

ALERT: HOSTILE AMENDMENT BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Official House Resolution and Board Comments Attached

Resolution 519 – Enable Member Participation in Governance by Allowing Resolution Submission by ADA Members

Author: Dr. Steven Saxe, Delegate

IF YOU VOTE YES

A YES vote on Resolution 519 supports the action requested in the resolving clauses. It protects the right of every ADA member to have a voice in their own Association by allowing any three members in good standing to co-submit a resolution directly to the House of Delegates. This creates a fair, transparent pathway for ideas from the membership to reach the floor for open discussion. Resolution 519 does not weaken order or structure. It keeps all existing safeguards such as formatting requirements, submission deadlines, and reference committee review. It simply ensures that member ideas cannot be blocked, delayed, or altered before reaching the House. Immediately after you vote YES on Resolution 519, you must vote NO on 519B. The Board's substitute version is a direct assault on member participation. It not only rejects the right of members to submit resolutions, it also eliminates the right of individual delegates to do so. It takes power away from both the members and their elected representatives.

IF YOU VOTE NO

A NO vote on Resolution 519 supports the current restrictive system and the Board's proposed substitute, 519B. That version removes the right of members to submit resolutions and strips away the ability of individual delegates to bring forward new business. It concentrates all control at the top, turning what should be a member-driven professional association into a system where ideas flow only one way: downward. Voting NO is not a neutral choice. It is a vote to silence members and weaken the House of Delegates. It is a vote for hierarchy over representation, and it continues a disturbing pattern of the Board consolidating power while limiting the voice of those it serves.

SUMMARY

Resolution 519 restores balance to ADA governance. Under the current Standing Rules, only agencies, constituent societies, trustee districts, and individual delegates can file resolutions. Regular ADA members, those who pay dues, treat patients, and sustain the Association financially, have no direct path to bring forward their own ideas. The proposed change adds just one phrase: 'and any three members in good standing.' This is a simple, transparent reform that broadens participation and demonstrates that the ADA truly belongs to its members. The Board's substitute version (519B) reverses that intent. It not

only blocks members from submitting resolutions, it goes further by removing the existing right of individual delegates to do so. This is a hostile amendment that would permanently shift control away from the House and toward the Board of Trustees. It is an unmistakable attempt to take power from the many and hand it to the few.

Why the Board Is Wrong

The Board claims that its substitute ensures fiduciary oversight and structural order. In truth, it dismantles one of the most fundamental rights in a member-governed association: the ability of delegates and members to initiate policy. This is not about efficiency. It is about control. For years, the Board has slowly increased its authority while reducing transparency and accountability to the House of Delegates. The substitute version of 519 is part of that pattern. It would give the Board the ability to block ideas before they ever reach the House, effectively controlling the entire policy pipeline. Delegates are not employees of the Board; they are the elected representatives of the profession. The House of Delegates is, by ADA Bylaws, the supreme authority of the Association. Allowing the Board to silence both delegates and members is an unacceptable power shift. The ADA cannot claim to be member-driven if it prohibits members from driving change.

TALKING POINTS

- • Resolution 519 empowers members by allowing any three members in good standing to submit a resolution.
- • Keeps all safeguards: proper formatting, submission deadlines, and reference committee review.
- • Expands access to the House without sacrificing structure or oversight.
- • The Board's substitute, 519B, removes the right of members and delegates to file resolutions.
- • Centralizes power within the Board of Trustees and weakens the House of Delegates.
- • Continues a clear pattern of the Board reducing transparency and controlling governance outcomes.
- • Voting YES on 519 and NO on 519B protects democracy within the ADA and preserves the rights of every member and delegate.
- • The House must not allow its authority to be diminished or its voice silenced.



Prepared by Dentistry in General Advocacy Coalition
<https://dentistryingeneral.com/digac>

Resolution No. 519 NewReport: N/A Date Submitted: August 12, 2025Submitted By: Dr. Steven Saxe, delegate, NevadaReference Committee: D (Legislative, Governance and Related Matters)Total Net Financial Implication: None Net Dues Impact: _____

Amount One-time: _____ Amount On-going: _____

ADA Strategic Forecast Outcome: Direct to Dentist: Increase interpersonal and digital connections with members, dental students, and future members over the next five years.

1 **ENABLE MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE BY ALLOWING RESOLUTION SUBMISSION** 2 **BY ADA MEMBERS**

3 The following resolution was submitted on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, by Dr. Steven Saxe, delegate,
4 Nevada.

5 **Background:** The ADA's *2024 Strategic Forecast* identifies participation, representation, and
6 engagement as central to strengthening the Association's leadership role. The Forecast highlights the
7 need for increased interpersonal and digital connections with members, stability across the Tripartite, and
8 alignment of member value regardless of practice location or modality ([2024 Strategic Forecast](#)
9 [Summary](#)). Expanding access to resolution submission for members in good standing directly advances
10 these goals by creating new opportunities for grassroots involvement, engagement, and learning in the
11 governance process ([2024 Strategic Forecast, pages 2–4](#)).

12 Connecting governance access to membership growth is not speculative. The ADA's *2024 Strategic*
13 *Forecast* identifies member participation, engagement, and alignment of value across the Tripartite as
14 priorities for strengthening the Association's future ([2024 Strategic Forecast Summary](#)). Allowing any
15 three members in good standing to co-submit a resolution is a direct mechanism to advance these
16 priorities. Broader access ensures that grassroots ideas can reach the House without being delayed,
17 blocked, or diluted, and demonstrates to members that their voice has value at the national level. In this
18 way, governance reform is not separate from membership strategy — it is one of the tools to grow
19 engagement and strengthen retention.

20 Right now, the Standing Rules of the House of Delegates limit resolution submission to Association
21 agencies (including councils, commissions, and committees), constituent and component societies,
22 trustee districts, and individual delegates (*Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental*
23 *Information*, page 11, section titled "Items of Business"). This means most members have no direct way to
24 bring forward their own ideas unless they hold delegate status or navigate a constituent or component
25 society. Several state dental associations — including Illinois, Georgia, and many others — already allow
26 members to submit resolutions directly to their state House of Delegates, and these systems have
27 operated for years without governance disruption.

28 Under current ADA practice, member-submitted ideas often get delayed, blocked, or "altered " as they
29 pass through caucus or constituent review. This can strip away urgency, blunt innovation, and discourage
30 participation. Allowing any three members in good standing to co-submit a resolution directly to the ADA
31 House of Delegates — while keeping existing procedural safeguards like formatting requirements,
32 deadlines, and reference committee review — would protect the integrity of member-driven proposals,
33 broaden engagement, and send a clear message that every member's voice matters.

Resolution

519. Resolved, that the Standing Rules of the House of Delegates, section titled "Items of Business" in the *Manual of the House of Delegates* be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

Items of Business

An item of business becomes the property of the House of Delegates and is subject to House action in accordance with the appropriate order of business and agenda schedule when such item is received in writing by the American Dental Association Executive Director (Secretary of the House) subject to the following conditions:

1. Reports and resolutions from Association agencies, constituent and component societies, trustee districts, individual delegates, and any three members in good standing are governed by the Association *Bylaws* and the *Manual of the House of Delegates*. The three members in good standing submitting a resolution shall have the option to request formatting support from their state or constituent leadership, local district caucuses, and the American Dental Association, who may not block, delay, or alter the substance of the resolution but may assist the members in bringing the resolution into proper order.
2. Resolutions from dental agencies not part of the American Dental Association may become items of business at the discretion of the House if received in writing by the Executive Director (Secretary of the House) at least 15 days in advance of a session.

BOARD COMMENT: The Board of Trustees deeply values the ingenuity, initiative, and commitment of individual members who seek to contribute to the work of the American Dental Association. The strength of our Association lies in the diversity of voices and the dedication of members who identify opportunities to improve our profession and patient care.

At the same time, when an issue rises to the House of Delegates, it becomes a matter of formal policy development that shapes the future of our organization. Such matters deserve the benefit of thorough preparation, meaningful dialogue, and the fiduciary oversight that ensures the House can consider policy proposals with the seriousness and diligence they require.

This amendment preserves the important role of individual members in surfacing ideas while reinforcing the responsibility of constituent, component, and trustee leadership to help channel those ideas into resolutions that are properly developed, representative, and ready for deliberation by the House of Delegates. In this way, we honor both the creativity of our members and the integrity of our governance process.

519B. Resolved, that the Standing Rules of the House of Delegates, section titled "Items of Business" in the *Manual of the House of Delegates* be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

Items of Business

An item of business becomes the property of the House of Delegates and is subject to House action in accordance with the appropriate order of business and agenda schedule when such item is received in writing by the American Dental Association Executive Director (Secretary of the House) subject to the following conditions:

- ~~1. Reports and resolutions from Association agencies, constituent and component societies, trustee districts, individual delegates, and any three members in good standing are governed by the Association *Bylaws* and the *Manual of the House of Delegates*. The three~~

members in good standing submitting a resolution shall have the option to request
formatting support from their state or constituent leadership, local district caucuses, and
the American Dental Association, who may not block, delay, or alter the substance of the
resolution but may assist the members in bringing the resolution into proper order.

1. Reports and resolutions from Association agencies, constituent and component
societies, and trustee districts are governed by the Association Bylaws and the Manual
of the House of Delegates.

2. Constituent and component societies, trustee districts, American Student Dental
Association (ASDA), and ADA agencies shall have the authority to submit resolutions
to the Association. Constituent and component societies, and trustee districts must
collaborate with their individual delegates on resolutions submitted to the Association.
Individual delegates may collaborate with members in good standing to develop
resolutions that must be submitted to a constituent, component society, and/or a
trustee district.

2.3. Resolutions from dental agencies not part of the American Dental Association may
become items of business at the discretion of the House if received in writing by the
Executive Director (Secretary of the House) at least 15 days in advance of a session.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Vote Yes on the Substitute.

Vote: Resolution 519B

BERG	Yes	DOWD	Yes	KNAPP	Yes	STUEFEN	Yes
BOYLE	Yes	GRAHAM	Yes	MANN	Yes	TULAK-GORECKI	Yes
BROWN	Yes	HISEL	Absent	MARKARIAN	Yes	WANAMAKER	Yes
CAMMARATA	Yes	HOWARD	Yes	MERCER	Yes		
CHOPRA	Yes	IRANI	Yes	REAVIS	Yes		
DEL VALLE-SEPÚLVEDA	Yes	KAHL	Yes	ROSATO	Yes		