



To: Council Board Chairs and CEOs
From: Office of the National Board
Date: February 28, 2023
Re: Proposals and Discussion Topics Not Selected for the 56th National Council Session Agenda

At the 56th National Council Session (NCS 2023), the Movement will come together to reinforce our collective commitment to girls and build a common vision to transform our organization and bring the benefits of Girl Scouting to even more girls. As part of our democratic process, the Girl Scouts of the USA Board of Directors (the board) invited councils to partner to build a strategic and future-focused agenda for NCS 2023.

For a second consecutive triennium, a National Council Session (NCS) Advisory Team was created to provide guidance in planning for the NCS 2023. The 12-member team, comprised of both girl and adult members, includes current and former National Board and council board members, council CEOs, and National Council delegates. The members are from small, medium, and large councils in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The team is charged with reviewing proposals and discussion topics for strategic impact, making recommendations on how councils and GSUSA can prepare and engage delegates, providing input to the board regarding the impact of proposals on councils and the Movement, and advising on creating an engaging and productive NCS agenda.

Every council was invited to partner with the NCS Advisory Team and the board in building a strategic and future-focused agenda for NCS 2023. All councils were given the opportunity to suggest topics for the agenda via a proposal and discussion topic submission process that took place from August 2021 through June 2022. The Office of the National Board received a total of ten proposals and five discussion topics from councils.

The board suggested four proposals and the NCS Advisory Team itself suggested one proposal. The National Council Session Alert, distributed at the same time as this memo, describes in greater depth the proposals and discussion topics placed on the agenda. This memorandum provides details about the discussion topics and proposals that were not selected for the agenda.

Summary

A large number of NCS discussion topics and proposals were received, which reflects our collective interest in Girl Scout governance. To ensure effective, efficient, and strategic use of our time onsite together at NCS, the board worked to carefully consider all feedback and the NCS Advisory Team's recommendation before determining the final agenda. Some items were not included either because they lacked support, are operational in nature, or can be considered by GSUSA management.

Other suggested proposals relate to governance topics that are best addressed in combination with related proposals or with further research and consideration which cannot be completed during the formal NCS debate. This input was used to shape the 2023 NCS “Democratic Process and Delegate Voice” discussion topic. Delegates are encouraged to bring forward their ideas in delegate webinars before NCS and during the NCS discussion itself.

The Board determined not to place the following discussion topics and proposals on the NCS 2023 agenda:

Discussion Topics (in alphabetical order by title)

- A. Inclusion of Gender Expansive Youth in Girl Scouts
- B. Joining Together to Maximize Girl Scout Resources
- C. Offering families with multiple members a sliding scale of reduced membership fees
- D. Quality and Relevancy of the Girl Scout Badge Programs and Journeys
- E. WAGGGS Compass 2032’s Collective Vision “to Build an Equal World Where All Girls Can Thrive” and Challenge “to Become a Girl-Led Movement”

Proposals (in alphabetical order by title)

- A. Addition of a Girl Scout Adult “Young Alumna” Membership Category
- B. Constitutional Amendment: Credentials and Amendment to Credentials Section
- C. Constitutional Amendment: Frequency of National Council Sessions
- D. Constitutional Amendment: Role of the National Council Delegates
- E. Ensuring the Importance and Effectiveness of the Democratic Process in the Movement
- F. Notice to GSUSA of Councils’ Intent to Sell Camp Properties
- G. Update to Internet Sales Policy and Fundraising Methods

Discussion Topics

Even though not included on the agenda, the board supports exploring other ways to support discussions with delegates and members on these topics.

Inclusion of Gender Expansive Youth in Girl Scouts

This is an important and complex issue for an organization that has a long history of serving a single gender. The board believes this topic deserves attention and needs to be addressed in a way that helps support gender expansive youth and is empowering. GSUSA will comprehensively review and more clearly articulate our guidance and materials and provide councils with the support they need. We are on a journey and will continue our work to be an organization that supports, empowers, and uplifts all girls and all youth.

Joining Together to Maximize Girl Scout Resources

Maximizing resources is important to our Movement. The opportunity to act on this – to share properties and other resources, to extend council events to girls in other geographies exists currently and occurs in many parts of our Movement. Given time constraints and that this goal can be implemented by councils currently, this discussion topic was not prioritized for the NCS 2023.

Offering families with multiple members a sliding scale of reduced membership fees

A sliding scale of membership fees can currently be implemented by the board after communication with councils and National Council Delegates. Should this be considered, delegate feedback will be solicited. Given time constraints and alternative ways to solicit feedback, this discussion topic was not prioritized for the agenda.

Quality and Relevancy of the Girl Scout Badge Programs and Journeys

The quality and relevance of the Girl Scout Program is important to maintain and grow membership. Program changes and adaptation can and are made throughout the triennium. Operationally Girl Scout programs (including badges, journeys and highest awards) are developed through external research, expert engagement, council feedback, and soliciting girl and adult perspectives. Given time constraints and the existing efforts to continuously address the quality and relevance of the Girl Scout program, this discussion topic was not prioritized for the agenda.

WAGGGS Compass 2032's Collective Vision "to Build an Equal World Where All Girls Can Thrive" and Challenge "to Become a Girl-Led Movement"

As a WAGGGS member organization, Girl Scouts participation in WAGGGS's initiatives is important. Compass 2032 continues to evolve, and we are in partnership with WAGGGS on this matter. Our existing strategic planning processes will enable a thorough consideration of WAGGGS Compass 2032. Given time constraints, the evolving Compass 2032 work and our Movement strategic planning efforts, this discussion topic was not prioritized for the agenda.

Proposals

Addition of a Girl Scout Adult “Young Alumna” Membership Category

This proposal suggested that a new membership category with specific programming for former Girl Scouts between the ages of 18 and 29 should be created. National Council action is not needed to create this category and programming. Work is already underway to retain members of this age group. Therefore, the Board did not place this on the agenda but referred this idea to management for consideration as part of that ongoing effort.

Constitutional Amendment on Credentials and Amendment to Credentials Section

This proposal suggested changes to the Girl Scout chartering process. There are both governance and operational management aspects of the chartering process. There are opportunities to refine the chartering process. The board referred the Girl Scout chartering process to management to address in their work with councils including soliciting specific ideas on how to evolve the council chartering process. Governance aspects of chartering may also be appropriate during the “*Democratic Process and Delegate Voice*” discussion. *See the discussion topic information in the NCS Alert.*

Constitutional Amendment on the Frequency of National Council Sessions

This proposal suggested that the National Council be required to meet annually by electronic means. How often the National Council meets is one aspect of our Movement’s governance. Given the number of submitted proposals related to varied aspects of our democratic process, including those placed on the agenda for vote, the Board chose to include these concepts via the “*Democratic Process and Delegate Voice*” discussion and in the virtual meeting proposal. *See the discussion topic and virtual meeting proposal information in the NCS Alert.*

Constitutional Amendment on the Role of the National Council Delegates

This proposal suggested that every delegate be assigned to work on an issue-driven working group during their 3-year term. Aligning every delegate to a working group poses significant challenges related to identifying substantive issues, placing delegates who then need to be available and contribute to the working group, and effectively consolidating the feedback. Additionally, when Movement task forces are currently created by GSUSA, these efforts already include delegate membership and their feedback. The role of National Council Delegates is one aspect of our Movement’s governance. Given the number of proposals submitted that focused on one aspect of our democratic process, including those placed on the agenda for vote, the Board chose to include this idea in the “*Democratic Process and Delegate Voice*” discussion. *See the discussion topic information in the NCS Alert.*

Ensuring the Importance and Effectiveness of the Democratic Process in the Movement

This proposal suggested the formation of a task group to complete a 2-year study of our democratic process. Given the considerable number of proposals submitted that focused on one aspect of our democratic process, including those placed on the agenda for vote, the board appreciated that this proposal took a more comprehensive approach to our Movement’s governance. Rather than wait for completion of a 2-year study, the board chose to act more quickly by placing a discussion topic “*Democratic Process and Delegate Voice*” on the agenda for this National Council Session and referring the outcomes from that discussion to a Governance Advisory group that will be formed immediately thereafter to consider this issue. *See the discussion topic information in the NCS Alert.*

Notice to GSUSA of Councils' Intent to Sell Camp Properties

This proposal suggested that councils provide GSUSA with a 90-day advance notice of sale of any camp property. This notice would allow GSUSA to provide resources to help councils explore all options before reaching a decision. The ultimate decision on sale would remain with the council. The 90-day notice period does not prevent the council from selling camp, it rather provides a brief waiting period creating space for new ideas or resources to maintain the green space. The board received feedback from council CEOs and board chairs that there were more effective ways of achieving this goal than adding this language to the charter.

Update to Internet Sales Policy and Fundraising Methods

This proposal suggested that the current fundraising policy regarding internet sales be changed to allow more flexibility. National Council action is not needed to change this policy. Management is already focusing on a variety of technological issues across the Movement. Therefore, the Board did not place this on the agenda but referred this idea to management for consideration as part of that ongoing effort.

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Thank You!

GSUSA and the board appreciate the effort that so many members of our Movement dedicated to developing these proposals and their engagement in our democratic process. Engaging in important dialogue through the delegate website, delegate education sessions, at local council events, and when NCS convenes in July 2023 will actively shape the way forward.

See you in Lake Buena Vista, Florida!