

STANDING RULES OF THE 2026 COA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

The 2026 COA House of Delegates must agree and adopt procedures for discussing resolutions and bylaws changes. The following are suggested for appropriate House procedures:

General House of Delegates Operating Guidelines

1. Please be on time and have your delegates available for the policy resolutions, and other agenda items discussion.
2. Personal communications devices must be silenced when the House is in session.
3. The sergeants-at-arms have the duty to function as “pages” in transmitting messages to persons in the restricted delegates’ seating area from the “gallery” and other outside sources.
4. There will be a minimum of two (2) sergeants-at-arms available in the House of Delegates for relocating resource volunteer doctors of optometry. (Refer to Addendum A for charge to sergeants-at-arms.)
5. The COA president or president-elect will be available to the House of Delegates as a resource. He or she will be seated at the reserved COA leaders’ table.
6. Only credentialed delegates or alternates are seated in the society-designated sections of the House of Delegates meeting. Non-delegate members are seated in the area designated as the “gallery”; however, there will be reserved tables available for the COA Board of Trustees, executive staff, press representatives, distinguished guests and invited guests.
7. The COA president appoints a credentials committee, which also serves as the election teller committee. The chair of the committee shall serve as elections teller. This committee should not include any members of the current year’s COA Nominating Committee.
8. To facilitate credential matters, the credentials committee chairperson should be positioned at the entrance to the delegate’s designated seating area and near the sergeant-at-arms.
9. Election campaigning for COA elected positions should be planned and implemented so that it is not disruptive or distracting for the delegates in session. This rule is to be publicized to candidates for office.
10. Non-delegates have ample opportunities to submit their input on House of Delegates business and are encouraged to take advantage of those opportunities. Delegates are elected in sufficient time prior to the House of Delegates meeting; consequently, COA members may contact any or all of them for input. Societies should hold a general

membership meeting prior to the House of Delegates meeting for delegate information and education, as well as for discussion of issues with the general membership. Delegates receive House of Delegates information early and are thus aware of many issues that will be addressed to be able to seek input from their society membership. Another opportunity exists during the House meeting when any member may contact his or her own, or any other, delegation through the sergeant-at-arms to offer input. Any delegate may request special permission of the speaker of the House, and/or the House, for a non-delegate to speak. Any delegate may request a postponement of any issue for purposes such as caucusing. Only members of a particular society may attend that society's caucus unless specifically invited by that society.

11. Scheduled committee meetings shall take place outside of the time that the House of Delegates is meeting.
12. The Public Vision League (PVL) annual meeting shall be held upon recess of the House of Delegates. The House shall reconvene immediately following the PVL annual meeting.

Submission and Consideration of Policy Resolutions and Bylaws Amendments

1. Policy resolutions and bylaws amendments submitted by the published deadline will be submitted to a reference committee prior to the House of Delegates meeting. The role of the reference committee at this point is to review the proposed resolutions and bylaws amendments for factual content; to determine if they conflict with existing COA policies, bylaws, or state or federal rules; and propose language changes if necessary to clarify the meaning or intent of the proposal. The reference committees shall recommend to the speaker the prioritization of resolutions and bylaw amendments submitted for discussion during the first session of the House. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the committee may not change opinions or perceptions expressed, or the intent, of the proposal.
2. Policy resolutions not submitted to COA's office by the published deadline may be submitted from the floor for consideration at the first session of the House of Delegates with the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates seated.
3. With the exception of commendation resolutions, all policy resolutions submitted on the floor and approved for consideration by two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates seated that are not resolved on the House floor will be assigned to a reference committee for consideration and subsequent report to the House at the last session.
4. The author or representative of the society or board proposing a policy resolution or bylaws amendment will be expected to speak to the rationale for their proposal on the floor of the House of Delegates and before the reference committee.
5. Each proposed bylaws amendment and policy resolution will be presented to the House of Delegates during the first session and prioritized as recommended by the

reference committees and either discussed on the House floor or referred to open hearings of the reference committees.

6. As a delegate, please keep in mind that proposed policy resolutions are policy statements of COA, and bylaws amendments represent the rules and procedures for how COA will operate and be governed. Each generally remains in force long after the House of Delegates meeting at which they are adopted. Therefore, it is important to consider the long-term implications and consequences of any resolution or bylaws amendment being considered.
7. If you wish to speak, stand for recognition by the speaker, and then state your name and society. Your time must be limited to 2 (two) minutes at the microphone. Please make your comments succinct.
8. If someone else makes a point which you were going to make, don't stand up and say the same thing - this is a waste of time.
9. Remember, you are voting on the intent of the resolution or bylaws amendment. If you agree or disagree with the intent, say so - but, if your concern is with only a word or two, say so, but make it brief. Always state whether you are speaking "for" or "against."
10. **Reference Committees:** As needed, the speaker shall appoint reference committees comprised of three (3) or more delegates or alternate delegates to study and report to the House of Delegates on business that comes before it. The reference committee will review the proposals prior to the House of Delegates meeting and, if referred to committee, take public testimony during an open hearing on policy resolutions, bylaws amendments and other matters referred to it by the House of Delegates.
 - a. The reference committee will work with the author(s) and opponents of a policy resolution or bylaws amendment in an attempt to find a mutually agreeable proposal.
 - b. Following the open hearing, the reference committee will meet in closed session to consider the testimony and other relevant information and prepare its report.
 - c. Reference committees shall recommend to the House of Delegates the adoption, rejection, amendment, postpone indefinitely, referral or substitution of all recommendations, and policy resolutions which have been assigned to them.
 - d. Staff will electronically distribute the report to all delegates. No changes will be made without the permission of the reference committee chair who will be available for consultation.
 - e. The chair or a designated committee member is to present the report to the House.

11. When presenting policy resolutions for a vote on the House floor during the last session, only the “RESOLVED” portion of the resolutions should be read out loud; however, resolutions newly introduced to the House should be read in their entirety.

Election Procedures

1. The following procedures will be employed for COA Board of Trustees, speaker and vice speaker elections:
 - a. Elections for any office or position shall take place with all candidates for that office or position collectively offered as a group for voting purposes.
 - i. The COA Nominating Committee report shall be scheduled and nominations from the floor are requested during the first session of the House. Candidate presentations will also occur during the first session. During the last session elections shall be scheduled.
 - b. Voting will follow the close of nominations for each office or position with the results announced prior to proceeding to the next office or position. Losing candidates for a first office or position may announce their candidacy for a subsequent office or position prior to the vote for that office or position.
 - c. Uncontested elections may be held by voice vote.
 - d. In the event of a contested election, a ballot, a secret ballot, voice vote, or roll call vote by societies is allowed.
 - e. If a roll call voted is conducted, each society delegation’s leader, e.g., society president, shall announce the society votes by roll call. The vote by roll call of societies may be projected and tabulated live. However, the final election result will not be official until the COA House of Delegates Election Teller Committee has tabulated and confirmed the vote.
 - f. If a ballot vote is conducted, votes cast for contested office will be submitted and recorded by electronic society ballots. The results will be displayed for all delegates and confirmed by the Election Tellers Committee.

If a secret ballot vote is conducted, votes cast for contested offices will be recorded by secret society ballots and tabulated by the election teller committee. The final election result will not be official until the Election Tellers Committee has tabulated and confirmed the vote.
 - g. If a secret ballot vote is conducted, votes cast for contested offices will be recorded by secret society ballots and tabulated by the election teller committee. The final election result will not be official until the Election Tellers Committee has tabulated and confirmed the vote.
 - h. For individual offices and positions, each delegate may cast one vote for the nominee of his or her choice. Where multiple vacancies exist for one position, each society will have a total number of votes equal to their number of seated delegates multiplied by the number of vacancies to be filled. However, no more than the number of votes equal to the society’s delegate strength may be cast for any one candidate. There will be no cumulative voting.

- i. Delegates cannot be required to cast their votes if they do not so choose. Each delegate has the right and obligation to cast his or her vote for each candidate or to abstain from casting a vote.
- j. When there are more candidates than the office or position(s) up for election and no one receives a simple majority of the votes cast, i.e., anything greater than 50%, a second ballot is ordered with all nominees listed as on the first ballot. If no one receives the majority vote on the second ballot, a third ballot is taken. Balloting continues until one or more of the nominees receives a majority of the votes cast.
- k. Candidates receiving a majority of the total number of delegates voting are elected. If on any ballot: **1)** more than the required number of candidates for available positions receives a majority, the required number of candidates with the most votes is elected, or **2)** fewer than the total number of candidates required to fill all positions are elected on any ballot, subsequent ballots will be taken among the remaining candidates until all positions are filled.
- l. For both individual and multiple positions and offices, following each ballot and after the election teller committee has certified the results of the ballot, the number of votes received by each candidate will be announced. Thus, the delegates will know which nominees were stronger and which were weaker on the prior ballot.
- m. Delegates will be informed of the election procedures prior to the beginning of the election process.

ADDENDUM A

Charge to Sergeants-at-Arms

The sergeants-at-arms are to be properly and distinctively identified.

The sergeants-at-arms have the duty to function as “pages” in transmitting messages to persons in the restricted delegates’ seating area from the “gallery” and other outside sources.

The sergeants-at-arms will maintain a bulletin board in the rear of the House of Delegates (depending upon physical arrangements) to be utilized to post non-urgent messages for delegates, etc.

The sergeants-at-arms will monitor the quality and utilization of audio-visuals, including the floor microphones in the House of Delegates.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for controlling the access to the House of Delegates room and the delegates seating area.

The sergeants-at-arms will assist in monitoring orderly access to and line-up in the credentialing desk area.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for maintaining order in the House of Delegates meeting room (including the gallery) and adjacent areas. Maintaining order includes not only decorum of occupants, but also the noise level, lighting, temperature, etc.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for enforcement of restricted seating areas within the House to include the reserved tables for the COA board, guests, staff, press, etc.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for notifying the speaker of the House of the arrival of distinguished guests, speakers and visitors. The sergeants-at-arms are to direct and escort such dignitaries to their seats in the House. The COA staff House of Delegates coordinator is to provide the sergeants-at-arms with a daily listing of expected dignitaries.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for the distribution of handout materials and the collection of same within the House.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for the placement, retention and retrieval of all society and other table signs, posters, panel speaker signs, lectern signs, and COA House of Delegates wall banner in the House meeting room.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for designating the caucus area(s) in which society delegates and other groups can convene.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for monitoring the numerical strength of the delegates, ensuring the proper number for a quorum of the House.