



**Motion to Amend Section 15.1 in Article XV in the
CONSTITUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP and to
Rescind Paragraph 9.2 in the By-laws**

**Submitted prior to December 24, 2022
for General Council Consideration on
February 24-26, 2023 at the Special Meeting
of the General Council in Nashville Tennessee**

Article XV was passed unanimously by ten General Councilors on SCICR [2022-07-18](#) at timestamp 1:57:00. Amended unanimously on [2022-08-01](#) at time stamp 23:15. Amended on [12-5-2022](#) at time stamp 57:20 Amended on 12-19-2022 at time stamp 17:15

Submitted by General Councilors Tom Allen, Cecelia Lampley, Barbara Newsom, John Lange, Brent St. Denis, David Schlundt, Sue Seccombe, Douglas Burns, Bobbie Dreier, and Jackie Koury. This is being submitted to the General Council sixty (60) days before the Nashville special meeting.



Whereas, the General Council rules are according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) as stated in [Paragraph 4.4](#) on page seven (7) in the By-laws, and

Whereas, RONR suggests a two-thirds (2/3) vote for bylaw amendment ratification four (4) times in Chapters I and XVIII, and

Whereas, our current By-law amendment approval requirements in [Paragraph 9.2](#), on page fourteen (14) should be rescinded, as the General Council can in Section 8.8 (b) still amend By-laws without the following requirements in our current constitution which are:

- Provide fifteen (15) day's notice

- One author minimum requirement for By-law submission
- The current constitution and By-laws do not specify how many persons are required to submit By-laws,
- Majority vote without a secret ballot by the General Council to ratify, and

Whereas, constitution amendment approval requirements in Section 15.1 in our current [Constitution](#) on page thirty (30) are too difficult except for the thirty (30) day's notice and six (6) General Councilors:

- Three-fourths (3/4) Executive Committee approval for submission
- A minimum of six (6) General Councilors may submit an amendment
- Provide thirty (30) day's notice before a General Council meeting
- Three-fourths (3/4) vote by secret ballot of the General Council to ratify, and

Whereas, a two-thirds (2/3) required vote for constitutional amendment passage is a reasonable, sound, and safe standard for amending our constitution, and

Whereas, a simple majority in the Executive Committee is currently five (5) members all of whom are General Councilors, and is one (1) less than six (6) General Councilors who are eligible to submit amendments to the constitution of the Fellowship, and

Whereas, a simple majority is a safe and fair number for Executive Committee amendment submission because the Executive Committee currently has eight (8) voting members where a two-thirds (2/3) majority is six (6) and six (6) is also a three-fourths (3/4) majority, and

Whereas, the inclusion of the current number of ten (10) members of the Fellowship who may submit amendment resolutions can stimulate involvement from members who are not General Councilors, and

Whereas, increasing the time for the General Council to consider constitutional amendments to sixty (60) days required for submission and forty-five (45) days of public comment will improve communication and education about submitted amendment resolutions, *therefore be it*

Resolved, that the General Council adopt this revised constitutional amendment to replace Section 15.1 in Article XV in the CONSTITUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP.

This is the Constitutional Amendment Proposal:

ARTICLE XV

AMENDMENTS

Section 15.1. Procedure for Amendment: Amendments to the CONSTITUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP may be originated by:

- a) Six (6) members of the General Council may submit resolutions to the Secretary-General of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP, or
- b) Majority vote of the Executive Committee, or
- c) Ten (10) members in good standing may submit resolutions to the Secretary-General of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP.

General Councilors must be notified of amendment proposals sixty (60) days before any meeting of the General Council. The proposed amendment must be posted on a discussion forum for comment and input from the membership of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP for at least forty-five (45) days during the sixty (60) days. Once received, amendment resolutions will be placed on the agenda of the next General Council meeting with proper General Council notice. Amendment adoption requires two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote by secret ballot of the General Council membership present and at least a majority favorable vote of the entire General Council membership. If there is unanimous consent for adoption, a secret ballot is not required. With a vote cast in favor thereof, the amendment shall immediately become effective and a part of the CONSTITUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP.



This is the Current Wording of Article XV, Section 15.1 in the Fellowship Constitution to be Replaced

ARTICLE XV

AMENDMENTS

Section 15.1. Procedure for Amendment: Amendments to this Constitution may originate by the process outlined in (a) or (b) which follow:

- (a) The Executive Committee shall adopt a resolution setting forth the amendment proposed by a three-fourths (3/4) favorable vote of the entire Executive Committee membership, declaring its advisability, and recommend its adoption by the General Council. The Secretary-General will forward copies of said resolution to each member of the General Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the next meeting of the General Council.
- (b) The General Council shall (also) adopt a resolution to amend the Constitution. A resolution to amend the Constitution shall be proposed by six (6) members of the General Council. Proposing Councilors will forward copies of said resolution to each member of the General Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the next meeting of the General Council.
- (c) At the next meeting of the General Council, said resolution to amend the Constitution originating by procedure as outlined in section (a) or (b) shall be presented for adoption. It will require a three-fourths (3/4) favorable vote by secret ballot of the General Council membership present and a majority favorable vote of the entire General Council membership, for adoption. However, if there is unanimous consent for adoption, a secret ballot is not required. With a vote cast in favor thereof, the amendment shall become effective and a part of this Constitution. Each amendment to the Constitution must be submitted as a separate resolution for a vote by the General Council.

Further Rationale for Amendment Revision

The Article XV amendment was voted unanimously by SCICR constituted by ten General Councilors and two Fellowship members. This amendment proposes to reduce our constitutional amendment requirement from three-fourths (3/4) to two-thirds (2/3). Sixty (60) days' notice and at least forty-five (45) days of public discussion is proposed to ensure the proper education of General Councilors before voting in Nashville.

The Executive Committee requirements for amendment submission to the General Council will be changed to majority vote instead of three-fourths (3/4) to submit a constitutional amendment. Six (6) General Councilors remain as a requirement for amendment submission. A new subsection allows ten (10) members who are not necessarily General Councilors to submit amendment resolutions.

RONR recommends two-thirds (2/3) vote to amend bylaws. This is a high enough bar to reach when amending our constitution. Three-fourths (3/4) is more than is needed. A two-thirds (2/3) amendment requirement in a single ruling document will be sufficient to keep our constitution stable, simple, and safe for the minority.

SCICR submits this unanimous resolution for the health of the CONSTITUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP because three-fourths (3/4) requirement is too high, and a simple majority is too narrow for constitutional change. That is why RONR recommends a two-thirds (2/3) bar for bylaw change.



Further By-law Amendment Recission Proposal of [Paragraph 9.2.](#) in the By-laws

Whereas, if this resolution to rescind Paragraph 9.2 passes, the General Council may still make By-law amendments according to Section 8.8 (b) in our constitution,

Whereas, Paragraph 9.2 is poorly worded, vague and too easy to implement, therefore be it

Resolved, that Paragraph 9.2 in the By-laws be rescinded and that Paragraph 9.3 now becomes Paragraph 9.2.

Here is the Current Wording in Paragraph 9.2 in our By-laws

Paragraph 9.2. Amendment of By-laws: Subject to the provisions of Section 8.8 of ARTICLE VIII of the Constitution of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP, the By-laws of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP may be amended at any time by a majority of the Councilors present at any general or special meeting of the General Council at which not less than a majority of the Councilors are present, provided, however, that notice of any proposed amendment to be considered at such meeting shall have been given to all Councilors not less than fifteen (15) days prior to such meeting.

Further Rationale to Rescind Paragraph 9.2 in the By-laws

One objection to rescinding Paragraph 9.2 is that at any General Council meeting, a spontaneous motion to amend the By-laws could be brought up by anyone for consideration if the agenda allowed. This would probably not happen without prior notice because of wise resistance to such a move. Wisdom and proper procedure would recommend due notice for such a change without necessitating a By-law 9.2 requirement. Nothing would prohibit the Executive Committee from placing a By-law change on the General Council agenda. By-law changes could be petitioned from Local Societies or twelve (12) members as allowed in [Paragraph 4.5](#) on page seven (7) of the By-laws.

[Paragraph 9.2](#) does not give a number for who or how many persons can propose a By-law change. It has a short window of fifteen (15) days to submit a By-law amendment which is not long enough time for the General Council to consider such. These By-law amendments can be wisely left up to the General Council, the Executive Committee, Local Society petitions, and Membership Petitions without Paragraph 9.2.



The following are bylaw amendment procedure recommendations from RONR 12th Edition. Our proposal to amend section 15.1 in Article XV to two-thirds (2/3) is supported by recommendations in RONR Chapters I and XVIII.



Below are the Suggested Rules in RONR to Specify a Preference for a Two-thirds (2/3) Requirement for Bylaw Amendments.

Chapter I - THE DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY: ITS TYPES AND THEIR RULES

§1 THE DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY

Nature of the Deliberative Assembly - Paragraph 1:7

When a decision is to be based on more than a majority, the requirement most commonly specified is **a *two-thirds vote***—that is, the expressed approval of **at least two-thirds** of those present and voting.

Chapter I - THE DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY: ITS TYPES AND THEIR RULES

§2 RULES OF AN ASSEMBLY OR ORGANIZATION

Constitution; Bylaws - Paragraph 2:8

....The term bylaws, as used in this book, refers to this single, combination-type instrument—by whatever name the particular organization may describe it—which:

- 4) includes all rules that the society considers so important that they (a) cannot be changed without a previous notice to the members in the vote of a specified large majority (**such as a 2/3 vote**)

Chapter XVIII - BYLAWS
§56. COMPOSITION AND CONTENT OF BYLAWS - Paragraph
56:50

The bylaws should always prescribe the procedure for their amendment, and such provision should always require at least that advance notice being given in a specified manner, and that **the amendment be approved by a two-thirds vote.**

Chapter XVIII - BYLAWS
§57. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS - Paragraph 57:1

A motion to amend the bylaws is a particular case of the motion to *Amend Something Previously Adopted* (§35); it is therefore a main motion, and it is subject to the same rules as other main motions with the following exceptions:

1) Special requirements for this motion's adoption should be specified in the bylaws, *and* they should always include notice ***and a 2/3 vote***,...



Regardless of the improved change that this amendment will institute, approval now will constitutionally require a three-fourths (3/4) majority as is currently in our constitution.

Even though it is not required in our current constitution, in the spirit of this amendment resolution, we are submitting it sixty (60) days ahead of our meeting in Nashville, SCICR will schedule hearings and public discussion for comment and input of the changes we suggest.

Thank-you for carefully considering these constitutional and By-law changes.

Respectfully submitted unanimously,

General Councilors: Tom Allen, Cecelia Lampley, Barbara Newsom, John Lange, Brent St. Denis, David Schlundt, Sue Seccombe, Douglas Burns, Bobbie Dreier, and Jackie Koury. SCICR Members: Philip Calabrese and Barb Maier.