



Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2798

PROPOSAL FOR 2017 NATIONAL COUNCIL AGENDA

Girl Scouts of North East Ohio

Name of Girl Scout Council

Macedonia

Ohio

City

State

Write the following information exactly as the council wishes it to appear in the *Workbook* if accepted for the agenda.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL

National Board of Directors, Girl Members-at-Large

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL (in the form of a motion)

THAT the National Board of Directors shall include at minimum two Girl Members-at-Large, 16 years of age or older, as non-voting members, or ex-officio. The two girl Members-at-Large would be in addition to the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Members-at-Large. The Girl Members-at-Large would be required to attend at least two of the meetings during each year of their three year term.

The terms of the girls shall match the terms of the adults, both being three years. The term for a girl member will not end when she turns 18 years old or graduates from high school. After selection, a girl would turn 18, 19, 20, 21 years old and still serve in the Girl Member-at-Large position, although she would remain an ex-officio non-voting member.

Girl Members-at-Large shall be elected by the National Council, with the first election to take place at the National Council Session in 2020. This will allow ample time for a nomination process to be developed.

REASONS

Since 1912, Girl Scouts has been the premier girl leadership organization with the mission to develop girls of “courage, confidence, and character.” Girl Scouts gives girls the opportunity to nurture and develop their leadership skills in a safe environment, in both their local community and on a national platform. We propose giving girls the opportunity to continue expanding their leadership opportunities by developing two Girl Member-at-Large, non-voting member positions on the National Board of Directors.

By creating these two girl Member-at-Large positions, we will:

- Offer girls the opportunity to be courageous by experiencing the chance to be on a National Board of Directors, representing over 1.9 million girl members (Girl Scouts, 2016);
- Build a girl's confidence by having the opportunity to work in teams, do social good, and develop leadership skills by networking and working intimately with leaders from all over the United States; and
- Give girls a character building experience. By being a non-voting member of the National Board of Directors, girls will have the opportunity to be responsible, ambitious, adventurous, and trustworthy.

Courage

As explained by Winston Churchill, “Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities... because it is the quality which guarantees all others.” Girl Members-at-Large will have the opportunity to be courageous in multiple ways. First, the girl members will be charged with representing their 1.9 million Girl Scout sisters. These ex-officio members will need to be bold and willing to make difficult decisions that will benefit the future of Girl Scouting for all members. Second, the girl members will have to travel, potentially across the United States, to New York City, at least 2 times each year of their 3-year term. As a teenager traveling without parents, this has the potential to be a stressful and new situation for girls. Finally, the girl members will be placed in a situation where they will be expected to communicate with prominent business leaders of America. Very few organizations give an opportunity for teenagers to sit on a National Board of Directors with the power to influence the direction of the organization and the opportunity to network with leaders from across the country. People are afraid of failing; and the fear of failing may prevent today's youth from attempting courageous acts. Girl Scouts gives girls a safe environment to try new and potentially scary things. In the 2012 Girl Scout Alumnae Impact Study, a report from the Girl Scout Research Institute, Girl Scout alumnae are more willing to be courageous, by seeking out a problem and trying to find a solution, than non-alumnae.

Many Girl Scout councils already give girls an opportunity to be courageous by sitting on their local Board of Directors. Providing an opportunity for girls to sit on the National Board of Directors is the next, reasonable and intuitive step forward to develop courageous Girl Scouts.

Confidence

Girl Scouts understands the need to bolster girls' confidence by developing opportunities for leadership. According to the Texas School Safety Center, "when youth realize they have the power to influence decisions at a community or school level, they will rise amongst their peers and begin to show signs of leadership." Brennan, Barnett, and Lesmeister (2007) discovered how important it is to empower the youth of today to become the leaders of tomorrow. When children realize their voice matters, they bloom into confident leaders. According to multiple researchers (Edelman et al., 2004; Larson, 2000; Sagama, 2003), youth who are given leadership opportunities show high levels of self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and self-determination. By creating two Girl Member-at-Large positions, Girl Scouts will be helping girls be more confident.

In a blog written by Andrea Bastiani Archibald, Ph.D. who is the Chief Girl Expert at GSUSA, there are many ways to make girls more confident. One of her suggestions is to encourage girls to try something new and get out of their comfort zone. By taking that first courageous step of trying something new, a girl may feel more capable of trying something new again. By starting at a local Board of Directors for a Girl Scout council, it may give some girls the confidence to run for a National Board of Directors position. After sitting on the National Board of Directors, the possibility of leadership opportunities is endless. According to Anna Maria Chavez, former CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA, "Girls that are part of a girl-led program like Girl Scouts are more likely to develop confidence, healthy relationships, critical thinking, problem solving, and positive life skills—and that makes our program so beneficial."

Character

Girl Scouts across America say the Girl Scout Promise and Law at their meetings. We ask girls to be honest and fair; friendly and helpful; considerate and caring; courageous and strong; and be responsible for what they say and do. By accepting two girls onto the National Board of Directors, we will be asking the girls to not only live by, but also to support legislation that confirm and endorse the Girl Scout Law. This is giving the two Girl Members-at-Large the opportunity to experience firsthand the trials and tribulations of having a position of power. These girls will be asked to keep information confidential and to act in an ethical manner when making decisions that could potentially affect millions of members. These are skills and experiences that will last a lifetime.

The Girl Members-At-Large are not the only ones who will benefit from this amazing opportunity. The National Board of Directors will have the opportunity to work closely with two girls. The GSUSA website says it is looking for “individuals who are recognized leaders, experts on girls’ and women’s issues as well as candidates with experience in philanthropic nonprofit fund-raising.” The best expert in girls’ issues is a girl facing them every day. Other Board Members will have the opportunity to interact with, and ask questions of the Girl Members. These girls will be able to give honest feedback about the issues that are affecting their lives and the lives of their 1.9 million Girl Scout sisters. The National Board of Directors will have a fountain of knowledge readily available to help guide their discussions, goal setting, and decision making processes.

By not including girls on the Board of Directors in this premier girl leadership organization, we are not practicing one of our fundamental and foundational pieces of Girl Scouting, being “girl-led.” It is paramount that we correct this oversight, so that we can move forward with a fuller, more adept National Board of Directors that truly understand the needs and hardships of today’s youth.

By including two Girl Members-At-Large, we will be practicing our mission of building girls of “courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.”

References

- Brennan, M. A., Barnett, R. V., & Lesmeister, M. (2007). Enhancing local capacity and youth involvement in the community development process. *Journal of Community Development, 38* (4), 13-27.
- Edelman, A., Gill, P., Comerford, K., Larson, M., & Hare, R. (2004). *Youth development and youth leadership: A background paper*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.
- Girl Scouts (2012). *Girl Scouting works: The alumnae impact study*. New York, NY.
- Girl Scouts (2015). *Help build self confidence in your daughter with these expert tips*. Retrieved from <http://blog.girlscouts.org/2015/08/help-build-self-confidence-in-your.html>
- Girl Scouts (2016). *Who we are*. Retrieved from <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/who-we-are.html>
- Larson, R.W. (2000). Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 170-183.
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American Youth Policy Forum.

Texas State Texas School Safety Center (2016). *The positive effects of youth community engagement*. Retrieved from <https://txssc.txstate.edu/topics/youth-leadership/articles/positive-effects-of-youth-engagement>

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Indicate the projected expenditures and impact on resources for councils and the national organization, for a five (5) year period.

The budget impact is based on two Girl Members-At-Large attending three National Board Meetings per year.

Costs for transportation (airfare and ground, hotel, meals) are estimated at approximately \$10,000 per year.

For a five-year period costs are estimated at \$50,000.

 **Laura L. Watson, GSNEO Board Chair**

Signature and Printed Name of chair, or secretary, council board of directors

June 8, 2016

Date of council board meeting

On or before September 30, 2016, email to: BoardOffice@girlscouts.org
Or mail form to: Office of the National Board of Directors, Girl Scouts of the USA, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2798.

Submission Deadline: September 30, 2016

If additional space is needed, please attach a separate page.



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New York, NY 10018-2798

SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL FOR 2017 NATIONAL COUNCIL AGENDA

(Originated by another Council)

Name of Girl Scout Council

City

State

TITLE OF PROPOSAL SUPPORTED

National Board of Directors, Girl Members-at-Large

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL SUPPORTED (exact wording)

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REASONS OF SUPPORTING COUNCIL

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