

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON RULES AND CREDENTIALS

The following report, in addition to the regular reports of the committee (see page 2), was presented by Mary T. Herald, MD, Chair:

1. AMA ELECTION PROCESS AND CAMPAIGN RULES

HOUSE ACTION: REFERRED

BACKGROUND

At the 2005 Annual Meeting, the Speaker of the House of Delegates asked the Committee on Rules and Credentials to study the American Medical Association's election process and campaign rules and make recommendations to the House for any modifications that would serve to streamline the process. While this request stemmed originally from the concern that the increasing number of candidate presentations, interviews and other appearances did not serve the AMA, the House, or the candidates well, the Speaker asked the Committee to study the entire election process and make appropriate recommendations.

The Speaker made an announcement to the House regarding the Committee's charge, and members of the House were asked to submit suggestions for improving the process. Following the Annual Meeting, an e-mail to the House also asked for suggestions, and a notice was also placed in a memo to the House regarding the Interim Meeting. Many responses were received by the Committee, which utilized them in developing this report.

In addition to the comments received from members of the House, the Committee on Rules and Credentials reviewed and discussed numerous documents, including:

- The current campaign process and rules (see Appendix).
- The 2005 Election Manual.
- A memo from the Council on Long Range Planning and Development with the council's suggestions for improvement.
- Results from a 2000 survey of the House on shortening House meetings, among which were numerous open-ended comments on elections and the election process.
- Reports of the Special Committee on Campaigns and Elections (I-96 and A-97), which resulted in some of the current AMA policy on campaigns.
- Reports of the Committee on Rules and Credentials (A-92 and I-92), which also resulted in some of the current campaign rules.

During its review of background materials and a conference call to discuss possible recommendations to the House, the Committee focused on the fact that the primary driver in any changes to the election process should be what is good for the organization and our members. It is in this spirit that the Committee presents this report for the House's consideration.

DISCUSSION

While the Committee reviewed numerous aspects of the campaign and election process, its discussion and recommendations center on two areas: (1) streamlining and adding value to campaign interviews and presentations; and (2) reducing some unnecessary costs associated with election campaigns. The Committee believes that its recommendations, while somewhat incremental in nature, may provide substantial benefits to candidates, delegates, and our organization.

Campaign Interviews/Presentations and Moderated Candidate Forums

A primary focus of the Committee was to enhance the process through which the House of Delegates hears presentations from and conducts interviews with candidates. The increasing number of appearances by candidates at various caucuses, combined with the shortened Annual Meeting schedule, subjects candidates to an overly rigorous period of campaigning, and, in the Committee's opinion, does not provide adequate opportunity for many delegates to truly evaluate the candidates. Many members of the House hear substantially identical presentations from candidates, albeit in varying lengths, several times. This repetition does not benefit candidates or delegates, and consumes time that could be put to better use, especially on Saturday, which for many members of the House is the busiest day of the meeting. It is the Committee's aim to streamline this process while still allowing members of the House to adequately evaluate candidates for AMA office.

At the 2000 Interim Meeting, a survey of the House (undertaken to aid in the process of shortening House meetings) asked several questions related to the election process. The results of the survey related to candidate speeches and candidate interviews/presentations are listed below:

1. Overall, do you believe the amount of time devoted to elections:

Is about right	Could/should be decreased	Could/should be increased
290 (45.2%)	347 (54.1%)	4 (0.6%)

2. Do you believe the time devoted to candidate speeches during the House opening session (Officer and Board positions only):

Is about right	Could/should be decreased	Could/should be increased
326 (50.8%)	310 (48.3%)	6 (0.9%)

3. Do you believe all candidates, including Council candidates should speak before the entire House?

Yes	No
138 (21.7%)	499 (78.3%)

4. Do you believe the time devoted to candidate interviews/presentations (includes Officer, Board, and Council candidates) to caucuses:

Is about right	Could/should be decreased	Could/should be increased
380 (59.9%)	243 (38.3%)	11 (1.7%)

5. If a candidate forum (for candidates to all elected offices, including councils) were held, do you believe the time currently devoted to candidate interviews/presentations could be significantly decreased?

Yes	No
446 (71.0%)	182 (29.0%)

6. If a candidate forum were held, do you believe it would adequately allow the House to evaluate candidates?

Yes	No
440 (70.6%)	183 (29.4%)

The idea of candidate forums is not new. The survey of the House indicated that 71% of respondents both favored the idea of a candidate forum and believed it would adequately allow the House to evaluate candidates. In addition, Council on Long Range Planning and Development Report 8 (I-01) suggested that the Speakers of the House organize and schedule candidate forums to determine if such forums could enhance the House's election process. The Committee believes that moderated candidate forums should be held, beginning with the 2006 Annual Meeting, for all contested elections for AMA councils, officers, and trustees. The Committee further believes that such candidate forums should be piloted for two years, and reviewed after that period to determine their success and whether or not they should be continued.

Moderated Candidate Forums for Elected AMA Councils

Moderated candidate forums for the four elected AMA Councils (Constitution and Bylaws, Medical Education, Medical Service, and Science and Public Health) would involve having candidates present a short speech, followed by a series of questions submitted by members of the House. Candidate forums for the elected councils could be held on Saturday, prior to the Opening Session, and could run sequentially, with one forum being held for each of the four councils. The Speakers of the House would establish the exact format and rules for the candidate forums to ensure fairness and adequate time for each forum. Any member of the House who wished to attend could do so. Alternatively, caucuses could designate certain members to attend each forum and report back to the caucus, similar to what occurs now with small interview sessions by caucuses.

Candidate forums for council candidates could take the place not only of speeches to caucuses, but also interviews by caucuses--input from former candidates indicates that many of the questions asked in the current interviews are duplicative, and could be covered in the candidate forums. For council candidate forums to accomplish their intended aims of informing delegates and decreasing the repetitiveness and duplication of caucus presentations and interviews, caucuses and delegations are strongly discouraged from scheduling separate interviews for council candidates.

Moderated Candidate Forum for Officer/Trustee Candidates

The Committee also discussed the notion of a moderated candidate forum for officer and trustee candidates. Because such candidates already give a two-minute nomination speech to the House, and because of the high degree of interest in these positions, a natural place for this candidate forum would be as part of the House's Opening Session. This would allow every member of the House a chance to hear not only the candidate's nomination speech, but also their responses to a number of questions submitted in advance by delegates and delegations. A candidate forum for officer and trustee candidates would also serve to decrease the number of appearances by candidates at caucuses and the repetition of "stump" speeches by the candidates.

In conjunction with having a candidate forum for officer and trustee candidates, the Committee recommends restructuring interview sessions for these candidates. As with council candidates, there are many questions asked of officer and trustee candidates at caucus interview sessions that are duplicative. However, the value of having interview sessions, because of the importance attached to these positions, is well understood by the Committee. Therefore, the Committee recommends that a series of interview sessions be scheduled for each of the officer and trustee candidates.

These interview sessions, which would have limited seating, would be scheduled by the Speaker's Office, and delegations would sign up for one session with each candidate. The sessions would allow for more give-and-take between attendees and candidates, allowing the attendees a good opportunity to see the candidates in person. They would also help to alleviate the number of individual appearances made by candidates, and the hurrying between various caucuses, which has become a problem--candidates and caucuses cannot currently keep to the posted schedules, resulting in a snowball effect of every session running late.

While individual caucuses could still schedule individual interviews with candidates, the need for such sessions would be greatly decreased by the moderated candidate forum before the House, and the group interview sessions scheduled by the Speaker's Office. Individual caucus sessions with candidates would no longer be scheduled by the Speaker's Office, and caucuses are strongly encouraged to try to attend one of the group interview sessions rather than scheduling their own.

The Committee understands there may be reluctance on the part of delegations and caucuses to depart from long-established routines, but urges the House to be open-minded and allow a two-year pilot of these proposals. Again, the Committee believes that these proposals are feasible and practical, and should be given a chance to work--if after two years it is determined that they do not, the House could return to the current system while other ideas can be explored.

Cost of Election Campaigns

Concern over the cost associated with election campaigns has generated much discussion in the House for over two decades. The Committee notes that as far back as 1980, the House adopted a recommendation in Council on Long Range Planning and Development Report E that “campaign expenditures and activities should be limited to prudent and reasonable levels necessary for adequate candidate exposure to the delegates” (Policy G-610.020[2], AMA Policy Database). The House has already instituted a number of other constraints on campaign spending.

The Committee believes that while the financial cost of mounting an election campaign may discourage some qualified candidates from seeking election, it also believes that past efforts to curtail costs have been generally successful, and that the notion of a “hard cap” on spending is not necessary. However, the Committee believes that campaign parties and numerous mailings and telephone calls do not have much influence on election results, and urges candidates and sponsoring societies to carefully consider their spending on such. It therefore seeks to reaffirm Policy G-610.020[7] encouraging a reduction in the volume of telephone calls from candidates, and literature and letters by or on behalf of candidates, and urges candidates and their sponsoring societies to abide by this policy.

Another election expense is the campaign gifts that are provided in the “Not Official Business” bag provided to delegates at the Opening Session. The current spending limit for these gifts as determined by the Speaker is \$1.00 per delegate and alternate delegate--a total of \$1086 for the 2005 Annual Meeting. The committee does not believe that the small gifts deliver value for candidates or members of the House, or have any influence on election results, and thus proposes that such gifts not be placed in the “Not Official Business” bag in the future. Should candidates still wish to provide these gifts, they may be distributed at the candidate’s campaign party.

Appointment vs. Election

One suggestion that was received by the Committee was that of appointment rather than election for all AMA councils. The Committee discussed this idea at length, and believes that it may be worth further study. As noted above, there is valid concern that the costs and rigorousness of a campaign for House election can discourage candidates from seeking election. However, there are numerous weighty issues involved with appointment vs. election of councils, and the Committee on Rules and Credentials does not believe this notion falls within its charge. It therefore makes no recommendation on changes to whether councils should be appointed or elected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its extensive review of the current election process and campaign rules, the Committee on Rules and Credentials recommends that the following be adopted and that the remainder of this report be filed:

1. That a candidate forum for each elected American Medical Association council be held, beginning with the 2006 Annual Meeting. Council candidate forums will be scheduled only for those elections that are contested. The Speakers shall establish the format and rules for the candidate forums. Caucuses are strongly urged not to schedule interviews or presentations with council candidates, but to have members attend the forums in order to evaluate candidates. The Speakers will review the candidate forums for elected AMA councils after two years, and report back to the House of Delegates at the 2007 Interim Meeting.
2. That a candidate forum for AMA officer and trustee candidates, which will include nomination speeches by the candidates, be held as part of the House Opening Session, beginning with the 2006 Annual Meeting. The officer/trustee candidate forum will be only for those elections that are contested. The Speakers shall establish the format and rules for the forum. Interview time blocs for officer and trustee candidates will be scheduled by the Speaker’s Office, and caucuses are strongly encouraged to participate in these interview sessions. Speeches by officer and trustee candidates to caucuses should not be scheduled, as speeches will be part of the candidate forum before the entire House. The Speakers will review the candidate forum for AMA officer and trustee candidates after two years, and report back to the House of Delegates at the 2007 Interim Meeting.

3. That AMA Policy G-610.020[9] be modified by insertion and deletion as follows:

The Speaker's office will coordinate the scheduling of ~~group candidate~~ interviews sessions for general officer ~~candidates positions~~ (Trustees, President-Elect, Speaker and Vice Speaker). Caucuses are strongly encouraged to participate in one of the group interviews. Caucuses will be responsible for scheduling any additional interviews they wish to hold.

4. That AMA Policy G-610.020[7] be reaffirmed, and strongly reiterated to candidates and their sponsoring societies. Policy G-610.020[7] states:

A reduction in the volume of telephone calls from candidates, and literature and letters by or on behalf of candidates is encouraged. The Election Manual serves as a mechanism to reduce the number of telephone calls and mailings members of the House of Delegates receive from or on behalf of candidates. The Election Manual provides an equal opportunity for each candidate to present the material he or she considers important to bring before the members of the House of Delegates and should relieve the need for the additional expenditures incurred in making non-scheduled telephone calls and duplicative mailings.

5. That AMA Policy G-610.020[8] be modified by deletion as follows:

Campaign gifts can be distributed only at the Annual Meeting ~~in the non-official business folder and~~ at one campaign party. Campaign gifts should only be distributed during the Annual Meeting and not mailed to Delegates and Alternate Delegates in advance of the meeting. Campaign memorabilia are limited to either a button, pin, sticker, or other low-cost item, the maximum cost of which shall be determined by the Speaker of the House. No other campaign memorabilia shall be distributed at any time.

APPENDIX - AMA ELECTION PROCESS AND CAMPAIGN RULES

Introduction

Officers, Trustees, and four Councils are elected by the House of Delegates at the Annual Meeting. This democratic process allows the delegates ample opportunity to become acquainted with the candidates and their views. Nominations for these offices are widely solicited throughout the Federation. The campaigns are often spirited and are conducted under rules established by the House, which are modified from time to time. The elections are by secret ballot and are under the supervision of the Convention Committee on Rules and Credentials and the Chief Teller, who are appointed by the Speaker and Vice Speaker.

Nominations

The Board of Trustees solicits nominations for the four elected Councils twice a year. They are the Council on Constitution and Bylaws, Council on Medical Education, Council on Medical Service, and Council on Scientific Affairs. The deadline for receipt of nominations is usually mid-January of each year, so that the Board can consider in a prompt fashion. *[Note: For 2006 elections, the deadline will be January 3, 2006.]* Once the nominees are notified and have agreed to seek office, the campaigns begin.

Officers and Trustees are nominated by their sponsoring societies; they are not nominated by the Nominating Committee of the Board of Trustees. Officer and Trustee candidates, however, usually announce their intention to seek office well in advance of the Annual Meeting either by distributing an announcement to the delegates on the last day of the Annual or Interim Meeting or by a general mailing to the delegates and alternate delegates between meetings of the House. As a courtesy and to keep the headquarters informed, these candidates are asked to send a letter to the Executive Vice President announcing their intention to seek elective office.

At the Opening Session of the Annual Meeting, Trustee candidates in a contested election will give their own two-minute nominating speech. The order of the speeches will be determined by lottery. No speeches for unopposed candidates will be given, except for President-Elect. When there is no contest for President-Elect, the candidate will ask a delegate to place his or her name in nomination and the election will then be by acclamation. When there are two or more candidates for the office of President-Elect, a two-minute nomination speech will be given by a

delegate. In addition, the Speaker will schedule a debate in front of the House of Delegates to be conducted by rules established by the Speaker. There are no nominating or seconding speeches for council candidates; the Chair of the Board of Trustees places their names in nomination at the Opening Session of the House of Delegates. At that time the Speaker will call for additional nominations from the floor.

Campaign Rules

This listing of campaign rules is comprised of several policies adopted by the House of Delegates and procedures developed by the Speakers to comply with House actions. Where House policies are listed, the meeting(s) at which the action was taken and the relevant AMA Policy number are listed in parentheses following the policy. The rules are listed in general categories.

Guiding Principles for House Elections

The following principles provide guidance on how House elections should be conducted and how the selection of AMA leaders should occur:

1. AMA delegates should: (a) avail themselves of all available background information about candidates for elected positions in the AMA; (b) determine which candidates are best qualified to help the AMA achieve its mission; and (c) make independent decisions about which candidates to vote for.
2. Any electioneering practices that distort the democratic processes of House elections, such as vote trading for the purpose of supporting candidates, are unacceptable.
3. Candidates for elected positions should comply with the requirements and the spirit of House of Delegates policy on campaigning and campaign spending.
4. Candidates and their sponsoring organizations should exercise restraint in campaign spending. Federation organizations should establish clear and detailed guidelines on the appropriate level of resources that should be allocated to the political campaigns of their members for AMA leadership positions.
5. Incumbency should not assure the re-election of an individual to an AMA leadership position.
6. Service in any AMA leadership position should not assure ascendancy to another leadership position. (I-01, G-610.021)

Expenses, Events/Parties and Other Activities

1. Campaign expenditures and activities should be limited to prudent and reasonable levels necessary for adequate candidate exposure to the delegates. (I-80, G-610.020[2])
2. There will be only one big party at the Annual Meeting financed by a coalition or a state or specialty delegation irrespective of the number of candidates from that society or coalition. At these events, alcohol may be served only on a cash or no-host bar basis.
This would limit a candidate to only one big party at the Annual Meeting whether financed by a coalition or a state or specialty delegation. This would also limit a state or specialty society or delegation to one big party irrespective of the number of candidates from that society or coalition. (I-92, Reaffirmed and Revised, A-97, G-610.020[5])
3. Campaign gifts can be distributed at only the Annual Meeting in the non-official business folder and at one campaign party. Campaign gifts should only be distributed during the Annual Meeting and not mailed to delegates and alternate delegates in advance of the meeting. (I-92, G-610.020[8])
4. Campaign memorabilia shall be limited to either a button, pin, sticker or other low cost item, the maximum cost of which shall be determined by the Speaker of the House. No other campaign memorabilia shall be distributed at any time. (I-96, G-610.020[8])
5. The Speaker has determined the following expense limitations for campaign related giveaways.
 - The cost of stickers, pins or buttons will not be included in the spending limits. Stickers, pins or buttons should be simple and not be “gifts” in disguise.

- Each candidate is limited to spending no more than one dollar (\$1.00) per delegate and alternate delegate for memorabilia and/or giveaways, including drawings or door prizes for items to be delivered either at the meeting or later. For 2005, the states, specialty societies, government services and sections are allocated 543 delegates and 543 alternate delegates for a total spending limit of \$1086. This limit applies for the entire year and is specifically intended to include the total cost of those items distributed in the bag at the Opening Session as well as any raffle or drawing conducted on behalf of a candidate. This expense may include quantity discounts available to anyone but must be calculated at full retail price regardless of the actual price spent for the item.
6. Candidates for AMA office should not attend meetings of the state medical societies unless officially invited and could accept reimbursement of travel expenses by the state society in accordance with the policies of the society. (I-93, Reaffirmed I-96, G-610.020[11])

Announcements, Literature and Publicity

1. There should be no formal campaign activities during the Interim Meeting.
This would not preclude distribution of an announcement of candidacy:
- on the last day of the Annual Meeting; OR
 - on the last day of the Interim Meeting; OR
 - one announcement of candidacy by a mailing prior to the Interim Meeting.
- This rule would prohibit the campaign parties at the Interim Meeting and the distribution of campaign literature and gifts at the Interim Meeting.* (I-92, Reaffirmed I-96, G-610.020[3])
2. Displays of campaign posters, signs and literature are prohibited in public areas of hotels in which Annual Meetings are held.
Displays of campaign posters, signs and literature in public areas of hotels in which Annual Meetings are held detract from the dignity of the position being sought and are unsightly. Campaign posters may be displayed at the campaign parties and campaign literature may be distributed in the non-official business bag for members of the House of Delegates. (I-92, Reaffirmed I-96, G-610.020[6])
3. A reduction in the volume of telephone calls from candidates, literature and letters by or on behalf of candidates should be encouraged.
The Election Manual was initiated as a mechanism to reduce the number of telephone calls and mailings members of the House of Delegates receive from or on behalf of candidates. The Election Manual provides an equal opportunity for each candidate to present the material he or she considers important to bring before the members of the House of Delegates and should relieve the need for the additional expenditures incurred in making non-scheduled telephone calls and duplicative mailings. (I-92, G-610.020[7])
4. Publication of the AMA Election Manual should be continued. (I-96, G-610.020[1])
5. Publication of candidate interviews in *AMNews* should be featured prior to AMA elections. (I-96, G-610.020[10])
6. No campaign literature shall be distributed after the Opening Session of the House of Delegates. (I-96, G-610.020[6])

Interviews and Presentations

1. Every state and specialty society delegation is encouraged to participate in a regional caucus, for the purposes of candidate review activities. (I-80, G-610.020[12])
2. The Speakers' Office shall coordinate the scheduling of candidate interviews for general officer positions (Trustees, President-Elect, Speaker and Vice Speaker). (I-96, G-610.020[9])
3. The Speaker has directed that the Office of the Speaker arrange a system for scheduling candidate interviews as follows:

- Interviews will be scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Friday up to 6:00 p.m. Monday, the night before the election. On these days interview sessions may be scheduled from 7:00 a.m. up until 9:00 p.m. except for times when the House of Delegates or Reference Committees are in session and except for when the usual hospitality suites are open.
- Interviews for Officer and Trustee candidates will be booked in 10-minute units. Each candidate will be given one open 10-minute period of time between interviews. Each caucus can allocate one or more 10-minute units per session. Caucus staff should notify the Speakers' Office when their interview sessions are scheduled, the room name, and how many 10-minute units (candidates) should be scheduled in those time slots. The Speaker's Office will prepare and distribute the initial schedule according to the House action. Adjustments or revisions should be arranged with the caucus staff and/or other candidates affected.

Elections

The AMA elections are held on Tuesday of the Annual Meeting from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. under the supervision of the Committee on Rules and Credentials and the Chief Teller. Poll hours will not be extended beyond the times posted. All delegates eligible to vote must be in line to vote at the time appointed for the close of polls. Only credentialed delegates are permitted to cast a ballot. If a delegate cannot participate in the election he or she may have a designated alternate delegate properly credentialed at the AMA Registration Desk prior to the election. Candidates are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by name only. AMA Bylaws require simultaneous elections that call for the exact number of votes for each vacancy. Each ballot clearly states the number of votes that should be cast. Ballots containing more or fewer votes will not be counted by the election software. During runoffs, ballots containing more or fewer votes will be declared invalid by the Chief Teller. Also during runoffs, if a delegate makes a mistake and spoils the ballot, he or she should immediately signal a Teller and request another ballot. A majority vote of the ballots cast is required for election.

If all of the vacancies are not filled on the first ballot, a runoff ballot will be distributed and collected by the Tellers on the floor of the House. AMA Bylaws dictate that if three or more members of the Board of Trustees or any Council are still to be elected, the number of nominees in the runoff election shall be no more than twice the number of remaining vacancies *less one*. If two or fewer members of the Board or Council are still to be elected, the number of nominees in the runoff shall be no more than twice the number of remaining vacancies. In either case, the nominees in runoff elections are determined by retaining those who received the greater number of votes on the preceding ballot and eliminating the nominee(s) who received the fewest number of votes on the preceding ballot, except where there is a tie. This process will continue until all the vacancies are filled.

Those candidates who are elected officially take office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.