s), the ensuing procedure is to be followed:

In interpersonal and/or policy disagreements, the House of USA voting membership shall act as mediator following due process in accordance with HPR, local state, and federal entities that follow recognized Constitutional, statutory, and common law. If the matters cannot be settled at the membership meeting, an appointed fact finding committee could meet with the offended parties to attempt to settle the differences amicably, and report back at the subsequent meeting with a report giving the results and/or recommendations, and ar to be submitted to the House voting membership for its approval or rejection by a necessary two-thirds margin.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

The Bylaws may be amended at any regular membership meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing at least twenty (20) days prior notice to members.

- a) Any changes that may conflict with HPR Bylaws shall be submitted to the HPR Bylaws Committee for review.
- b) After the HPR Bylaws approval, the amendment(s) shall be posted in the House of USA and/or sent to the membership via email or post mail at least 20 days prior to vote on the amendments.

Section 1. Current Bylaws Committee:

Amended by Inki Welch, Chairperson, Connie Arnson, and Gary Jones, in October 2018 and adopted by members in October 2019. Additions and corrections or suggestions by HPR Bylaws Committee in August 2021.

USA Bylaws Committee Chair: ***Inki Welch*** (Electronic Signature)

USA Membership Adopted on: September 12, 2021

HPR Bylaws Committee Approval on: August 26, 2021

Section 2. Previous Bylaws Committees:

1. Betty Klumpp, Chairperson; Ted Bruce, Dolores Williamson; Betty Welty; Ormsby Scudder. Amended October 1976.

2. Gary Flor, Chairman, Carlos Valentines, Andy Chiavaras, Larry Jaffe, Jack Reynolds. Amended October, 1991.

ARTICLE XIII RULES OF ORDER

All membership meetings of the House of USA by its members shall be governed by the House of USA Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order.

Standing Rules shall cover small details and can be changed bi-annually without the delay of changing the Bylaws. Changes shall be presented for a simple majority vote, then published by email and posted on a bulletin board in the kitchen of the House of USA for members to note and copy.

STANDING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1. All decisions for change or removal regarding furnishings and decorations should be brought before the Active members for final vote. All donations of decorating goods and/or supplies shall obtain prior approval from the Decorating Committee Chair.
2. NEW PURCHASES. Authorization for new items shall be submitted to the electorate at the general meeting ahead of time. By a simple majority approval of the active members present at the membership meeting, new purchases for the House of USA may be obtained.
3. Two (2) people in the same family should not hold official board offices, unless approved by a simple majority override of the Active members.
4. All monies collected should be counted by two (2) people. This is customary in many organizations.
5. The “Host of the Day” shall control the use of the piano so it is not abused but reflects the best of our country’s music and respect for good taste.
6. Hosts should not turn their back on the collection dish used for collecting donations from the general public. Ask a friend to help, if you are short-handed.
- 7.. Reminder List for Hosts: The House of USA starts to serve at 11am and closes at 4 pm. Those who have volunteered to serve with no email addresses will be notified by postal mail along with the previous month’s minutes.
8. Danger of Loss and Damage. A written release of House of USA responsibility should be obtained from each person upon their loaning or exhibiting anything. There should also be a dated and signed letter from the owner stating that an article has been given to the House of USA; that letter should be secured and put in our historian’s book which is kept in the House of USA.
9. It is customary to present the retiring president with a gift of appreciation from the members.

10. Membership Dues: Active, Supporting or Associate Members \$15 (First Individual) and \$5 (for each additional family member) per year unless Dues are waived or exempt by the member votes or the Board of Directors. Honorary Members \$20 per year.

11. Budget: A budget should be made at the beginning of the fiscal year. The budget should consist of sufficient funds to pay for fixed expenses, such as monthly rent, utilities cleaning and other necessary expenses.

12. Host(s) may receive up to \$15 to help defray cost of transportation or items brought to serve. All members who host at least 5 times in the current 12 months, annual dues are waived for the next year.