

NOW Elections Committee Report

June 20, 2020

The NOW Elections Committee met on Saturday, June 13, 2020, via Webex. Members in attendance were chair Kim Villanueva, Hala Ayala, Kae Chatman, Gordy Gustafson, and Marion Wagner.

Kim called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM CST. The following items were discussed:

NOW State Presidents' Participation Project proposal

The Elections Committee discussed a proposal developed by the Bylaws and Resolutions Working Group of NOW State Presidents to implement a virtual hybrid voting system for NOW board and officer elections. NOW Bylaws currently allow electronic voting in accordance with procedures adopted by the National Board and approved by the National Conference. By consensus, the Elections Committee agreed to support the concept of a virtual hybrid voting system as proposed by the NOW State Presidents.

NOW Western District vacancy

Kim reported that board member Cindy Drabek of Texas has resigned to accept employment with the National Action Center, creating a vacancy in the Western District. The committee discussed the process for filling the vacancy, which requires at least 30 days' notice to announce the vacancy to members, accept candidate applications, and hold a special meeting of the district State Presidents and remaining board members. The person selected would only serve until the 2020-2022 NOW board elections take place and would not be eligible to run in the 2020-2022 elections since the application deadline closed on March 7. The committee asked Kim to contact the State Presidents and board members in the Western District regarding the vacancy.

2020-2022 NOW Board candidate applications

All 18 seats on the NOW Board of Directors are up for election or re-election this year. On February 13, the National Action Center emailed a Call for Nominations for the 2020-2022 board to all members. A total of 21 applications were received via the online submission process on the NOW website. After nominations closed on March 7, the NAC researched every candidate's eligibility regarding their membership status and leadership positions held. The six District Nominating Committees (comprised of the State Presidents in each district) were asked to review the eligibility of the candidates who applied in their district, using the information provided by the NAC, and approve or disapprove the list by April 3.

Three districts responded by April 3 that they had verified the eligibility of their candidates:

- **Northern District**
 - Dr. Nina Ahmad of Pennsylvania (incumbent)
 - Anjali Mehrotra of New Jersey
 - Kimberly S Adams of Pennsylvania
 - Sasha Goodfriend of Massachusetts
 - Samantha Pearson of Pennsylvania

- **Pacific District**
 - Patricia Bellasalma of California
 - Karen Eyres of California
 - Christine Chin Ryan of Oregon
 - Denise Sala-Gore of California
 - Cheryl Wapes'a-Mayes of Washington (incumbent)

- **Southern District**
 - Triana Arnold James of Georgia
 - Lakey Love of Florida
 - BJ Star of Florida (incumbent)

Three districts did not report formal votes on verification of candidate eligibility by April 3, although individual confirmation emails were received from various state presidents:

- **Eastern District**
 - Kobby Hoffman of Virginia (incumbent)
 - Ashley Pirani of Indiana
- **Heartland District**
 - Susan Elder of Michigan
 - Freda McKee of Missouri
 - Jessica Scheller of Illinois
 - David Stewart of Iowa
- **Western District**
 - Jeri Burton of Nevada (incumbent)
 - Victoria Steele of Arizona (incumbent)

The Elections Committee accepted the reports of the six District Nominating Committees as presented.

Inquiry regarding candidate credentials

NOW Bylaws state that “Any NOW member who has been a member in good standing for at least two years immediately prior to the date of election and has held an elected or appointed position in a chapter, state, or the national organization shall be eligible to serve on the National Board.” The Elections Committee discussed an inquiry regarding the eligibility of board candidates when their leadership positions occur in a chapter that may not in compliance with NOW requirements (i.e., regular submission of chapter annual reports, maintenance of IRS tax-exempt status).

Committee members noted that the NOW Bylaws as currently written only require candidates – not their local or state chapters – to be “in good standing” with NOW. By consensus, the committee agreed that a local or state chapter’s failure to comply with NOW requirements does not disqualify its members from seeking NOW board positions.

California NOW grievance

Kim reported that a grievance has been filed regarding California NOW’s 2019 state conference and officer elections. The NOW Elections Committee may be asked to assume oversight of that election.

The meeting adjourned at 1:43 PM CST.

Submitted by Kim Villanueva, NOW Elections Committee chair