

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution Regarding Chapter Affiliation

Purpose:

To allow NLG members to self-determine their chapter affiliation when necessary.

Article 2.2 of the National Lawyers Guild Constitution Shall be amended as follows, to add one sentence qualifying the provision that membership be through existing chapters:

Article 2.2 Chapters, Law Student Chapters, and At-Large Membership –

- a) Wherever a chapter exists, membership shall be through such chapter.
- b) *Where there exist multiple, non-student chapters, in overlapping geographic regions, members may self-determine chapter affiliation.*
- c) *Where other relevant circumstances exist, a member of a non-student chapter may be permitted to self-determine chapter affiliation, including the option to be a member-at-large. If a member wishes to pursue this option, they must petition in front of the National Executive Committee, who will vote to approve or deny the member's request.*
- d) Law students shall be concurrent members of their law student chapter and full voting members of their local non-student chapter. ~~At the National Convention, law students shall vote through their local non-student chapter. The NEC shall determine to which local non-student chapter each law student is a member.~~
- e) Where there is no organized chapter, membership shall be through direct affiliation with the national organization. Such persons shall be known as members-at-large. Jailhouse lawyers shall be members-at-large ~~unless a chapter in their area shall elect to include them in its membership.~~

Rationale:

The National Lawyers Guild is a confederation of chapters, whose members have often long been affiliated with a particular chapter. As we continue to grow, some of our members find themselves within the geographic boundaries of multiple chapters, or within a newly-formed state or other newly-formed chapter that has the effect of changing chapter membership. Furthermore, as we are a political organization, our members may wish to change their chapter affiliation, including wishing to become a member-at-large, because of personal preference. Over the past eight years, a few members have informed the National Office that if forced to pay dues to a particular chapter they would rather not remain current members. Rather than lose NLG members, this proposed change attempts to retain them.

In order to promote the self-determination of our members relationship to the Guild, this amendment will allow them more choice in their chapter affiliation. As student members are affiliated with their student chapter, as well as a non-student chapter, this would not apply to them as their relationship with their non-student chapter is secondary and based on support provided to their student chapter.

Submitted by the National Office of the NLG, director@nlg.org