

FAQ for Hearings Committees (Article IX) Bylaws Amendment

- **Q:** What will this amendment do to the National Hearings Committee system?

A: It will substantially change the National Hearings Committee system in the following ways:

1) Recurring conduct that is inappropriate and can be demonstrated as causing harm to Mensa the organization (locally, regionally, or nationally) would be the primary basis for such hearings.

2) This removes the three most recent Past Chairmen of AMC (and potentially other recent-past AMC members) from serving as the National Hearings Committee (NHC).

3) Only local group Ombudsmen will be eligible to serve on the NHC.

4) There is a much larger pool of candidates eligible to serve on the NHC (compared with either current procedures or the procedures being proposed by the Hearings Process Review Committee). The total number eligible under this proposal will be up to 130+ people.

5) The AMC will review all NHC hearings that result in any sanctions, not just those hearings resulting in suspension or expulsion.

6) This prevents AMC involvement in any hearings prior to AMC's "appellate" review of hearings that result in sanctions.

7) The most senior Past Chairman of AMC (or other recent-past AMC member) will no longer be, by default, the NHC chairman. Each NHC will select its own chairman from its three members.

8) In the unlikely situation where too few Ombudsmen are seated to fill the NHC, a procedure is in place enabling a hearing to be held.

- **Q:** What will this amendment do to the Regional Hearings Committee system?

A: It will substantially change the Regional Hearings Committee system in the following ways:

1) The threshold for holding a regional hearing is adjusted to be the same as that for a national hearing.

2) Only local group Ombudsmen are eligible to serve on a Regional Hearings Committee (RHC).

3) It empowers an RHC to impose certain sanctions without AMC concurrence.

4) It could reduce the number of hearings that reach the level of the National Hearings Committee.

5) Clarifying language eliminates the current confusion regarding the timeline for the RHC processes.

- **Q:** What happens if a member resigns during the hearings process?

A: Hearings at any level would cease upon the resignation of the accused member, and it protects against such a former member from gaming the system.

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- **Q:** Why should the AMC not be associated with the NHC, either in sitting on the NHC or even appointing members eligible to sit on the NHC?

A: The hearings process requires fairness and impartiality. Since the AMC will remain, in effect, the final “court of appeals” within American Mensa, it needs to be completely removed from all other parts of the process that precede their “appellate” review of the case.

- **Q:** Why use local group Ombudsmen for the RHC and the NHC?

A: They have been chosen by their respective local groups as being fair, even-handed, impartial, and apolitical, having good judgment, and being able to bring to bear on the situation the various rules and regulations that apply to the situation at hand.

- **Q:** Are there other benefits of using local group Ombudsmen for the RHC and the NHC?

A: Yes. The benefits are as follows:

1) Given the sheer number of local group Ombudsmen and the procedures which would be put in place, the odds of actually being seated on a hearings committee are low. The workload is spread around significantly, greatly reducing the possibility of burn-out that prior NHC members have described.

2) The increased size of the eligible pool decreases the possibility of running out of candidates to sit on the NHC.

3) The possible members of an RHC or NHC will have been chosen purposefully by their local groups for traits that are useful on such a committee. In the current system, the majority of the membership voting on the AMC positions of Chairman, 1st Vice-Chairman, 2nd Vice-Chairman, and Secretary are not even aware of the possibility that these four people are the ones slated for the NHC in the future.