

Proposed TOC Bylaw Amendments

Thoroughbred Owners of California members will soon receive a ballot for the ratification of seven bylaw amendments proposed by the TOC Board. The amendments are intended to improve the representation of all members, as well as to update certain bylaws to be consistent with current State law and TOC policies.

The first four amendments address improved representation for owner/trainer members by formalizing certain new and existing practices for Northern California. Why are we proposing these amendments? Well, in short, because the TOC Board listens to its members.

Over three and a half months ago, several Northern California members expressed concern over perceived inequities in the TOC “Owner/Trainer” board representative appointment process, qualifications to serve as a Northern California TOC Director, and involvement in purse schedule negotiations. In response, TOC Directors and staff participated in candid dialogues with Owner-Members, and as a result of everyone’s efforts, concluded that certain bylaw changes were necessary to improve representation.

To that end, TOC, in cooperation with elected State representatives, crafted legislation that would authorize TOC to make the necessary bylaw changes. That legislation passed on August 31 – as Senate Bill 51 – with the Governor signing it into law on September 25.

The last three of the seven amendments are proposed in order to update and/or clarify certain bylaws to be consistent with current TOC policies and procedures.

Your vote is critical to strengthening TOC, and to improving its efforts to effectively represent the interests of all California Thoroughbred owners. We strongly encourage each member to exercise the right to vote, and to ratify these bylaw amendments. TOC believes these changes will strengthen and unite all owners as one strong voice in California Thoroughbred racing.



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1. Permit all TOC members – regardless of membership “class” (owner or owner/trainer) – to vote for all TOC Board members.

This action will enable owner/trainer members and their licensed spouses to vote for all TOC Directors, be they “owner” or “owner/trainer” representatives, as well as authorize TOC “owner” members to vote for both “owner” and “owner/trainer” representatives serving on the Board.

2. Require that Northern California TOC Board members both reside and race in the North.

Qualification criteria will be amended to reflect that Northern California board representatives must have started a horse or horses a minimum of six (6) times in the Northern Zone during the preceding calendar year and, that as with all other directors, they be a TOC member in good standing who owns at least twenty-five percent (25%) of a Thoroughbred racehorse. This amendment will ensure that those serving as Northern California TOC Directors not only live in the North, but that they are actively involved in Northern California racing.

3. Confirm that at least 3 of the 12 “owner” representative Board members and at least 1 of the 3 positions reserved for owner/trainer/licensed spouse representatives on the Board be a Northern Californian.

To ensure broad representation in all related decision-making, Northern California representation in each of two (2) owner classes active on the Board will be incorporated into the bylaws.

4. Formalization of a Northern California subcommittee of the Racing Affairs Committee.

The bylaws will reflect the formation of a subcommittee – consisting of Northern California TOC Directors and such other Northern California TOC members that are appointed – that will meet in the Northern Zone for the purpose of reviewing, negotiating, and establishing purse schedules with racing associations and fairs conducting live racing meets within the zone.

5. Add two officers, each with the title of “Vice Chair,” to the Corporation with one being a Northern California Board member and the other being a Southern California Board member.

Existing bylaws state the officers shall include, “...such other officers and assistant officers with such titles and duties as shall be determined by the Board...” The amendment would specify the titles of two Vice Chairs to be added to the current list of officers so as to be consistent with a TOC practice that has been in effect for several years. In addition, having a Vice Chair from Northern and Southern California will further ensure strong representation from those areas.

6. Add language to further define and clarify a member in “good standing.”

7. Modify reference to a Director’s racing activity from the “preceding twelve (12) months” to the “preceding calendar year.”

In addition:

Northern California Board Members and staff will convene at least one (1) open meeting per race meet for Northern California members during each of the race meets held in Northern California to gather additional feedback for the TOC Board; and, TOC will annually host a General Business Meeting in the North, similar in scope and purpose to that conducted in Southern California.