How to Draft and Submit a Resolution or Bylaws Amendment Proposal to the AVMA House of Delegates (HOD)

The Bylaws Amendment and Resolutions Review Subcommittee can assist you in crafting the language for your Resolution or Bylaws Amendment. The Subcommittee consists of two HAC members with assistance from the AVMA parliamentarian, two staff members from the Office of the Executive Vice President (OEVP), and the AVMA General Counsel. The role of the Subcommittee is to review and assist in possible revisions to proposed Resolutions or Bylaws Amendments before full debate in the HOD. This is to address and/or correct parliamentary and other issues that might get in the way of healthy discussion and debate on the merits of the proposal at hand during the HOD meeting.

The Office of the Executive Vice President (OEVP) maintains templates for Resolutions and Bylaws Amendments. Both templates are available at the HOD SharePoint site, in the HOD Working Library section.

Once you have filled in the template with a rough draft of your proposal, submit it to the OEVP via email at OfficeEVP@avma.org. It is ideal to include in your email cover letter a little background information and the intent or expected goal of the Resolution or Bylaws Amendment. The Chair of the Subcommittee will contact you as soon as possible with a critique from the Subcommittee, and with possible edits or changes that could enhance your proposal.

The following are some guidelines and helpful sections from the AVMA Bylaws:

AVMA RESOLUTIONS

Be Specific: In preparing the resolution, determine who should be doing what, by when, and include that specificity in the resolution.

Authority to act: In determining what entity within AVMA should be doing the task, check the AVMA Bylaws to ensure that the entity you are giving the assignment to has the authority to do that assignment. Two sections of the AVMA Bylaws will give you guidance in this area; they are the section on the duties of the Executive Board and the duties of the House of Delegates.

Duties of the Executive Board:

ARTICLE V
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Authority and Responsibility. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Board of Directors (which shall be referred to in these Bylaws as the “Executive Board”), which shall have supervision, control, and direction of the Association, shall determine its policies or changes therein within the limits of these Bylaws, shall actively promote its purposes, and shall have discretion in the disbursement of its funds. The Executive Board shall act for and on behalf of the House of Delegates between sessions of the House of Delegates. The Executive Board may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its business as shall be deemed advisable and may, in the execution of the powers granted, appoint such agents as it may consider necessary. The Executive Board shall provide reports to the House of Delegates.
Duties of the House of Delegates:

ARTICLE VII
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Section 1. Authority and Responsibility. The House of Delegates shall be the principal body within the Association responsible for establishing policy and providing direction for matters relating to veterinary medicine and shall be the representative body of the Principal and Constituent Allied Veterinary Organizations of the Association. In addition to such other duties set forth in these Bylaws, the House of Delegates shall:

a) Approve all changes to the Association’s Articles of Incorporation;
b) Amend, alter, or repeal the Bylaws in accordance with Article XV of these Bylaws;
c) Approve all changes to the Veterinarian’s Oath;
d) Vote on all matters properly brought before the House of Delegates;
e) Solicit, process, and communicate membership needs to the Executive Board;
f) Participate in the Association’s strategic planning;
g) Elect members to serve on the Association’s councils;
h) Elect the President-Elect and Vice President, and, when necessary, President; and
i) Elect members to the committees established by the House of Delegates.

Therefore, if the resolution is regarding a policy relating to veterinary medicine, the House of Delegates has full authority to adopt that policy and the resolution would probably begin: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association . . .”

Since the Executive Board is the entity that has the “discretion in the disbursement of its funds,” any resolution that would require the expenditure of money must be presented as a recommendation to the Executive Board and would probably begin: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates recommend to the AVMA Executive Board that . . .”

Since the AVMA Councils report to the Executive Board, any direction that the HOD wishes to give to a AVMA Council must be in the form of a recommendation to the Executive Board and would probably begin: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates recommend to the AVMA Executive Board that . . .”

The AVMA Bylaws gives the authority to form an ad hoc committee or task force to the Executive Board (Article VIII, Section 3 Advisory/Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces. “The Executive Board may appoint such advisory or ad hoc committees or task forces as are necessary or appropriate to support the purposes of the Association.”) Therefore, if the HOD would like to have a task force or ad hoc committee formed, it can only do so as a recommendation to the Executive Board and would probably begin: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates recommend to the AVMA Executive Board that they form a task force to . . .”
The AVMA House of Delegates, in the AVMA Bylaws, is given the authority to assign duties to the House Advisory Committee (Article VII, Section 19, c. Duties. “The House Advisory Committee shall have such duties as set forth in these Bylaws, and as shall be assigned to it by the House of Delegates . . .”). Therefore, any Resolution directing the House Advisory Committee to do something might begin: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates direct the House Advisory Committee to . . .”

Another area of the Bylaws that gives specific authority to the Executive Board and to the House of Delegates is the article on dues:

**ARTICLE IV**

**DUES AND ASSESSMENTS**

_The initial and annual dues for all members of the Association shall be determined by the House of Delegates. The time for paying such dues and other assessments, if any, shall be determined by the Executive Board. Under special circumstances, the Executive Board, or its designee(s), may waive the annual dues and/or assessments for any member._

Therefore, if the resolution is in regards to dues, the only entity that has the authority to change the annual dues of members is the House of Delegates, and the way that would happen is through a resolution. The resolution might read: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates authorize an increase in membership dues effective . . .”

But if the House of Delegates wanted to change the time of payment of dues, it does not have the authority to do so. Therefore, the resolution regarding that issue might read: “Resolved, That the American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates recommend to the AVMA Executive Board that the due date for dues be changed to . . .”