

Intergroup Representatives and the "Right of Decision"

Our SEAZ Intergroup bylaws do not specify whether an Intergroup Representative (IR) can vote on something they haven't discussed with their group. The research below suggests they can.

The gist of it seems to be that while the goal is for IRs to keep their group members informed about Intergroup (IG) activities, each group is autonomous under OA's Fourth Tradition. If a group's members choose to empower their IR to make their decisions for them and don't want their IR to give regular reports and/or don't want to discuss Intergroup business, Intergroup can't restrict the group's right to be represented by the IR deciding for them. The Third Concept, the "right of decision," empowers IRs to act for their group by voting their conscience. Intergroup's only involvement is to report to the group if the IR misses three consecutive meetings, but even then, action is at the group's discretion (bylaws, Article III, Section 4).

Research from OA/AA Literature on the 12 Traditions and Concepts of Service

1. *THE TWELVE STEPS and TWELVE TRADITIONS of OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS*, Tradition Four:

"Tradition four--the tradition of autonomy--gives OA groups the right and responsibility to operate as they see fit, free from any outside influence....It also means that no other group or service body--even inside OA--can dictate group actions." [p. 137, para. 1]

"Tradition four gives OA groups the freedom to do what works best for them...without interference from any governing body other than its own group conscience." [p. 137, para. 2]

Also note the last question on p. 144: *Do we practice the principle of autonomy by taking responsibility for our own actions and avoiding attempts to control the actions of others?*

- It appears that if a group gives their IR a vote of confidence to vote as that person sees fit (noting that the vote cannot be detrimental to OA, as a whole), the IG is in violation of the Traditions by determining that the IR cannot vote.

2. *THE TWELVE CONCEPTS OF OA SERVICE*, pp. 4-5

Concept Three [Trust]: "The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible...The Third Concept gives OA groups the right to bestow upon a trusted individual or group the authority to make decisions on behalf of the group when needed...Delegating in this manner allows quick and efficient decision making..."

Concept Two [Conscience]: "...Delegates of the WSBC know the will of the service bodies that elect them to serve as their representatives. However,...they may change their position on an issue when presented with multiple perspectives or when motions are amended that alter the direction of the issue at hand..."

- The same concept would seem to apply to Intergroup Representatives.

3. AA's *TWELVE CONCEPTS*, p.19, as quoted in *AS BILL SEES IT* [since this is AA Conference approved, it is also OA Conference approved], #310, para. 1: "Our entire A.A. program rests upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A. and we trust each other. Therefore, we trust our leaders in world service. The "Right of Decision" that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence." Also see para. 2 of #224 and all of #144.

- When a group elects an IR, or an IG elects a WSBC Delegate or Region Representative, the "Right of Decision" is offered to that person and "is also the symbol of our implicit confidence" (unless the group tells the IR otherwise.)