

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] [Type]

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

Submitted By: Steven Saxe, DMD

Reference Committee: D (Legislative, Governance and Related Matters)

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.

**[RESOLUTION: OPTIMIZING HOUSE OF DELEGATES STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS FOR
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MODERN MEMBER ENGAGEMENT]****Background:**

The American Dental Association (ADA), as the national voice for the dental profession, must continually evaluate whether its governance structure reflects fiscal prudence and meets modern member expectations. ADA members entrust the Association with their dues and expect these resources to be allocated in a manner that is accountable, transparent, and aligned with organizational goals (*Manual of the House of Delegates*, p. 4).

The ADA House of Delegates (HOD), the legislative body of the Association, currently includes 485 voting delegates—a figure anchored in a target size of 473 established in 2014 (*Manual of the House of Delegates*, p. 4). Delegate allocation is recalculated every four years using membership data from two years prior; however, the target size has not been updated despite a decline in ADA active membership of more than 25% since 2005 (*Report of the Treasurer*, p. 6).

Professional associations such as the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) allocate delegates based on current active membership, with formulas adjusted annually to ensure fair representation. In keeping with these standards, a new target ratio of approximately one voting delegate per 700 members is proposed to modernize the House of Delegates and align representation more closely with the membership base. This ratio was selected to balance fairness, accessibility, and practicality, ensuring smaller constituent societies retain a meaningful voice.

Additionally, the House continues to allocate time and resources to ceremonial activities—including the installation of trustees and officers, spouse recognitions, and scripted speeches—which require significant travel, staffing, and coordination. These important acknowledgments can be transitioned respectfully to professional digital formats or official publications to preserve recognition while reducing overhead (*Manual of the House of Delegates*, pp. 6–8).

Environmental concerns also merit attention. The continued use of printed reference committee reports, delegate packets, and physical testimony documents results in substantial paper waste. Reducing printed material and unnecessary travel aligns with ADA’s stated commitment to sustainability and modernization, as outlined in its current Strategic Plan (*Common Ground 2025: ADA Strategic Plan*, p. 2).

Furthermore, consolidating the in-person portion of the HOD into a three-day format—by conducting preparatory sessions virtually in advance—would enhance accessibility for working dentists, reduce costs, and uphold the authority of the House as the voice of ADA membership.

The ADA has a fiduciary and ethical responsibility to structure its governance in a way that honors member investment, upholds the profession’s values, and operates with maximum efficiency (*2025 ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct*, Preamble, p. 3). These proposed updates bring the House of Delegates in line with modern governance standards while respecting the history and significance of its role.

Resolved, that the American Dental Association House of Delegates reduce its size to reflect current ADA membership levels, targeting approximately one voting delegate per 700 members (rounded to the nearest whole number), provided that every constituent society, federal dental service, and the American Student Dental Association retains guaranteed minimum representation to ensure broad national participation, and that delegate reapportionment be conducted every three years using the most recent verified membership data, in order to ensure fair representation, operational efficiency, and long-term cost savings; and be it further

Resolved, that the ADA respectfully transition ceremonial and non-governance activities during the House of Delegates session to digital formats, including:

- Pre-recorded election speeches for officers and trustees;
- Recognition of retiring officers, trustees, and trustee spouses;
- Remarks by the ADA Alliance and ADPAC Chair;
- Shortened and time-limited opening-day speeches; and that these elements be distributed professionally through ADA.org, official publications, or delegate packets, preserving recognition while reducing costs and floor time; and be it further

Resolved, that the ADA adopt a digital-first model for House of Delegates operations by:

1. Providing all reference committee reports, resolutions, and supporting documents in digital formats by default;
 2. Offering pre-recorded or live-streamed delegate testimony and virtual public comment options for those unable to attend reference committee hearings in person;
 3. Limiting printed materials to only those explicitly requested in advance;
- and be it further

Resolved, that the ADA convene a time-limited task force composed of representatives from the Speaker's Office, Board of Trustees, Council on Governance, Council on Communications, and ADA staff to evaluate a hybrid governance model, including:

- Reducing the in-person House of Delegates session to no more than three consecutive days;
 - Scheduling reference committee hearings after the first House meeting;
 - Enhancing use of secure virtual platforms for preparatory or procedural business;
- and that the task force report its findings and recommendations to the 2026 House of Delegates.