

2019 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FROM THE IBD

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – REPRESENTATION CAP FOR IBD

The following shall be put to a vote of the worldwide membership on the next regular election ballot:

In the Constitution of Mensa, Article V, section B.2 is revised to read:

“2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding paragraph, no national Mensa shall have more than 40 percent of the full Board membership, nor shall any national Mensa exercise more than 40 percent of the full Board vote. If the result of the calculation of the 40 percent limit includes a fraction, the national Mensa involved shall have the next higher whole number of national representatives or of votes if the fraction is one-half or more, or the next lower whole number of national representatives or of votes if the fraction is less than one-half.”

In the Constitution of Mensa, in Article IV, section D, a new subsection 4 is added as follows, renumbering other subsections accordingly:

“4. The “full Board membership” shall mean the maximum number of Board members if all officers and national representatives were present.

EXPLANATION: This amendment is essentially housekeeping in nature, in that it clarifies the intention of the original wording. The 40 percent cap is already present in section V.B.2, but the section refers only to voting on the Board (IBD); this amendment adds Board representation to it. Without this amendment, theoretically a very large national Mensa could have 90 percent of the people sitting at the IBD table and participating in discussions, but when it came time for a vote only some of them would vote in order to get below the 40 percent cap; this amendment prevents that situation from happening.

No financial impact is expected from this amendment.

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Con</i>
<p>This amendment is needed to explain ambiguous wording in the Constitution of Mensa. The IBD has already taken action on this, but that action can be undone by the IBD if it chooses to do so. Putting it in the Constitution is much better protection.</p>	<p>This amendment is change for the sake of change. The meaning is already clear. The concept is also already in an ASIE (an action taken by the IBD), so an amendment is not needed.</p>

2. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT -- PUTTING AN AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT

In the Constitution of Mensa, Article XIII, section B is revised to read:

“B. Any proposal for an amendment which is recommended by the Board, or by at least 1/3 of all national Mensa Committees, shall be submitted to a ballot among all members of Mensa.”

EXPLANATION: Currently, there are two ways to put a proposed amendment to the Constitution of Mensa on a ballot for voting by the worldwide membership:

- (1) the Board (IBD) can put an amendment on the ballot, and
- (2) one or more national Mensas that together comprise at least twenty percent (20%) of the worldwide membership can put an amendment on the ballot.

This amendment changes the second of those methods. The second method would still refer to national Mensa Committees, but changes “national Mensa Committees comprising 20 percent of the worldwide membership” to “1/3 of all national Mensa Committees”. This is being proposed because it better protects the international nature of Mensa; the feeling is that, in an international organization, it should take support by more than one large national Mensa to put a proposal before the worldwide membership. Currently, there is one national Mensa (American Mensa) that comprises more than twenty percent (20%) of the worldwide membership by itself, and therefore could put a proposal for a constitutional amendment on the ballot by itself. Requiring 1/3 of the national Mensa Committees to put an amendment on the ballot is more appropriate for an international organization than one national Mensa being able to do so by itself.

No financial impact is expected from this amendment.

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Con</i>
<p>This amendment protects the international nature of Mensa by preventing one large national Mensa from putting proposed amendments on the ballot by itself. That same large national Mensa could potentially also produce a 2/3 majority vote in favor of its own amendment by mobilizing large numbers of voters and passing the amendment by itself. This needs to be avoided.</p>	<p>This amendment eliminates the possibility of a single national Mensa putting a proposed amendment on the ballot, or even a small group of national Mensas doing so. It should be very easy to put amendments on the ballot to let the voters decide; this makes it harder.</p>

3. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – HOW AMENDMENTS CAN BE PASSED

The following amendment to the Constitution is passed to a referendum of the worldwide membership on the next regular election ballot:

Article XIII section A of the Constitution is amended by deleting the second alternative, so that article XIII section A reads: “This Constitution may be amended only as a result of a ballot among all individual members of Full and Provisional National Mensa and Direct International Members, provided that, of the members from whom completed ballots are received, more than one-half vote in favour of the amendment and the amendment is favoured by the voters in at least one-third of the national Mensas.”

EXPLANATION: Currently, there are two ways for the membership to pass a constitutional amendment:

- (1) An amendment will pass if the amendment receives more individual votes in favour than opposed, with the voters in at least one-third of the national Mensas voting in favour (more votes from that national Mensa in favour than opposed), and
- (2) An amendment will pass if more than two-thirds of the individual votes received are in favour, with no requirement about national Mensas at all.

This amendment removes the second way for an amendment to pass, that is, the way that requires two-thirds of the individual votes being in favour of the amendment and nothing about national Mensas at all. This is being proposed because it better protects the international nature of Mensa; the feeling is that, in an international organization, it should take support by more than one large national Mensa to pass a constitutional amendment. With the two-thirds method to pass an amendment, if many voters from a single very large national Mensa vote in favour of an amendment, they could outweigh the combined votes of all voters from all other national Mensas, and that does not seem right in an international organization. If this amendment passes, the only way to amend the Constitution of Mensa would be with more individual voters in favour than opposed and with the voters in at least one-third of the national Mensas in favour, which seems more in keeping with an international organization.

There might be a small financial cost to this motion if it results in more processing by the independent vote-counting agency being needed.

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Con</i>
<p>This amendment protects the international nature of Mensa by preventing one large national Mensa from passing a constitutional amendment by itself by mobilizing large numbers of voters. The requirement to have at least one-third of the national Mensas prevents this from happening.</p>	<p>This amendment requires that the votes needed to pass an amendment are not just a majority of all individual votes, but also that those votes in favor be widely distributed (that a majority of voters from several different national Mensas vote in favor of the amendment.). There is no reason for this; every voter is an individual, not a representative of his or her national Mensa. The Constitution wisely requires that the percentage of votes needed to pass an amendment goes up if the number of national Mensas favoring the amendment is small -- the percentage needed goes up from 50 percent plus one voting in favor to 2/3 voting in favor – and that is enough of a safeguard against domination by a single very large national Mensa.</p>

4. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – TERMS OF OFFICE

The following shall be put to a vote of the worldwide membership on the next regular election ballot:

The Constitution of Mensa, Article X, section A.1, is revised to read:

“1. The term of office of the named International Elected Officers is three years, from July 1 following their election until June 30 three years later. They shall be elected by a majority of the votes received during the election period, which shall be April 15 at the latest through May 31 of every third year commencing 2021 (2021, 2024, 2027. . .).”

The Constitution of Mensa, Article X, section B.1, is revised to read:

“1. The term of office of the named International Elected Officer is three years, from July 1 following his or her election until June 30 three years later. The officer shall be elected by a majority of the votes received during the election period, which shall be April 15 at the latest through May 31 of every third year commencing 2021 (2021, 2024, 2027. . .).”

EXPLANATION: This amendment changes the term of office for International Elected Officers (Chairman, Treasurer, and Directors of Administration, Development, and Smaller National Mensas) from two years to three years. It does not change the limit of a person being allowed to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms in the same office.

The reason the change is being proposed is that three-year terms give the officers longer to carry out their roles without the interruption of another election. Newly elected officers can take some time to learn their new jobs, maybe even as long as the first year. Consequently, in a two-year term, they have only just gotten into the swing of their roles when the next election comes up; having a third year in the term gives an additional year of productivity before the next election.

The financial impact of this amendment is a saving of 1/3 of the expected total election expenses going forward, as there will be two elections every six years rather than three elections every six years. This saving is expected to be up to £5000 per year.

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Con</i>
<p>This change delivers increased productivity and reduced costs. Typically newly elected officers spend their first year, and first IBD meeting, understanding and adjusting to their new role, gathering data, identifying issues, and planning improvements. In the second year they start making changes but then reach end of term before they can see those through to completion. Adding a third year means officers are truly productive for a much greater portion of their term, and can follow changes they make through to completion. There is no benefit in bringing in new officers with fresh ideas if they don't have the time to deliver on those ideas, and experience indicates the current two year term is too short. Also, the cost saving that is a side-benefit of this change will give Mensa an extra £5000 a year that can be invested in development rather than spent on election administration.</p>	<p>This amendment lengthens the maximum duration a person can stay in the same officer position from four years to six years. That is a bad idea; new officers with new ideas are needed more frequently, not less frequently. Also, increasing the term length by 50 percent could discourage some good people from running, and Mensa could be stuck with a bad officer for a longer time before someone else could be elected.</p>

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – VOTING CAPS IN OFFICER ELECTIONS

The following amendment to the Constitution of Mensa is passed to a referendum of the worldwide membership on the next regular election ballot:

In the Constitution of Mensa, Article X, section A.1 is revised to read:

“The named International Elected Officers may serve for a period of two years. They shall be elected by a majority of the votes received during the election period, which shall be April 15 at the latest through May 31 of the odd-numbered years, provided that no more than 40% of the votes in favour of a candidate come from any one national Mensa or, in the case of Direct International Members any one country, at any stage of the counting. The terms of office of the named International Elected Officers shall begin July 1 following their election.”

If the constitutional amendment changing the officer term length from two years to three years passes, this amendment shall be adjusted accordingly to reflect three-year terms.

EXPLANATION: Mensa is an international organization. Its international flavour is protected in the Constitution of Mensa by capping the number of votes on the International Board of Directors that any one national Mensa is allowed to carry at 40%; that is, no matter how large a national Mensa is in relation to the other national Mensas, it is allowed to carry no more than 40% of the total number of votes on the IBD. The cap is meant to prevent a single, very large national Mensa from dominating everyone else when voting on the IBD.

This proposed amendment extends that 40% cap to another situation, that being voting for international officers (International Chair, International Director - Administration, International Director - Development, and International Treasurer). The rest of Constitution Article X remains unchanged.

The IBD has passed a motion to implement this amendment should it pass. The IBD motion will not go into effect if this amendment does not pass. Details of the implementing motion and several examples are available on the mensa.org website and from the international office at mensainternational@mensa.org.

There might be a small financial cost to this motion if it results in more processing by the independent vote-counting agency being needed.

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Con</i>
<p>This amendment protects the international nature of Mensa by preventing one large national Mensa from electing international officers by itself by mobilizing large numbers of voters. The requirement to have no more than 40% of a winning candidate's votes coming from any one national Mensa prevents this from happening.</p>	<p>This amendment is anti-democratic. If a candidate gets more than half the votes, he or she should win, regardless of where those votes come from. Getting all votes from one national Mensa is just as valid as getting them from several national Mensas; each one is still a vote from an individual Mensa member and should count the same as any other vote from any other individual Mensa member.</p>