



BYLAWS AND ORDER

**(BETTER THAN TELEVISION; A LIVE, RIVETING PRESENTATION
OF WHY OUR GOVERNING DOCUMENTS AND ROBERT'S RULES
OF ORDER ARE SO IMPORTANT!)**

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Hierarchy of the Governing Documents and why they are important

36 USC Ch. 305: BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.

This is our Congressional Charter and can only be changed by Congress; it is the foundation for our remaining Governing Documents

CONSTITUTION

Basic rules pertaining to Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

BYLAWS

Primarily a set of limitations that members place upon themselves and their officers and describes the boundaries of what can and cannot be done by the organization

CODE OF CONDUCT

More detailed review of the operations of the organization

AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

Legal document signed by National/Department/Chapter/Auxiliary officers defining the relationships between the various levels of the organization

Policies (Financial; other)

REFERENCE SHEET

A listing of the commonly used acronyms found in the Governing documents

Reviewed every 3 years, or sooner in an emergency

The Most Significant Changes to the Governing Documents

Constitution

1. New Article V that clarifies the definition of an Associate
2. Article IX revised to allow the NEB to operate at full capacity if a PNP position is vacant (for a meeting, or a term). If the vacant PNP can return, the position goes back to her. The pro tem'd PNP has voting rights.
3. Reinstated Articles for Parliamentary authority and amendments

Bylaws

1. New Article III establishes same rights of an Associate to a Member
2. Deleted Blue Star Dad's as an auxiliary.
3. New Article VI to better explain the process of disbandment.
4. Allows chapter level financial officers to participate in NEB financial training sessions in lieu of having an accounting or financial background.
5. All national officer position descriptions were updated to include what is actually done (it was moved from the Leadership Guide, which is not a Governing Document and placed in the Bylaws to conform to our Charter).
6. New Article XIII which formally establishes the Standing Committees of the organization.
7. Amendment process mirrors the Constitution.

Code of Conduct

1. Article III clarifies the process for membership and renewals
2. If an in-person meeting for elections is not possible, a member of the NEB must be on the Zoom (social platform) to ensure confidentiality and election integrity.
3. The "suggested agenda" for meetings was revised so chapters did not have to do all of the above; gave the chapters greater flexibility for social/bonding time.
4. Article IX changed the rules of what can be worn as the official uniform.

5. Article XII (Disciplinary Procedure) was revamped and spells out the duties of the Conflict Resolution and Grievance Committees' processes.

6. Article XIV better defines VAVS.

7. Whistleblower Policy and Amendment process updated.

Affiliation Agreement

1. Auxiliaries added to the Agreement.

2. Compliance requirements were presented in a better format and explained.

3. All entities must comply with all policies and guidelines, in addition to the Governing Documents.

4. Liquidation of assets (process, etc.) fully explained.

Blue Star Mothers Expectations*

1. Treat our Sisters like a Sister – Members/ Associates should treat each other in the spirit of our Corporation’s core values and history. Members/ Associates shall treat one another, public officials, our military, and those in our neighboring communities with courtesy and goodwill at all times. This includes communications by telephone, email, virtual platforms, social media platforms, meetings, activities and events.
2. All contributions of time and talent shall be encouraged. Highly active members should not criticize or denigrate the contributions of less active members.
3. Personal disputes have no place at Chapter meetings or at any Corporation event. Disputes between members during any activities or events will not be resolved through argument but shall be referred to the NEB, DEB or CEB for resolution.
4. Associate members do not have the right to hold an office or vote.
5. The Corporation is non-partisan, a non-political, non-sectarian organization. We do not support any political candidate, nor do we endorse any religious organization. The military represents all aspects of America as does our organization.
6. Members/ Associates are encouraged to participate in meetings, events and activities as often as possible.

* Courtesy of Texas 18

Session 2 –

Green and yellow

1. If we have standing rules in our chapter, where do they fall in order of authority?

A: If your chapter has standing rules, they must be reviewed by the NEB for review to ensure they don't conflict with National. In the order of authority, they follow "Policies."

2. When can we hold Chapter elections?

A: According to our Governing Documents, you may only hold Chapter elections from August 1 through September 30. You cannot elect new officers (who will then sign the Affiliation Agreement) before the new NEB is elected.

3. Can an Associate be in an appointed position?

A: No. They may serve on a committee, but cannot be the chair of the committee.

4. Do you need to put who made a motion in the minutes?

A: While Robert's Rules of Order doesn't mandate including the name of the seconder, it's standard practice to record the name of the person who made the motion. This ensures clarity and accountability in the meeting record.

5. Can you vote via Zoom?

A: For Chapter business items, yes. For Elections, see:

Article X – Bylaws

Section 5. Nominees, except under extreme circumstances (such as temporary illness, accident, family emergency, natural disaster, or act of war or terrorism) must be present to accept the nomination.

In the case of absence, a letter must be addressed to the NEB or DEB prior to the Convention citing the office, qualifications for office, acceptance if nominated, and a detailed explanation of why the candidate is absent. Upon receipt of this letter, the candidate will be added to the ballot.

Section 12. If a Department, Chapter or Auxiliary cannot hold an in person meeting for elections, a member of the NEB shall facilitate the elections portion of the online meeting to ensure election confidentiality.

6. What if our chapter has already had elections (before August 1)?

A: They are not valid and must be redone.

7. Can you pop up the website in the convention hall so we can see where info is (how to find mentor, rituals, etc.)?

A: ??????

8. Can you put a subtitle to Quick Reference Guide on the website to denote that's where we find the old Rituals guide?

A: ??????

9. How does a "minor" who joins as an Associate legally sign the application?

A: ???????

10. If I wasn't present at a meeting, should I abstain from approving the minutes?

A: No. According to parliamentary procedure guidelines like Robert's Rules of Order, you can absolutely vote to approve minutes even if you weren't present at the meeting being documented.

Here's why:

- **Approving minutes isn't about attesting to attendance.** Your vote to approve signifies that you trust the accuracy and formatting of the minutes, not that you were there in person.
- **The body needs a complete record.** All members have a right and responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the meeting minutes, regardless of their individual attendance at a specific meeting.
- **Robert's Rules explicitly states it.** "It should be noted that a member's absence from the meeting for which minutes are being approved does not prevent the member from participating in their correction or approval," [according to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition](#).

Therefore, you should not abstain from voting on the approval of minutes simply because you were absent. Your participation is important for ensuring the correctness of the record.

11. Can we get an illustration on the website of a "proper" uniform? Can you include pictures of appropriate "military branch" pins?

A: ??????????

12. Can we do an additional “cheat sheet” included for first-time convention attendees to assist them with some of the logistics?

A: ??????????