



Council on Legislation 2013

Report

Representatives from Rotary's 532 districts met in downtown Chicago 21-26 April, approving a number of measures designed to strengthen Rotary, increase membership, and enhance the organization's capacity to serve.

It has been a great pleasure and privilege to participate with my legislative duties in Chicago. My experience was a positive one, and now that the Council has adjourned my intention is to fulfill the rest of my responsibilities:

1. Reporting on the deliberations of the Council to the clubs in my district
2. Reviewing the Report of Action and revised constitutional documents
3. Keeping RI informed of any changes to contact information in case an action of the RI Board is appealed per RI Bylaw section 5.030.
4. Being accessible to clubs in the district to assist in their preparations for future Councils
5. Reviewing the notification of Board actions taken in regard to resolutions adopted by the Council (to be issued within one year of the Council)

I have sent the Report to Action to all the clubs for revision. The English revised constitutional documents that incorporate all the enactments adopted by the 2013 COL are now available. The following three documents have been updated: Bylaws of Rotary International, Constitution of Rotary International and Standard Rotary Club Constitution. They have been posted on the [Policy Documents](#) portion of rotary.org and have also been posted on the Council on Legislation workgroup.

I have summarized some of the decisions taken at the 2013 COL.

Important decisions:

This year's Council accepted an increase of US\$1 per year in per capita dues, removed limits on e-clubs, permitted satellite clubs, and changed the name of the fifth Avenue of Service to "Youth Service."

The dues increase means Rotary clubs will pay Rotary International annual per capita dues of \$54 in 2014-15, \$55 in 2015-16, and \$56 in 2016-17. Dues for 2013-14 had already been set to \$53.

The RI Board of Directors proposed the increase based on a five-year financial forecast that projected that Rotary's spending would exceed revenues by \$9 million in 2018 if there were no increase. The result would be a drop in the General Surplus Fund below the level required by the RI Bylaws.

- [Allowed districts to have more than two e-clubs](#). The 2010 Council made e-clubs, which meet electronically, a permanent part of Rotary. Proponents argued removing the limit will bring in new

members and will appeal particularly to young professionals, who may be less able to meet in person weekly.

- [Approved satellite clubs](#), whose members meet at a different time and location from their parent club but are still considered members of the parent club. The measure is intended to make it easier for members to develop the core for a new club.
- [Increased the number of clubs that can take part in pilot projects from 200 to 1,000](#). The RI Board uses these pilots, which last for up to six years, to test new ideas, methods, and organizational frameworks for clubs. Pilot clubs that participate in these experiments are fully functioning Rotary clubs but are exempt from some requirements of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution.
- [Approved changing the name of Rotary's Fifth Avenue of Service, currently called "New Generations Service," to "Youth Service."](#) The 2010 Council approved this Avenue of Service for youth, which joined the already established Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service, and International Service. The name "New Generations" was meant to reflect the need to build the next generation of Rotarians, but proponents of the name change argued that the word "youth" is more universally understood, both inside and outside Rotary, and clarifies the fact that these programs encourage Rotarians to empower youth.
- [Approved a measure allowing participation in club projects to count toward club attendance requirements](#). The measure amends the Standard Rotary Club Constitution to require that a member attend or make up at least 50 percent of regular club meetings or engage in club projects for at least 12 hours in each half of the year, or a combination of both.
- [Approved to amend the qualifications for club president](#). A candidate for the office of president shall have served as a member of this club for at least one year prior to being nominated for such office, except where service for less than a full year may be determined by the district governor to satisfy the intent of this requirement.
- [Approved a measure for calculating attendance records](#). In the event that a member's absence is excused by the club board for the reasons it considers good (e.g., inevitable event such as a funeral or illness) the members attendance should be excluded from the attendance records.
- [Approved a measure for excused absences \(commonly called the "rule of 85"\)](#). The aggregate of the member's years of age and years of membership in one of more clubs is 85 years or more and the member has notified the club secretary in writing of the member's desire to be excused from attendance and the board has approved.
- [Approved a measure allowing Rotarians outside the United States and Canada to receive an electronic edition of their official regional Rotary magazine, if one is available](#). Rotarians within the United States and Canada were given the option of receiving a digital version of The Rotarian by the 2010 Council.
- [Approved a measure creating the office of vice governor, who would act as a substitute if the governor became unable to serve](#). The vice governor would be selected by the district's nominating committee from among the district's past governors.
- [Approved a measure to add to the duties of a Governor](#). The District Governor will ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the clubs comply with the constitutional documents, especially following councils on legislation.
- [Removed the travel reimbursement policy from the RI Bylaws](#). This will enable the RI Board of Directors to develop a policy that is flexible, able to address emergency travel situations, and able to take advantage of cost-saving opportunities.
- [Approved a measure to change the term "district assembly" to "district training assembly"](#). The reason for a change in terminology is to clarify the purpose of this district activity. It is designed to

be a training session for Rotary club leaders to prepare them for their responsibilities. The term assembly has different meanings and interpretations and does not focus on leadership skills which are the desired outcomes of this training.

- **Defeated two measures affecting Rotaract**, Rotary-sponsored service clubs for men and women ages 18 to 30. The Council rejected raising the age limit to 35, arguing that the older members would have little in common with 18-year-olds. They also argued Rotarians should reach out to include Rotaractors who are reaching the age limit in their Rotary clubs. The Council rejected establishing lower dues for Rotaractors who want to join Rotary, partly because Rotaract membership records have not been collected by RI.

Results for each one of the proposed legislation can be found @ www.rotary.org and www.rotarydistrict5240.org

Luz Maria Ortiz-Smith

District 5240 COL 2013 Representative.