

SELF-ADVOCATES BECOMING EMPOWERED
Bylaws
June 2010

Article 1: Name, Territory, and Description

Section 1. The name of the organization is Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered.

Section 2. The organization shall conduct its activities throughout the United States of America.

Section 3. The organization shall be a coalition of the state and local self-advocacy organizations, and shall be directed by regional representatives who function as a Board of Directors. These representatives work to network the state and local organizations with each other. A coalition is an organization made up of independent organizations that have formally agreed to affiliate with each other.

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose of Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered is to ensure that people with disabilities are treated as equals, and that they are given the same decisions, choices, rights, responsibilities, chance to speak up to empower themselves, to make new friends and renew old friendships, and to learn from mistakes, as everyone else.

Article 3: Membership

Section 1. The membership of Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered shall be people with and without disabilities who believe in the purpose of the organization. Voting members shall be people who have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nonvoting members shall be people without disabilities.

Section 2. The categories of membership shall be:

Voting Members

Nonvoting Members

Corporate Members

These categories shall be as defined by the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Members in good standing shall be those who have paid their dues annually.

Section 4. Rights/Limitations

Voting members in good standing shall have the right to vote for representatives on the Board of Directors.

Section 5. General Membership Meetings

General membership meetings will be held at the national self-advocacy conventions. The nation self-advocacy conventions will be held every two years, or as often as a sponsoring group has been selected by the board of directors to hold a national convention.

Article 4: Board of Directors

Section 1. The affairs of Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered shall be managed by a Board of Directors, which shall control the assets of the organization and determine its policies with the assistance of committees.

Section 2. There shall be 18 seats on the Board of Directors. Two seats shall be assigned to each of the nine (9) regions as defined by the Board. This number shall include the officers of the organization. If a region does not elect representatives to fill its seats, those seats will be held vacant until the general membership meeting.

Section 3.

3.1 Regional meetings will be held at each SABE national conference. During each meeting, one representative and one alternate will be elected to the Board of Directors from the region. In addition, one or two alternates will be elected, depending on how many alternate vacancies exist.

3.2 Board members and alternates should have the following qualifications:

- MUST be an active member of a local/statewide self-advocacy organization for at least two (2) years and continue that participation.
- Ability and availability to communicate (e-mail, mail, telephone, personal contact) and network with other members in their own

region and wherever else necessary or requested. Experience on other boards and committees

- Ability to get support to do the things they have difficulty with (reading, writing, traveling, etc.)
- Ability to work with others cooperatively
- Ability to get along with people
- Have the support of people in their region
- Good character...honest, truthful
- Ability to travel (with or without assistance) and follow through on commitments
- Ability to get time off to come to meetings
- Ability to express (communicate) yourself in one way or another
- Ability to get things done
- Ability and willingness to follow the bylaws
- U.S. Citizen
- Willingness to work to get funding for individual travel expenses and board expenses
- Willingness to participate in long meetings
- Ability to have fun

3.3 Candidates for regional representatives shall be nominated at regional meetings during the SABE National Conference. Candidates shall have the chance to give nominating speeches at the meeting. Each region will make its own decisions about how many candidates can run from the region.

3.4 So that as many states as possible can be represented:

- There shall be one representative from a state at one time, unless no person from any other state in the region wants to run.
- Alternates cannot be from the state of either representative, unless no person from any other state in the region wants to run. Alternates will be elected the same way as representatives.

3.5 The term of office for regional representative and alternate shall be for two election periods (an election period is the period of time between general membership meetings - generally this is every 2

years). Thus, if a general membership meeting is not held during a given year, the representative and alternate whose positions are designated to be filled shall continue to serve until the next general election.

3.6 If a vacancy occurs before the expiration of the term, it will be filled by the alternate for that position. If that alternate is unable to serve, the other alternate will be asked to serve. If the other alternate cannot serve, the Board may select a candidate from that region to serve until the next general election.

3.7 Representatives and alternates shall have a limit of two consecutive terms.

3.8 The duties of the representatives shall be:

- Develop contacts within your region
- Take information back and share it within your region
- Communicate with the other representatives and alternates within your region
- Contact other states within your region to find out what they are doing. This information will be used for SABE Regional Reports.
- Work cooperatively with the regional alternates to inform them of SABE activities and include them in SABE committee activities as appropriate
- Regional representatives and alternates should share information with appropriate agencies in their region for utilizing different funding and other resources supporting SABE.
- Cooperatively host Regional meetings
- Actively and appropriately participate at SABE meetings, SABE committee meetings, and SABE activities.

Section 4. The board of directors will meet four times per fiscal year. Board members will be notified at least one month before each meeting. The entire board will decide (by telephone or mail) if the meeting cannot or will not be held.

Section 5. A quorum shall consist of 10 members of the Board of Directors.

Section 6. Each board member shall have one vote. Provided there is a quorum, a majority of those present shall be sufficient to carry any motion or decision.

Section 7. No member of the Board of Directors shall receive monetary compensation (pay) for service as a board member. Reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in service to the organization is not considered compensation. *(For further explanation please read policy statement concerning this issue.)*

Section 8. Board members, who resign for whatever reason, must do so by letter or tape.

Section 9. A representative can be suspended or removed from the Board of Directors if the other members agree that he or she has engaged in any of the following:

- A high degree of unruly conduct (picking fights, yelling, spitting, taking or damaging property, cursing, being drunk or using illegal drugs during meetings).
- Physically hurting others.
- Having three unexcused absences. Excused absences would include personal illness, death or illness in the family, employer refusal to permit attendance (if a person's job is given as an excuse, the employer will be asked to write a letter stating that), or previous commitment
- Not following the bylaws intentionally on a regular basis
- Continually being in trouble with the law.

To remove or suspend a member, another member must bring the issue to the attention of the board and move for suspension or removal, stating the reason. The person can be suspended or removed based on a majority vote of the board.

Article 5: Officers

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sargeant at Arms. A representative on the SABE board should have at least one-year's experience with SABE before running for the Executive Committee / Officer's position. No officer shall serve more than two

consecutive terms in the same position. A term shall be one election period.

Section 2. Duties

2.1 President: The President shall serve as the chief officer of the organization and shall preside over meetings of the Board of Directors and the general membership. The President may sign all legal documents of the organization except where the signing has been delegated to another board member.

2.2 Vice President: The Vice President shall assist the President in presiding over the meetings of the Board of Directors and the general membership.

2.3 Secretary: The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the board meetings of and shall perform other duties as determined by the board.

2.4 Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible to account for all funds received or expended by the organization and shall report to the board at all meetings.

2.5 Sergeant of Arms: The Sergeant of Arms shall assist the President in keeping order of the meeting, keeping the meeting focused on the agenda and on time. The Sergeant of Arms will also assist by helping hand out any materials needed during the meetings and anything else that the President may need to keep the meeting going smoothly.

2.6 Each of the officer positions shall have the support needed to fulfill the duties of their position.

Article 6: Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

There shall be: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Public Relations Committee, Grassroots Committee, Legislative Committee, Policy Committee, and the Bylaws Committee.

The Board of Directors may establish other committees, both standing and temporary, as needed to complete the work of the organization.

Section 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of all the officers of the organization and shall be empowered to conduct business and manage affairs between board meetings.

Section 3. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall assume responsibility for all financial affairs for the organization.

Section 4. Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee shall assume responsibility for producing and sending out publicity materials for the organization, including brochures, fact sheets, newsletter, special issues, and other informational materials about the organization.

Section 5. Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee shall monitor and give input on legislation, legal issues, and regulations affecting people with disabilities.

Section 6. Membership

All board members are expected to develop and promote membership in the organization.

Article 7: Finances

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the organization shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

Section 2. Funds

All funds received by the organization shall be credited to Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered and deposited in accounts designated by the Board of Directors. All checks drawn by the organization shall be signed by two individuals connected to the organization.

Section 3. Accounting

All funds and expenditures shall be accounted for according to appropriate accounting procedures and shall be supervised by the Finance Committee.

Article 8: Advisors

Advisors are non-voting members of SABE who are willing to actively support the goals of SABE and to assist the Board of Directors.

Advisors and helpers for SABE must know how to help people understand information and how to help people without taking over the responsibilities of the board.

Section 1. Types of Advisors

There shall be national advisors and committee advisors, as designated by the board of directors.

Section 2. Selection of advisors

Qualifications:

- 2.1 The advisor should be active and have 2 years experience advising local or statewide self-advocacy groups and have been involved with SABE for at least 1 year.
- 2.2 The advisor should have the ability and availability to communicate and network with other advisors in their own region and where ever else it is necessary.
- 2.3 National and committee advisors are invited to serve by the board of directors. They shall have the following qualifications:
 - Must agree with the “Just Do It” statement
 - Ability and availability to communicate (e-mail, mail, telephone, personal contact) network with other members in the own region and where ever else necessary or requested. Experience on other boards and committees.
 - Ability to get support to do the things they have difficulty with (reading, writing, traveling, etc.)
 - Ability to work with others cooperatively
 - Ability to get along with people
 - Have the support of people in their region

- Good character—honest, truthful.
- Ability to travel (with or without assistance) and follow through on commitments.
- Ability to get time off to come to meetings.
- Ability to express (communicate) oneself in one way or another.
- Ability to get things done.
- Ability and willingness to follow the bylaws.
- U.S. Citizen.
- Willingness to participate in long meetings
- Ability to have fun.

Advisor elections will be held by secret ballot the year after the National Conference when Regional Representatives are elected.

- 2.4 The National Advisors may serve two (2) consecutive terms (each term consists of 2 years; for a total of 4 years if re-elected after the first term). After completing 4 years, a National Advisors cannot run again for 2 years.

Section 3. Responsibilities and Duties of the Advisors

3.1 Responsibilities:

- Think about and support the whole board rather than just one member.
- Help members think about how to use their individual strengths.
- Have fun and socialize with the members.
- Help with tasks like correspondence, phone calls, etc. between meetings.
- They support the officers in their work.

Additional items from the "agreement" that the past national advisors signed will also be included.

3.2 Duties:

- To provide information about issues and to assist in discussion by helping the board to list a variety of options and by pointing out the possible consequences of different options.

- To support the Board in learning how to participate in and lead meeting, in developing self-advocacy skills, and in learning about rights and responsibilities.

Section 4. Removal of Advisors

Advisors can be suspended or removed by the board for the same reasons as representatives can be removed (see Article 4, Section 9)

Section 5. Replacement of Advisors

5.1 Any advisor who resigns must do so by letter or tape.

5.2 To select an advisor to fill the board position of an advisor who has resigned or been removed, the board will, at the first meeting after the vacancy is know, decide whether the position needs to be filled. If it does, the board will elect an advisor to fill it.

Section 6. Mentor

SABE will support one former board member to attend board meetings for 2 years to mentor a new president. The mentor does not have any voting power. The mentor will be chosen by the new president.

Article 9: Amendment of Bylaws

The bylaws may be amended at the board of directors meetings by a two-thirds vote of members present, provided written notice of the proposed changes has been sent to all regional representatives at least 30 days prior to the meeting.