

Constitutional Amendment 00

Submitted by: _____

Article: 19 & 20

Section: Complaint and Discipline Process

Subject: **Repeal Constitutional Amendments 64 and 66 – A MEMBER IS A MEMBER**

HEU Will:

Repeal Constitutional Amendments 64 and 66 adopted at the 2024 HEU Convention and restore one constitutional complaint and disciplinary process that applies equally to every HEU member, regardless of the office they hold.

Restore Article 19 as the sole constitutional complaint and disciplinary process for all members, including Provincial Executive members.

Remove the separate constitutional complaint process established under Article 20 and the Provincial Executive Code of Conduct.

No HEU member shall be subject to a different constitutional complaint process solely because they hold elected office.

Because:

A MEMBER IS A MEMBER.

That simple principle has been the foundation of the labour movement for generations.

We all pay the same dues.

We all have one vote.

We all stand together on the picket line.

We are all bound by the same Constitution.

We should all be accountable under the same Constitution.

Holding elected office should never create a different constitutional standard of accountability.

Before the 2024 Convention, all HEU members were accountable through the same constitutional complaint process under Article 19.

Following the adoption of Constitutional Amendments 64 and 66, HEU now operates two separate constitutional accountability systems.

Members continue to be investigated and disciplined under Article 19.

Provincial Executive members are investigated under Article 20 through the HEU Ethics Commissioner.

That is not equality.

That is not solidarity.

That is not what our union was built upon.

A MEMBER IS A MEMBER.

These amendments were far more than housekeeping changes.

They fundamentally changed the constitutional relationship between the membership and its elected leadership by creating separate complaint processes for each.

Delegates deserved a full explanation that these amendments would fundamentally alter the accountability structure of our union before they were asked to vote.

To the best of the submitter's knowledge, HEU is unique among major public-sector unions in British Columbia in establishing separate constitutional complaint processes for ordinary members and Provincial Executive members. If comparable constitutional models exist elsewhere, they have not been identified.

The Ethics Commissioner investigates complaints involving the Provincial Executive under a system created and maintained by the Provincial Executive itself.

Even where everyone involved acts with complete integrity, such a structure creates a reasonable perception of a conflict of interest because the office exists to investigate the very leadership responsible for creating and maintaining that process.

Justice must not only be done.

Justice must also be seen to be done.

Since the appointment of the HEU Ethics Commissioner, **over a dozen complaints** have been filed by members against Provincial Executive members. **Not one has resulted in any corrective action against the current HEU leadership.** A complaint process that never results in accountability, regardless of the number of complaints received, inevitably raises legitimate questions about whether the process is serving its intended purpose.

The strength of a union comes from the confidence and trust of its members.

That confidence depends upon every member being treated equally under the Constitution.

Leadership exists to serve the membership—not to be governed by a different constitutional process than the members they represent.

No elected officer should ever be above the Constitution.

No elected officer should ever be subject to a different constitutional standard than every other member.

There should never be two classes of members within HEU.

There should never be two Constitutions in practice.

There should never be two standards of accountability.

There should only be one.

A MEMBER IS A MEMBER.

The new language would read:

Delete Constitutional Amendments 64 and 66 adopted at the 2024 HEU Convention.

Delete Article 20, **Provincial Executive Code of Conduct**, in its entirety.

Restore Article 19 as the sole constitutional complaint, investigation, discipline, and appeal process applicable to every member of the Hospital Employees' Union, including all elected officers and Provincial Executive members.

No member of the Union shall be exempt from, or subject to, a separate constitutional complaint or disciplinary process by reason only of holding elected office within the Union.

COMMITTEE

Non-Concurrence Concurrence

CONVENTION

Non-Concurrence Concurrence

Proposed Constitutional Amendment #1

Submitted by: [Insert Local Name]

Article: 6

Section: A

Subject: Election of HEU President and Financial Secretary by All Members

HEU Will:

Amend the Constitution to change the process of electing the President and Financial Secretary of the Hospital Employees' Union from a delegate-based vote at Convention to a direct vote by all members in good standing through a secure and accessible voting system.

Because:

The President and Financial Secretary are the two most senior full-time elected officers in the Union, each receiving a salary and total compensation package of approximately \$250,000 annually. These positions exercise significant authority over the direction, administration, and finances of the Union. It is undemocratic and inequitable that these positions are elected by a small number of delegates at Convention, rather than by the full membership who fund these positions through union dues.

Under the current model, only approximately one percent of the membership determines who holds these offices. A direct election would ensure all members have a voice in choosing their highest representatives and those responsible for overseeing union finances, and it would enhance engagement, transparency, and accountability.

Additionally, the current structure significantly favours incumbents. Sitting officers benefit from years of fully paid travel, access to staff, and opportunities to visit Locals which, while part of their official duties, also provide visibility and indirect campaigning. Challengers are generally limited to campaigning during the few days of Convention, creating a substantial imbalance and discouraging participation.

There is also concern that internal political considerations may influence which members are selected as Convention delegates, and who receives access to opportunities such as BCFED

representation, CUPE National delegation, education, and special events. This further concentrates political influence and discourages new leadership voices.

Moving to a system where all members can vote for the President and Financial Secretary would align the Union with democratic principles and follow the example of other major health care unions in British Columbia:

- The Health Sciences Association (HSA), which elects senior officers through a one-member, one-vote system; and
- The BC Nurses' Union (BCNU), whose Constitution provides for a province-wide vote of all members for the office of President.

These unions have recognized that broad democratic participation strengthens legitimacy, improves accountability, and increases engagement among the membership. If members of these unions can elect their senior officers directly, there is no reason HEU members should be denied the same right, particularly for the positions responsible for overall leadership and financial stewardship.

The new language would read:

Article 6 – Section A (Amended):

The President and Financial Secretary of the Hospital Employees' Union shall be elected by a majority vote of all members in good standing, through a secure and accessible voting process administered by the Union.

The Union shall ensure equal access to campaigning and communication tools for all candidates. Voting shall occur at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of Convention. The election shall be overseen by an independent elections officer, and results shall be certified and published to all members.

Effective Date:

This amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption by Convention and shall apply to the next election of the President and Financial Secretary, notwithstanding any past practice, timelines, or procedures that would otherwise delay implementation.

COMMITTEE

Non-Concurrence Concurrence _____

CONVENTION

Non-Concurrence

Concurrence

Proposed Constitutional Amendment #2

Article: 6

Section: L

Subject: Term Limits for President and Financial Secretary

HEU Will:

Amend Article 6, Section L of the Constitution and By-Laws to establish term limits for the President and Financial Secretary to a maximum of four consecutive two-year terms, totaling eight years.

Because:

Establishing term limits helps ensure that leadership positions remain open to new voices, ideas, and perspectives. HEU represents more than 60,000 members across the province — a membership rich with experience, skill, and leadership potential. Regularly opening opportunities for new individuals to serve strengthens democracy within the union and reflects the diversity of its members.

Incumbents in senior leadership roles have significantly greater access and visibility among locals in the years leading up to elections, including opportunities to visit locals in an official capacity. While these duties are part of the role, they can create an advantage not available to new candidates. Term limits help maintain fair and open democratic competition by ensuring regular opportunities for leadership renewal.

Long tenure in any leadership role can, over time, reduce accountability and limit opportunities for new leadership to emerge. Limiting service to eight years promotes transparency, prevents complacency, and helps ensure leadership remains responsive to the needs of a growing and evolving membership.

The positions of President and Financial Secretary are among the most influential in the union and carry significant responsibility under the PEA collective agreement. Given the importance of these roles, it is reasonable and responsible to ensure that qualified members have regular opportunities to serve. Leadership renewal supports confidence, fairness, and trust in the democratic process.

Many unions, non-profit organizations, and public institutions have successfully implemented term limits as a governance best practice, recognizing that regular leadership turnover strengthens accountability, reduces the concentration of authority, and encourages broader participation.

Addressing the President and Financial Secretary together recognizes that both positions operate under the same collective agreement governing benefits, raises, and employment conditions. Applying term limits to both roles ensures consistency, fairness, and balanced oversight within the union's leadership framework.

This amendment strengthens HEU's democratic values by promoting leadership renewal, equal opportunity, and accountability, while ensuring that positions of significant responsibility remain accessible to the full membership.

The new language would read:

Section L – Terms of Office

1. The term of office for the President and Financial Secretary shall be two (2) years.
 2. No individual shall serve more than four (4) consecutive terms in either role, totaling eight (8) years.
 3. For the purpose of calculating eligibility under this section, all consecutive terms served prior to the adoption of this amendment shall be counted.
 4. Any individual who, at the time this amendment comes into effect, has already served eight (8) or more consecutive years in the position of President or Financial Secretary shall not be eligible to stand for that office again without first being out of that office for at least one full term.
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Concurrence:

Non-Concurrence:

Proposed Constitutional Amendment #3

Article: Political Education and Political Action Fund

Subject: Elimination of Political Action Funding

Submitted by: [Your Name / Local #]

Rationale

HEU was founded as a collective organization representing all members, regardless of political affiliation. In recent years, substantial funds have been allocated to political action rather than direct member support. This practice has contributed to concerns among members regarding neutrality, accountability, and the use of union dues.

Many members believe that resources should be prioritized toward strengthening workplace representation, improving wages and working conditions, and providing tangible benefits that directly support members in their workplaces.

Political neutrality also protects the union and its members by ensuring that HEU can effectively advocate for members under any government, regardless of party, and reduces the risk of political retaliation or reduced influence during changes in government.

Funds currently allocated to political action could instead support expanded steward programs, enhanced workplace representation, education, and member advocacy. Investing directly in member services fulfills the union's core purpose of representing, supporting, and protecting members.

Redirecting these funds toward representation and member services would strengthen transparency, accountability, and member trust, while ensuring that dues are used primarily for collective workplace benefit.

Proposed Changes

Section A – Elimination of Political Action Funding

All funds currently allocated to the Political Education and Political Action Fund shall be discontinued.

Funds previously allocated for this purpose shall be redirected toward member representation, including the establishment and support of full-time steward positions, education programs, advocacy, and other initiatives that directly benefit HEU members.

Section B – Implementation of Expanded Steward Program

HEU shall develop and implement a program to expand steward and workplace representation capacity across healthcare facilities, prioritizing sites based on member density, geographic distribution, and demonstrated need.

This program shall improve accessibility, responsiveness, and timely support for workplace issues affecting members.

Implementation of this program shall begin within one fiscal year of adoption of this amendment.

Section C – Coordinated Advocacy

Where political or legislative advocacy is necessary to advance the interests of members, HEU shall prioritize coordinated advocacy through broader labour organizations, including the BC Federation of Labour, in order to ensure collaborative, transparent, and non-partisan representation on issues affecting workers collectively.

Section D – Transparency and Accountability

HEU shall establish a mechanism to oversee the transition of funds and the implementation of expanded representation programs.

The union shall provide regular, publicly accessible financial reports to the membership detailing expenditures related to advocacy, representation, and member services.

Regular reporting to the membership on outcomes and effectiveness of redirected funds shall be required.

Section E – Member Information and Political Neutrality

HEU leadership may provide information and educational materials to help inform members about political and workplace issues but shall not direct union funds toward supporting or opposing any specific political party or candidate.

HEU shall prioritize grassroots organizing, workplace education, and member engagement as the primary means of strengthening the union.

Conclusion

Eliminating the Political Action Fund and redirecting those resources toward member representation and services strengthens HEU's commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective workplace advocacy.

This amendment ensures that union dues are used primarily to support members in their workplaces, strengthens trust within the membership, and reinforces the principle that HEU exists first and foremost to represent, support, and protect its members.

Concurrence:

Non-Concurrence:

Proposed Constitutional Amendment #4

Submitted by: [Insert Local Name]

Article: 5

Section: E

Subject: **Consolidation of Equity Committees**

HEU Will:

Amend the Constitution and Bylaws to consolidate the existing Equity Standing Committees into a single **Social Justice Committee** responsible for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the union, coordinating advocacy, and ensuring representation of all equity-seeking groups.

Because:

The current structure of multiple separate equity committees can lead to duplication of efforts, fragmented reporting, and inefficient use of resources. A unified committee would strengthen coordination, improve collaboration, and allow for a more strategic and effective approach to advancing equity and social justice within the union.

Maintaining six separate committees requires additional administrative support, meeting costs, travel expenses, staff coordination, and reporting processes. Consolidating these committees would reduce overhead and allow more union resources to be directed toward member education, advocacy, training, and direct support rather than maintaining parallel structures.

In many cases, the issues addressed by different equity committees overlap significantly, including workplace discrimination, accessibility, harassment, and fairness in hiring and promotion. Addressing these issues through a unified committee encourages shared strategies, reduces duplication, and strengthens collective advocacy.

Consolidating these committees would also strengthen the union's ability to advocate for members and hold employers accountable to existing legal and contractual obligations related to discrimination, accessibility, and respectful workplaces, rather than duplicating work already mandated through legislation and collective agreements.

A single Social Justice Committee would provide clearer reporting, measurable outcomes, and improved transparency and accountability to the membership. Bringing diverse perspectives together within one committee would foster solidarity and collaboration while ensuring that equity-seeking groups retain a meaningful voice through structured representation.

A unified structure would also provide long-term flexibility, allowing the union to respond to emerging social justice issues and evolving member needs while maintaining equity as a central priority.

Union resources are funded by member dues, and it is essential that those resources be used as effectively and efficiently as possible to protect members' interests, strengthen advocacy, and support the core work of the union.

The new language would read:

Article 5 – Section E (Amended):

The Equity Standing Committees shall be consolidated into a single Social Justice Committee responsible for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the union.

The Social Justice Committee shall incorporate the mandates and objectives of the former Equity Standing Committees, provide coordinated advocacy and reporting on equity-related issues, and ensure participation and representation of all equity-seeking groups.

The Social Justice Committee shall include structured representation from equity-seeking groups as defined in the bylaws.

COMMITTEE

Non-Concurrence Concurrence

CONVENTION

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