

CRA BY-LAWS (2013)

ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION

Section 1.

The name of the organization shall be the *Congress of Russian-Americans, Inc.*, or *Congress of Russian Americans*, also referred to herein as *Congress* or *CRA*.

Section 2.

Structural units of the CRA are: the National Board of Directors, local chapters with their local Executive Boards, and members-at-large, i.e., those who do not belong to chapters.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the organization shall be:

- To help preserve the Russian spiritual and cultural heritage based on Christian traditions;
- To protect the legal, economic, cultural and civil rights of Russian Americans and to encourage active participation of Russian Americans in the public and social life of the United States;
 - To aid dispersed Russians in their legal, economic, cultural and social interests.
 - To combat Russophobia by speaking out in defense of the Russian people and developing friends for them among Americans. Assist the development of friendly relations between the U.S. and Russia based on mutual understanding and respect.
- To help the Russian people in its spiritual revival and the revival of its economy.

ARTICLE III - BY-LAWS

Section 1. Document.

The By-Laws are the basic document directing the activities of the CRA. The By-Laws determine the CRA goals and structure, as well as its organizational and operational guidelines. Periodically added to the By-Laws are general program statements which supplement the By-Laws with detailed explanations of CRA activity for a given period.

Section 2. Changes.

Changes to the By-Laws are confirmed by a 2/3 majority vote of the general membership. Changes to the By-Laws cannot be made more than once a year. Recommendations for changes to the By-Laws are submitted to the By-Laws Committee by individual members. The By-Laws Committee examines recommendations and, after consultation with the National Board, submits them to a vote.

Section 3. Program.

General program statements that supplement the By-Laws with detailed directions are put together as needed by the National Board and confirmed by a vote of the general membership.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership categories.

a. Full member.

Full members of the Congress of Russian Americans shall be persons of Russian ethnic descent who are US citizens or permanent residents, of legal age, who recognize the CRA By-Laws and observe them and who regularly (at least for 3 years) pay the membership dues. Persons with Communist beliefs cannot be CRA members.

b. Honorary member.

Honorary members are persons who have been inducted into the Congress of Russian Americans Hall of Fame.

c. Friends of the CRA.

Friends of the CRA are persons who have given financial or moral support to the CRA. At the recommendation of the members of local chapters or of the National Board, they can be appointed to committees of the respective chapters or the National Board.

Section 2. Admission to membership.

CRA membership is granted by the local Chapters or by the National Board. Persons wishing to become CRA members must submit a written application with a recommendation by one full CRA members who has been a CRA member for at least three years.

Section 3. Rights of members.

Every full member has the right to vote, to nominate candidates, and be nominated for any position in the CRA; with the consent of a local Board, to represent the local chapter in its dealings with local authorities and other organizations; with the consent of the National Board of Directors, to represent the CRA in its dealings with US Government representatives and organizations in the United States or abroad.

All members and friends have the right to attend CRA meetings, discuss items on the agenda, make proposals, resign from the CRA, and contest expulsion from the CRA.

Section 4. Membership dues.

All full members pay their prescribed yearly dues to the treasurer of each local chapter by the deadline established by the local chapter Board. Members-at-large pay to the treasurer of the National Board. Timely payment of membership dues is required for CRA membership.

ARTICLE V - NATIONAL BOARD

Section 1. Functions of the National Board.

The CRA National Board is the executive body of the Congress. It is responsible for the implementation of the program approved by the previous vote of the general membership and various activities that promote CRA goals. The National Convention is called by the National Board as needed. The President of the National Board is responsible for the preparation of an annual report on the activities and the financial state of the National Board. This report must be sent to the Chapters no later than May 1 of the following fiscal year.

Section 2. Composition of the National Board.

The National Board consists of 9 elected members: The President; first and second Vice-Presidents; Treasurer; Secretary; and four members of the Board, each responsible for designated functions. The number of the Board can be expanded to 12 members through cooptation by a unanimous vote of the Board.

Section 3. Election to the National Board.

The National Board of Directors is elected for a three-year term.

The President, Vice-Presidents; Treasurer, and members of the National Board shall be elected, upon their written consent, from a list of candidates compiled by the Election Committee by a majority vote of full CRA members participating in the election. The balloting is secret and is carried out by mail.

The Secretary is elected at the first meeting of the Board from among its members.

Candidates for the positions of President and Vice-Presidents must be persons who have been CRA members for at least six years, three of which must be in some elected position: either a National Board of Directors members or a chairman of a local Chapter.

Section 4. Filling a vacancy.

The vacated position of the President is automatically filled by the first Vice-President, the position of the first Vice-President - by the second Vice-President for the remainder of the term, or until new election results are announced. The second Vice-President is elected by the Board from its membership. In the case of a vacancy of some other member, the Board may select a CRA member to replace him/her until the new elections. The National Board can also coopt as Board members qualified members of the CRA - to perform special duties.

Section 5. Expulsion of a Board member.

Any member of the National Board can be expelled from the Board by a 2/3 vote of the National Board. Grounds for expulsion must be approved by majority of the members of the Board. Prior to the vote regarding expulsion, an investigation must be conducted during which an opportunity to refute the charges is given to the member of the Board facing expulsion.

Section 6. Meetings of the National Board.

Meetings of the National Board are called at least four times per year. The places and dates of meetings are determined by the Board. The absence of a member of the National Board without a valid reason from two consecutive meetings can result in a loss of membership on the National Board. Every member of the National Board present at a meeting has one vote in the disposition of all questions at the meeting. Meetings of the National Board are open to all full CRA members.

The decisions of the National Board and results of the voting are recorded by the secretary in the minutes. Meeting minutes are taken in English or in Russian and are sent to the chapters and to the representatives of the National Board within 15 days following each meeting of the National Board.

Section 7. Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of the National Board consists of the CRA President, both Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. Executive Committee meetings are called by the CRA President at his/her discretion for discussing various matters during periods between meetings of the entire Board. Decisions of the Executive Committee which require consideration by the entire Board are subject to the approval by the Board at its next regular meeting.

ARTICLE VI - LOCAL CHAPTERS

Section 1. Establishing a local chapter.

Establishment of a local chapter requires a minimum of five people and confirmation by the National Board. Only full members can be members of the Executive Board of a local chapter.

Section 2. Rights of chapters.

Chapters can determine the rules for the election of their Executive Board; the number of Executive Board members; the term of Executive Board members; duties of the chapter members and members of the Executive Board; deadlines for paying dues; rules for expulsion of members that must require, as a minimum, a thorough investigation of the grounds for expulsion and confirmation by a 2/3 vote of the chapter's membership

Section 3. Duties of chapters.

Chapters implement programs established by the National Board and approved by vote of the entire membership. Chapters conduct their own activities in accordance with the By-Laws, which is the main policy directing document for the entire organization, including local chapters.

Section 4. Local chapter Executive Boards.

Each local Executive Board consists, as a minimum, of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary-Treasurer; meets at least four times per year; calls at least one general meeting of the chapter membership each year; sends the minutes

of all meetings and other documents to the CRA National Board; establishes the membership dues for each member category over and above those dues that are established by the National Convention or the National Board and that have to be sent to the National Board; reimburses, whenever possible, travel expenses of chapter representatives incurred during trips to the CRA National Convention or other events on CRA business .

Section 5. Dissolution of a chapter.

A local chapter may be dissolved by a 2/3 majority vote of the full members of the chapter or by decision of the National Board. In such cases, all assets, archives and monies of the chapter are turned over to the National Board.

ARTICLE VII- COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees.

The following Standing Committees are established for carrying out CRA activities:

The Human Rights Committee organizes, directs, and coordinates all CRA activities directed against the persecution of the Russian people in the former USSR for their beliefs, and also defends the rights of Russian Americans.

The Auditing Committee audits the financial records kept by the National Board Treasurer and verifies the actual financial assets of the CRA at least once a year and reports to the CRA National Board and the National Convention.

The Scholarship Committee reviews scholarship applications and submits its recommendations to the National Board of Directors. After approval by the Board, it awards scholarships.

Section 2. Temporary committees. Committees to carry out definite functions, for example: Election Committee, Russian American Hall of fame Committee, By-laws committee etc. can be established as needed.

Section 3. Committee chairmen.

Committee Chairmen are appointed by the National Board. Committee members are selected by the respective chairmen and approved by the National Board.

ARTICLE XIII - CRA FINANCES

Section 1. Sources of income.

The CRA financial base is comprised of membership dues, contributions, and income from other legitimate sources.

Section 2. Membership dues.

Members of the CRA who belong to local chapters pay their dues in accordance with the rules established by their chapters; members-at-large pay their dues each year directly to the CRA Treasurer .

Section 3. Payments by chapters.

Each year no later than March 15 chapters transfer to the Treasurer of the CRA the amount due to the National Board as determined by the last National Convention or the National Board.

Section 4. Fiscal year.

The fiscal year of the National Board shall be April 1 to March 31st. Chapters determine their own fiscal years.

Section 5. Remuneration of elected officials.

All elected members of the National and chapter Executive Boards serve without pay. Expenses incurred in work on behalf of the CRA may be reimbursed in accordance with the rules established by the National Board.

ARTICLE IX - RUSSIAN AMERICAN HALL OF FAME

Section 1. Purpose of the Hall of Fame.

The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to recognize and award the honorary status of member of the Russian American Hall of Fame of the Congress of Russian Americans to outstanding and deserving persons of Russian descent living in

the US famous for their achievements in the fields of science, technology, art, literature or in other cultural, social or philanthropic endeavors which have brought honor to the Russian name. Inductions into the Hall of Fame shall not occur more than once a year.

Section 2. Candidates for the Hall of Fame.

Nominations to the Hall of Fame can be made by any full member of the CRA as well as by likeminded Russian American organizations. The person making the nomination must submit a detailed biography of the candidate, a description of his or her work, and documentary evidence concerning the candidate's achievements. The decision to accept a nominee into the Hall of Fame is made by the National Board of Directors.

Section 3. Induction into the Hall of Fame.

The Russian American Hall of Fame Committee performs the induction and submits to the CRA treasurer a complete financial report.

ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS

Section 1. Dissolution of the organization.

The organization may be dissolved by a 2/3 majority of the votes of all full CRA members.

Section 2. Liquidation of property.

A special Committee appointed by the National Board shall liquidate all property of the Congress in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Congress of Russian Americans.