

## Proposals Placed on the 58<sup>th</sup> National Council Session

### 1) Girl Scouts Highest Awards Solicitation

Submitted by Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania

To amend the Policies of GSUSA as follows: Update the first paragraph of the Solicitation of Contributions part of the Policies section of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* on page 20 by inserting the bolded, green wording and deleting the strike-through text as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If adopted, will read
<p>Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from their council's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Development Officer, or their designee.</p> <p>In addition, girls must abide by their own council's policies and procedures with regard to this matter.</p>	<p>Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except girl <b>members</b> <del>for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors</del> who may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout <b>Bronze, Silver, and</b> Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from their council's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Development Officer, or their designee.</p> <p>In addition, girls must abide by their own council's policies and procedures with regard to this matter.</p>	<p>Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except girl members may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from their council's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Development Officer, or their designee.</p> <p>In addition, girls must abide by their own council's policies and procedures with regard to this matter.</p>

### What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?

Currently, only Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors may request donations for their Gold Award projects, excluding Silver and Bronze Awards. This restricts access to resources that could support meaningful community partnerships and limits the potential impact of Highest Award projects. This proposal specifically expands access to those working on a Highest Award (Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award). This preserves important safeguards around solicitation while broadening the accessibility of our Highest Awards.

**Are there other ways to address this issue?**

Some councils might have created local exceptions or workarounds, but a unified national policy would help ensure fairness, reduce confusion, and eliminate barriers for all Girl Scouts eligible to achieve the Highest Award. This proposal aims to level the playing field by giving all Girl Scouts working towards their Highest Awards equal opportunity to partner with their communities and secure the support needed for impactful, long-lasting projects.

**How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR How does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?**

This proposal improves the Movement's policy by increasing equity and accessibility for all Higher Award project execution. It helps to empower all eligible Girl Scouts with the same tools to execute meaningful, well-resourced projects (while maintaining council oversight).

**Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?**

Yes, this will apply to all councils and help enhance consistency in the implementation of Highest Awards across the country. This would create a clear national standard that maintains required council oversight to safeguard against the risk of over-solicitation. Additionally, this could potentially lead to a positive Movement branding by increasing the visibility and possible impact of the Highest Awards. This could help enable more ambitious, visible, and high-impact projects at all Highest Award levels. Bronze and Silver Award projects with access to appropriate funding have the potential to elevate the visibility and value of Girl Scouting across communities.

**Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?**

Yes, many girls plan and begin their Higher Awards year-round. Clarifying this policy at the 58th NCS would ensure that future Girl Scouts interested in pursuing the Bronze and Silver Awards are fully supported in delivering projects that reflect the values and mission of Girl Scouting. Without updated national guidance, Bronze and Silver Award candidates may continue to face barriers to success.

**Financial Impact:**

There is no direct financial cost to councils or the national organization. Allowing more girls to seek approved contributions could lead to increased community engagement and potentially greater visibility for Girl Scouts in local communities. Councils would continue to monitor and approve fundraising, mitigating the risk of over-solicitation to donors. This change could lead to increased community engagement and visibility of Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects, while maintaining donor trust and mitigating the risk of over solicitation.

**Recommendation of the NCS Advisory Team:**

The NCS Advisory Team recommended board action on this proposal in advance of the 58th NCS.

**Recommendation of the National Board:** The National Board carefully reviewed input from the council support survey and concluded that while the proposal had a lot of support from across the Movement, there are also many councils concerned that this policy change would create significant administrative burdens which could divert staff time from efforts to support and grow membership, as well as create volunteer confusion about when money earning or fundraising rules applied. Therefore, the board remains neutral on this proposal and welcomes the opportunity to learn more from delegate education and deliberation.

2) **Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration**

Submitted by Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago & Northwest Indiana

To amend the Credentials Section of the Blue Book of Basic Documents, Membership Dues and Procedures for Registration as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If adopted, will read
The National Board of Directors must obtain approval from the National Council whenever a planned dues increase will result in dues increasing more than a total of 25% in any one triennium.	The National Board of Directors must obtain approval from the National Council whenever a planned dues increase will result in dues increasing more than a total of <del>25</del> 15% in any one triennium.	The National Board of Directors must obtain approval from the National Council whenever a planned dues increase will result in dues increasing more than a total of 15% in any one triennium.

**What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?**

25% of the upcoming \$65 dues is a much larger dollar amount than was 25% of the \$25 dues amount when this was first proposed in 2020.

**Are there other ways to address this issue?**

The issue of limiting the dues increases within each triennium gives the National Board the opportunity to react to financial conditions without consulting the National Council, however when this proposal was created, we could not have predicted the level of dues increase needed to make our national organization whole. The thoughtful and robust discussions and debate which resulted from the Special Session allowed the National Council and the National Board to reach an agreed-upon dues increase, and those discussions should happen regularly. Discussions such as this are essential to maintain the partnership between the National Board and the National Council, and therefore should happen on a regular basis, potentially at every National Council Session, if needed. Amending the 25% level to 15% we feel allows enough leeway for the National Board to keep up with inflation, while reinforcing the importance of the National Council in making the tougher decision should another large increase in National Dues be necessary.

**How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR How does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?**

Membership Dues increases should be reasonable and gradual to keep pace with inflation. Large dues increases would be best appropriately debated by the membership.

**Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?**

Yes and Yes

**Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?**

Yes, this saves the additional cost of holding another Special Session, while moderating the level of dues increase the National Board can impose between sessions of the National Council.

**Financial Impact:** This proposal revises the guardrails on the National Board to increase dues without consulting the National Council but would also allow for robust discussion on finances and membership dues at each triennial National Council session as needed.

**Recommendation of the NCS Advisory Team:** The NCS Advisory Team, while not indicating agreement with the proposal's intention, recommended that the National Board consider taking action in advance of NCS. They did, however, recognize that the board may not be able to take such action given its fiduciary duties.

**Recommendation of the National Board:** The board does not recommend adoption of this proposal. The National Council already debated and took action on this matter at the 2020 National Council Session, where the 25% dues increase threshold was set. At that same NCS, in partnership with the NCS Advisory Team and its Dues Sub-Group, the National Council passed related proposals for a dues-setting process that would best meet the needs of our Movement and the girls we serve.

3) **Preservation of Girl Scout Leadership Experience Relating to the Entrepreneurship Program**

Submitted by Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland

To amend the GIRL SCOUT TRADEMARK section of the Blue Book of Basic Documents as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If adopted, will read
<p>GIRL SCOUT TRADEMARK Every product sold in connection with a Girl Scout council-sponsored product sale shall bear the Girl Scout name and service mark, either on the product or on its packaging. Every item bearing any of the registered Girl Scout names, logos, or marks purchased or developed for resale,<sup>2</sup> including items to be sold in council-sponsored product sales, shall be purchased (1) from a GSUSA-licensed vendor, (2) from Girl Scout Merchandise, or (3) produced with prior approval from GSUSA when items are not readily available from a licensed supplier. Every item bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark, including items for resale or non-resale<sup>3</sup> by councils, shall conform to the Girl Scout Brand Standards published by GSUSA. Items used for both resale and non-resale shall adhere to the stipulations stated above for resale items.</p>	<p>GIRL SCOUT TRADEMARK Every product sold in connection with a Girl Scout council-sponsored product sale shall bear the Girl Scout name and service mark, either on the product or on its packaging. Every item bearing any of the registered Girl Scout names, logos, or marks purchased or developed for resale,<sup>2</sup> including items to be sold in council-sponsored product sales, shall be purchased (1) from a GSUSA-licensed vendor, (2) from Girl Scout Merchandise, or (3) produced with prior approval from GSUSA when items are not readily available from a licensed supplier. Every item bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark, including items for resale or non-resale<sup>3</sup> by councils, shall conform to the Girl Scout Brand Standards published by GSUSA. Items used for both resale and non-resale shall adhere to the stipulations stated above for resale items. <u>GSUSA, along with its alliances and relationships with corporations and businesses, shall not sell, license or otherwise provide for sale any food product bearing the Girl Scout name or service mark when related to the flavors, branding, or likeness of Girl Scout Cookies during the designated entrepreneurship program sales period of any Girl Scout council.</u></p>	<p>GIRL SCOUT TRADEMARK Every product sold in connection with a Girl Scout council-sponsored product sale shall bear the Girl Scout name and service mark, either on the product or on its packaging. Every item bearing any of the registered Girl Scout names, logos, or marks purchased or developed for resale,<sup>2</sup> including items to be sold in council-sponsored product sales, shall be purchased (1) from a GSUSA-licensed vendor, (2) from Girl Scout Merchandise, or (3) produced with prior approval from GSUSA when items are not readily available from a licensed supplier. Every item bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark, including items for resale or non-resale<sup>3</sup> by councils, shall conform to the Girl Scout Brand Standards published by GSUSA. Items used for both resale and non-resale shall adhere to the stipulations stated above for resale items. GSUSA, along with its alliances and relationships with corporations and businesses, shall not sell, license or otherwise provide for sale any food product bearing the Girl Scout name or service mark when related to the flavors, branding, or likeness of Girl Scout Cookies during the designated entrepreneurship program sales period of any Girl Scout council.</p>

**What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?** Girl Scout youth participating in the Entrepreneurship Program, as an element of the acclaimed Girl Scout Leadership Experience, are experiencing undue competition from GSUSA and their relationship with corporations and businesses. GSUSA is receiving royalties from food products sold by retailers during the same time period as Girl Scout youth are selling products as a part of the Entrepreneurship Program. Girl Scout youth are put into situations with consumers whereby the youth are expected to answer questions or respond to comments about Girl Scout cookie-inspired products and the cost comparison to Girl Scout cookies. Girl Scout councils and their established alliances with businesses in local jurisdictions are experiencing competition from GSUSA and their relationship with corporations and businesses when Girl Scout cookie-inspired food products are promoted, especially during the Entrepreneurship Program sale. GSUSA is not upholding the guiding principles of cause-related marketing (Blue Book, page 19) which includes “program activities will be enriched; and the integrity and financial wellbeing of GSUSA and Girl Scout councils will be maintained or enriched”. GSUSA is receiving financial gain by producing commercial competition with the girl entrepreneurship program to the detriment of the girl program and councils, and GSUSA is reducing the financial well-being of the councils through competition of Council’s local marketing partnerships. GSUSA’s commercial competition is not upholding the Girl Scout Law as it is not fair or being a sister to the girls or councils. Furthermore, the competition from GSUSA creates barriers to Councils for meeting the CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL (Blue Book, Mission Delivery, Standards 1 and 3, page 29) as the Girl Scout Leadership Experience positive girl outcomes are diminished, and creates barriers to meeting the needs and interests of girls in the jurisdiction.

**Are there other ways to address this issue?** An alternative way to address this issue is for Girl Scouts of the United States to provide an equal revenue share of royalties gained through cookies and other food products to councils, so councils can meet the needs of the girls. The royalties could be divided equally by the total number of councils participating in the entrepreneurship program plus GSUSA. Consumers currently have a misperception that they are contributing to local Girl Scouts when purchasing Girl Scout cookie flavor-inspired products.

**How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR How does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?**

This proposal strengthens policy by protecting the financial stability of individual councils while fully promoting the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. [This] is directly related to the Movement strategy of financial stability for GSUSA and all councils.

**Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?**

This proposal has Movement-wide significance as it protects the Girl Scout Leadership Experience provided locally through the Entrepreneurship Program.

**Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?**

This proposal needs to be addressed at the NCS 58 as council financial stability has been greatly impacted due to the GSUSA membership dues increases for which councils are paying financial assistance for girls to participate in Girl Scouting while trying to maintain quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience programs; GSUSA continues to increase the commercialized competition 25 for girl cookie, nut and candy sales; national consumer trends include lowered cookie and snack sales as a part of what is referred to as the “Ozempic Effect” for weight-loss; and girls at cookie booths have to provide customers the reason why purchasing a package of Girl Scout cookies is more beneficial than purchasing a cookie-inspired product.

**Financial Impact:** The potential financial impact to GSUSA and councils has not been determined and cannot be projected as increased details of royalty agreements have not been made public. GSUSA's 990 through 9/30/2023 indicated \$10,353,004 in royalties received during the fiscal year and commission expenses of \$1,038,901. The 990 through 9/30/2022 indicated \$10,579,898 in royalties received. The 990 through 9/30/2021 indicated \$9,605,776 in royalties received. There is no break-out of what royalties are secured through food related products or sales occurring specific times of the year. The financial impact on councils is directly related to reduced/strained local partnerships and the reduction in girls' product sales. This financial impact is difficult to quantify across all councils. An actual example of future potential negative financial impact to a local council is through competition created by the national partnerships with Andy's Frozen Custard and Wendy's for frozen ice cream shake products. The direct competition is with a local partnership where Thin Mint cookies are purchased from the council and are used in a restaurant shake. The competing national partnerships resulted in lowered local restaurant sales contributing to future lowered cookie sales through the council and reduced local Girl Scout marketing. The national competition also created ill-will that the council had to navigate by detailing the partnership entered into by GSUSA.

**Recommendation of the NCS Advisory Team:** The NCS Advisory Team considered this an operational proposal related to complex contract law which would require significant delegate education to ensure that delegates were able to make informed decisions during the NCS. They did not recommend placement on the 58th NCS Agenda.

**Recommendation of the National Board:** ...The complexities of IP and contract law mean that amending the proposal during NCS debate presents significant risk for the Movement. Therefore, the National Board recommends that delegates reject the proposal.