

Rules for District Director Election Campaigns

The Board of Directors establishes the following rules for the conduct of campaigns for District Director positions, pursuant to stipulations in the AVMA Bylaws (Article V, Section 6). These rules are intended to be fair to all candidates and to allow eligible voting members to exercise informed judgment in voting for a District Director.

The official campaign period shall begin at the beginning of the Association year during which the election will be held and shall end at the close of voting on March 31. The Board of Directors or its designee may establish different dates for a campaign schedule in the event of a special election to fill a vacancy for a District Director position. Prior to the beginning of the official campaign period, the AVMA places no restrictions on activities by or on behalf of individuals considering candidacy.

During the official campaign schedule, no functions on behalf of candidates, including but not limited to, banquets, open houses, and receptions, will be permitted at any convention center or official hotels during the annual AVMA convention, the Veterinary Leadership Conference, or any other AVMA meeting.

Candidates for District Director are encouraged and expected to conduct their campaigns at the highest level of professional ethics and to adhere to the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics of the AVMA. No campaign or promotional materials in support of a candidate shall be false, misleading or deceptive.

At the request of a candidate or a Principal Veterinary Organization in the pertinent district, the AVMA will make the mailing list of eligible voting members available to an AVMA approved third-party for mailing campaign materials, such as brochures, letters, and postcards.

Candidates may use the AVMA collective membership mark in campaign materials to indicate their AVMA membership. No campaign materials distributed by or on behalf of a candidate or a Principal Veterinary Organization shall include any other AVMA trademarks, including but not limited to the AVMA logo.

Email addresses of voting members will not be made available for candidate use. However, the AVMA will send two emails on behalf of all candidates to all eligible voting members in the district for whom AVMA has a valid email address. Each candidate will provide a concise statement (1,000 words maximum) that must be approved by AVMA prior to distribution. The statement will be included with candidate information at the AVMA website. The two AVMA emails sent on behalf of candidates will include a link to the candidate information at the AVMA website.

Except as provided in this Policy, AVMA digital and print media properties (*e.g.*, websites, *JAVMA*, and social media sites) shall not be used by candidates or other persons or organizations for campaigning. News stories appearing in *JAVMA* or other AVMA digital or print media properties identifying candidates who are running for office shall not be considered campaigning by the candidates.

Candidates may use non-AVMA digital or print media and social media to campaign for office, including email, digital communications and other forms of electronic messaging.

Violations of Campaign Rules

A written complaint alleging a violation of these campaign rules will be reviewed by the Board of Governors (BOG), which shall take any action it deems appropriate to investigate such complaint. Complaints must be in writing and signed by an eligible voting member. Complaints may be sent by electronic communication means.

If the BOG finds that a candidate has committed an infraction of these rules, the BOG is authorized to send a letter of reprimand to the candidate; withdraw the candidate's eligibility for AVMA funding, effective on a date specified; or take any other action deemed appropriate.

For each complaint found to be an infraction of these rules, the findings and actions will be reported to the candidate, the Board of Directors, and the complaining party. All related rulings or actions shall be considered final determinations and there shall be no appeal.

Balloting

The services of an electronic voting company will be used to facilitate balloting for district directors. An email message and subsequent reminder(s) will be sent to all eligible voters in the district. The email will provide directions and a link to a secure voting website. The website will authenticate the member's identity based on information provided by the AVMA, and the voting company will subsequently tabulate the election results. The initial email will be sent to eligible voting members on March 1 and the reminder(s) email will be sent on or about March 15.

Paper ballots will be distributed to those eligible voting members for whom AVMA does not have email addresses. Tabulations of returned paper ballots will be included with the electronic tabulation results.

The voting period will begin on March 1 and end at 11:59 Central Time on March 31. All electronic and paper ballots must be received no later than March 31. Any electronic or paper ballots received after March 31 will be disregarded. If March 31 falls on a non-business day of the AVMA, voting will close on the last preceding business day.

Safeguards will be in place to prohibit multiple voting. Only one vote shall be counted from any member who inadvertently votes by both paper ballot and electronic means. The vote appearing on the ballot first received will be counted.

The candidate who receives a plurality of the votes cast will be considered elected. When two or more candidates receive an equally high number of votes, the winner shall be determined by coin toss.

Reporting Election Results

Once tabulation of election results has been completed, each candidate will be promptly notified of who was elected.

Tabulated results of the election will be made available to any of the candidates on request, with the understanding that the results are not for publication. Election winners will be announced in the *JAVMA*. However, tabulated results will not be published in the journal or released for publication elsewhere.

Challenging Election Results

The results of an election may be challenged by any candidate whose name was on the ballot for District Director in accordance with the following procedures. A challenge may be raised where there is a credible allegation of mistake or fraud in the casting, counting, or return of the ballots for the office involved; there was some other irregularity in the conduct of the contested election; or both.

An election challenge shall be initiated by submitting to the Executive Vice President a petition signed by the person challenging the election within 15 days of the announcement of the election results.

The Executive Vice President shall promptly send a copy of the petition to each candidate whose name was on the ballot for that office.

The petition shall contain a concise statement declaring with particularity the grounds relied upon by petitioner to challenge the election, and a statement declaring that, as a consequence of the mistake, fraud or irregularity alleged, the result of the election was incorrect.

The petitioner shall submit all relevant evidence in support of the election challenge to the Executive Vice President no more than 10 days after the verified petition has been submitted.

The Executive Director shall promptly provide copies of the petitioner's submittal to the Board of Governors. Based on the evidence submitted, the Board of Governors shall either find that the petition fails to state a prima facie case to support an election challenge and dismiss the petition, or find that a prima facie case in support of the election challenge has been stated.

If the Board of Governors finds that the petition states a prima facie case, the Board of Governors may in its discretion take any or all of the following actions according to a schedule to be adopted by the Board of Governors: conduct a recount of the ballots for the challenged election in the presence of at least one of the election tellers responsible for the tallying of ballots for the challenged election, obtain and hear evidence from any other candidates in the challenged election; or obtain and hear evidence from any or all of the election tellers responsible for the tallying of votes in the challenged election.

After reviewing the verified petition and taking any action identified above, the Board of Governors shall declare as elected the person who, in its judgment, shall appear to be duly elected. The decision of the Board of Governors shall be final and will not be subject to appeal.

Members of the Board of Directors are expected to exercise professional judgment and discretion when supporting candidates in contested elections for select AVMA Officers (President, President-elect, Vice President), District Director, HAC, and Council positions.