

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] [Type]

Report: [Report] Date Submitted: [Date Submitted]

Submitted By: Dr. Steven Saxe, Delegate, Nevada

Reference Committee: [Reference Committee for Worksheet]

Total Net Financial Implication: [Total Net Financial Impl.] Net Dues Impact:

Amount One-time: Amount On-going:

ADA Strategic Forecast Outcome: Tripartite: Promote Tripartite stability, success, and future growth.

## [ENHANCING TRUSTEE ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXPANDING MEMBER ACCESS TO POLICY MAKING]

### Background:

#### Board Campaign Ineligibility

Currently, ADA Board of Trustees members can begin formal and informal campaigning for national office during their final year in office. Under ADA rules, candidates may announce for office at the conclusion of the House session two years before the election (as described in the 2024 Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information, p. 62). This allows political activity to overlap with fiduciary responsibility, undermining the integrity of board service. Other professional organizations, such as the American Medical Association, prohibit such overlaps. A simple policy stating that **no sitting trustee may run for ADA President-Elect** would clarify the ADA's commitment to neutral governance and uninterrupted fiduciary focus.

#### Trustee Vote Transparency and Majority/Minority Reporting

While the ADA currently publishes voting records of the Board of Trustees, internal discussions have proposed reducing transparency or removing individual attribution. Rather than limit information, the ADA should require publication of a written majority report—and, where applicable, a minority report—for all Board votes, including unanimous ones. These explanations will assist delegates in understanding decisions, serve as a durable historical record, and build accountability. This mirrors best practices of deliberative bodies such as the U.S. Supreme Court and nonprofit boards across healthcare and education.

#### Grassroots Member Resolution Access and State Precedent

ADA policy currently limits resolution submission to constituent societies, components, official agencies, or individual delegates (see 2024 Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information, p. 9). This excludes most members from direct participation. Allowing any three members in good standing to co-submit a resolution would democratize policy input, especially for younger and newer members. The Illinois State Dental Society and several other state associations already use this model successfully. To ensure smooth implementation and

minimize cost to the ADA, submitting members would have the option of seeking formatting assistance from either their constituent leadership (who may not block submission), or a current or former delegate with resolution experience. Members are more likely to join—and remain engaged—when they know they can bring ideas forward through a fair, accessible process.

### **Modernized Candidate Media Access**

Current rules prohibit individual interviews with ADA national candidates unless all candidates are invited jointly. This standard, designed pre-internet, limits visibility in today's digital world. Permitting candidates to participate in individual interviews if the interviewer signs an affidavit offering the same opportunity to all candidates would promote fairness while enabling broader exposure. The affidavit would be submitted to the ADA Election Commission and made public. Each candidate could then choose whether to participate. This opens the door to greater transparency and member education without coercing any participant.

These reforms are designed to strengthen trust, improve access, and support ADA membership growth. Younger dentists expect open, modern systems that value transparency and participation. Just as we expect accountability from insurers and third-party payers, our professional association must lead by example.

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## **Resolution**

*Resolved*, that the American Dental Association amend its Election Commission and Campaign Rules to state that **no sitting member of the Board of Trustees may be eligible to run for the office of ADA President-Elect**, in order to ensure that Trustees complete their terms with full fiduciary focus before pursuing higher office; and be it further

*Resolved*, that the American Dental Association shall continue publishing the complete voting record of every Board of Trustees vote on policy resolutions and decisions, and shall additionally require that a written majority report and, where applicable, a minority report be submitted and published for each vote, including unanimous decisions, to explain the rationale behind the action and provide transparency to members and delegates; and that such reporting serve as both a tool for decision-making by delegates and a durable governance record for future leaders; and be it further

*Resolved*, that Chapter III of the Bylaws of the American Dental Association be amended by inserting the following language (new language underlined):

### **Chapter III – House of Delegates**

#### **Section 10.C. (amended text)**

In addition to resolutions submitted by constituent societies, components, Association agencies, trustee districts, and individual delegates, **any three members in good standing may jointly submit a resolution for referral to a reference committee**, subject to applicable submission

1 deadlines and formatting requirements outlined in the Manual of the House of Delegates. ***The***  
2 ***submitting members shall have the option to request formatting support from their state or***  
3 ***constituent leadership, who may not block, delay, or alter the resolution's submission.***  
4 ***Alternatively, the members may seek formatting assistance from a current or former ADA***  
5 ***delegate with experience submitting resolutions, to reduce administrative burden and cost to***  
6 ***the ADA.***

7 *Resolved*, that the ADA revise its campaign rules to permit individual interviews, forums, or  
8 podcast appearances by candidates for national office, provided that the interviewer signs an  
9 affidavit agreeing to offer the same opportunity to all other candidates; that the affidavit be  
10 submitted to the ADA Election Commission and made publicly available; and that it remain each  
11 candidate's choice whether or not to participate—thereby ensuring fairness, expanding public  
12 access to candidate platforms, and helping foster a culture of transparency and openness that will  
13 increase member trust and attract non-members who value participation in an open democratic  
14 process; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, that any necessary conforming amendments to the ADA Bylaws, the ADA  
16 Governance Manual, or the Election Commission and Campaign Rules be prepared by the  
17 Speaker of the House of Delegates and the Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs  
18 (CEBJA) to implement this resolution if adopted; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, that the changes outlined in this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption  
20 by the House of Delegates and shall apply to all applicable governance, submission, and election  
21 procedures beginning with the 2025 governance cycle.