

C. Constitutional Amendment: Formula for Delegates

Farthest North Girl Scout Council

Proposal

To amend Article IV, National Council, Section 5, by striking the number 3,500 in every place where it occurs and replacing it with the number 1,000 and by striking the word “no” and replacing it with the words the words “as close to but not” in the last sentence.

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 girls thereafter.	FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 3,500 1,000 girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every 3,500 1,000 girls thereafter.	FORMULA FOR DELEGATES Each local council to which a charter has been issued and remains in force shall be entitled to the following delegates based on the number of girls under its jurisdiction who are members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America as of September 30 of the year preceding the regular session of the National Council: a. two (2) delegates; b. one (1) additional delegate for up to 1,000 girls; c. one (1) additional delegate for every 1,000 girls thereafter.
USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.	USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.	USA Girl Scouts Overseas collectively shall be entitled to the number of delegates according to the same formula prescribed for local councils.
The prescribed figure of 3,500 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no larger than 1,500.	The prescribed figure of 3,500 1,000 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council no as close to but not larger than 1,500.	The prescribed figure of 1,000 girls may be adjusted when necessary to keep the total membership of the National Council as close to but not larger than 1,500.

Proviso: That this action become effective for the 2026 National Council Session.

Rationale Submitted by Originating Council

The formula for the delegate body of council delegates was amended at the 2008 National Council Session, during the implementation of the Core Business Strategy. In 2008, the girl membership was 2,495,812. The number of councils was being reduced from 312 to 109. At the 2008 National Council Session, the delegates established the optimal size of the National Council body at 1,500 council delegates. Therefore, the formula was established to add council delegates accordingly using 3,500 girls as the threshold.

However, that formula did not hold up for even one National Council Session because girl membership was on a steep decline. The girl membership has continued to decline every year. The National Board of Directors used a modified formula of 2,000 girls in 2011, 2014, 2017; and 1,500 girls in 2020 and 2023. This resulted in the following number of delegates for those respective years:

2011: 1,296 National Council delegates, 7.6% decrease in membership since 2008

2014: 1,195 National Council delegates, 13% decrease in membership since 2011

2017: 1,027 National Council delegates, 12.1% decrease in membership since 2014

2020: 1,158 National Council delegates, 16.9% decrease in membership since 2017 (formula change)

2023: 846 National Council delegates projected, 27.3% decrease in membership from 2020–21

With the dramatic decrease in membership from 2019-2022, using the same girl formula of 1,500 would result in a delegate body of approximately 846 delegates for the 2023 National Council Session. It is safe to assume the girl membership will never recover to its former days of 2.5 million. Therefore, a Constitution change to the formula is long overdue.

Assuming the girl membership levels-off at its current amount of approximately 1,100,000 girl members, and no further decreases occur, an adjusted formula to add council delegates for every 1,000 girls would result in a delegate body of 1,320 for the 2026 National Council Session.

Finally, the wording change to add the phrase "as close to but not" larger than 1,500 council delegates is important because the GSUSA Board of Directors has interpreted the phrase "no larger than 1,500" to mean any number smaller than 1,500. However, the National Council in 2008 rejected the proposal by GSUSA to reduce the size of the National Council to 1,000 council delegates. An amendment was passed to increase the council delegate body to 1,500, where it stands today. Therefore, it is understood that the 2008 delegates did not want to allow the delegate body to shrink smaller than 1,000.

The size of the delegate body at 1,500 members is important because it represents the voices of the membership across the Movement. Despite the declines in membership, the delegate representation at the National Council Session is important to maintain at 1,500 delegates, respecting the decision of the 2008 NCS Delegates, and the importance of many voices.

Financial Impact Statement Submitted by Originating Council

No expenditures are anticipated as the total number of delegates to the National Council Session will remain unchanged.

Recommendation of the National Board

The board does not recommend adoption of this constitutional amendment for the following reasons:

- Changing the formula is not necessary to achieve the objective of the proposal. The prescribed figure of 3,500 may already be adjusted by the board each triennium.
- The proposal assumes the 2008 National Council Session body intended to keep size as close to 1,500 as possible. If that was the intent in 2008, the proposal also assumes 1,500 is the optimal size today, 15 years later.
- The originating council does not anticipate any financial implications should the proposal be approved. However, mandating a size as close to 1,500 as possible will increase the costs for some councils who will be accorded larger delegate allocations.

The board is committed to hearing the voice of the membership and has included a discussion topic specifically focused on our democratic process and delegate voice on the agenda to reinforce this commitment.

The NCS Advisory Team does not support this proposal.

GSUSA records for the delegate data cited above show:

1,262 council delegates in 2011 – girl membership of 2,285,765 (9/30/2010)
1,250 council delegates in 2014 – girl membership of 2,143,623 (9/30/2013)
1,079 council delegates in 2017 – girl membership of 1,808,266 (9/30/2016)
1,287 council delegates in 2020 – girl membership of 1,674,945 (9/30/2019)
902 council delegates in 2023 – girl membership of 1,106,084 (9/30/2022)