

**ORDER SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF  
ITALY IN AMERICA  
GRAND LODGE OF VIRGINIA**



**Bylaws  
of the  
Grand Lodge  
of Virginia**

These Bylaws contain all amendments adopted by the Grand Lodge Convention through April 2023 and approved by the Supreme Council through August 2021

**GRAND LODGE BYLAWS APPROVED ON  
4/29/2023.**

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## **Chapter 1**

### **The Grand Lodge of Virginia**

#### **Article 1. Jurisdiction**

The Grand Lodge of Virginia of the Order Sons of Italy in America dba ORDER SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY IN AMERICA, is the sole valid and legitimate representative in Virginia of the Supreme Lodge of the Order Sons of Italy in America and as such exercises jurisdiction over the Local Lodges within the confines of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### **Article 2. Membership**

The Grand Lodge is comprised of the State Officers, all past State Presidents, State Delegates elected by the Local Lodges, the Presidents of the Local Lodges, and such other officers as are designated in these Bylaws.

#### **Article 3. Structure**

The Grand Lodge, when in session, exercises executive, legislative, and judicial authority over the members in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Grand Lodge, when not in session, operates through:

- a. The Grand Council
- b. The Grand Executive Committee
- c. The Grand Lodge Arbitration Committee
- d. The Commissions, Committees or Boards of the Grand Lodge prescribed in these Bylaws.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Meetings of the Grand Lodge**

#### **Article 4. Frequency**

The Grand Lodge shall meet in Convention on the fourth weekend in the month of April, May, or June of each odd-numbered year, at the place chosen by the preceding Convention. When deemed necessary and advisable, the Grand Council may change the place and the date of the Grand Convention. The Grand Lodge shall meet in special sessions by order of the Grand Council, or at the request of the majority of the State Delegates whose Local Lodges are in good standing.

#### **Article 5. Notice & Convocation**

The notice calling the Grand Convention shall contain, item by item, the order of the day to be discussed and shall be mailed to the members of the Grand Lodge, as defined in Article 2, by letter at least 30 days before the date set for the Convention. The notice for special meetings of the Grand Lodge shall be mailed at least 15 days in advance. Both regular and special meetings of the Grand Lodge shall be held after due notice stating the place, the day, and the hour of the meeting for which there shall be a first and second call. If a majority of the State Officers and State Delegates having the right to vote are present at the first convocation of the Grand Convention, the session may be legally

opened. When the later convocations are made, the session shall be legal for all purposes regardless of the number of the State Officers and State Delegates present but not less than 10% of said number. The meeting having been declared legal, the State President, or whoever may be acting in his or her place, shall call for a report from the previously appointed Credentials Committee consisting of three Delegates assisted by the State Secretaries. The Credentials Committee shall certify the Delegates who are entitled to take part in the work of the Grand Lodge at the opening of each session of the Grand Lodge meeting. Appeals from the decisions of the Credentials Committee may be taken to the assembly of the GrandLodge whose decision shall be final.

## **Article 6. Parliamentary Procedure**

The business of the Grand Convention, in regular or special session, shall be transacted in conformity with the laws of the Order and under the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure as described in Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised). In case of conflict, the laws of the Order shall prevail. Any dispute as to the procedure shall be resolved by the following rules listed in the order of their precedence:

- a. The Supreme Constitution, General Laws, and Judicial Code
- b. The Bylaws of the Grand Lodge of Virginia
- c. The Ritual of the Grand Lodge of Virginia
- d. Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised)

The same rules shall apply for meetings of the Grand Council and of the Grand Executive Committee.

## **Article 7. Agenda**

The agenda of the regular meeting of the Grand Lodge shall include but is not limited to:

- a. Preliminary Ceremonies
- b. Report of the Credentials Committee
- c. Opening of the Convention
- d. Roll Call of Officers
- e. Approval of the minutes of the previous convention
- f. Communications
- g. State Officers' reports and unfinished business. The reports of the Committees and Commissions shall be the first order of unfinished business.
- h. New Business
- i. Nominations and Elections
- j. Welfare of the Order
- k. Installation of newly elected officers
- l. Adjournment of Convention

The agenda for special meetings of the Grand Lodge shall be set forth in the notice calling each meeting.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Grand Lodge Council**

#### **Article 8. Jurisdiction & Composition**

The Grand Council is composed of the officers of the Grand Lodge, called State Officers, and elected by the State Delegates, and functions as the executive body of the Grand Lodge when the Grand Lodge is not in session. The Grand Council shall exercise the powers and prerogatives enumerated in Article 49 and Article 50 of the Supreme General Laws.

The State Officers, listed in order of their rank, are as follows:

- a. State President
- b. State First Vice President
- c. State Second Vice President
- d. Immediate Past State President
- e. State Orator
- f. State Recording Secretary
- g. State Financial Secretary
- h. State Treasurer
- i. State Trustees (7)

The Immediate Past State President's position will be filled in accordance with Article 54 of the Supreme General Laws.

#### **Article 9. Meetings**

The Grand Lodge shall meet quarterly on the third Sunday of March, the fourth Sunday of June, the third Sunday of September and the first Sunday of December, in or near the city of Richmond, Virginia, unless cancelled or changed by two-thirds vote of the Grand Council. It shall meet in special session whenever the meeting is called by the State President or at the written request of five State Officers. The minutes of the Grand Council meeting shall be reviewed by the State President within 30 days after the meeting.

The Presidents of the Local Lodges or their representatives shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Grand Council, and to act as observers for their respective Local Lodges and to furnish information upon request of the Grand Council. They shall have the right to debate but not to vote or introduce motions.

Past State Presidents (other than the Immediate Past State President) of the Virginia Grand Lodge shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Grand Council, with the right to introduce motions, and debate, but not to second motions or vote. They may not send proxies in their place.

## **Article 10. Notice**

Notice of the meeting shall be sent to the State Officers ten days before the day designated, and in the case of emergency meetings, within such periods as may be possible under the circumstances. No meeting of the Grand Council shall be considered legal unless a majority is present. The presiding officer shall not vote except in case of a tie. The same rules apply to meetings of the Executive Committee of the Grand Lodge.

## **Article 11. Forfeiture of State Office**

Any State Officer who has two consecutive unexcused absences from Grand Council meetings forfeits his or her office. The Grand Council shall determine whether or not an absence is excused. Upon forfeiture of any State Office, the State President shall inform the State Officer that his or her office has been forfeited. The forfeited office shall be filled by the procedures outlined in Chapter 7, Vacancies, of these bylaws.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Executive Committee of the Grand Lodge Council**

#### **Article 12. Composition**

The Executive Committee of the Grand Lodge shall be composed of the State President, State First Vice President, State Second Vice President, State Orator, State Recording Secretary and State Financial Secretary. The Committee shall act in lieu of the Grand Council when the latter is not in session and may exercise all the powers and prerogatives of the Grand Council, except the authority to issue decrees. The Committee shall meet when called together by the State President or on the written request of a majority of the Committee.

## **Chapter 5**

### **State Cabinet, Commissions, Committees, and Boards**

#### **Article 13. State Cabinet**

The Grand Lodge shall have a cabinet composed of all Local Lodge Presidents. The purposes of the State Cabinet are to consider, discuss and make recommendations to the Grand Council on any programs wherein the need for fundraising is indicated, as well as any problems or programs which the Grand Lodge, the State President, the Grand Council, or the State Cabinet on its own motion, may present to said cabinet for consideration, discussion, and recommendation. The State Cabinet shall elect annually, in the month of March, from among its membership, a chairperson who shall have the right to make motions and vote at Grand Council meetings. At the same March meeting, the Cabinet will elect a vice-chairperson who will act in the absence of the chair.

## **Article 14. Arbitration Commission**

The Grand Lodge shall, at the time of the elections of State Officers, elect a Grand Lodge Arbitration Commission composed of five members and five alternate members who shall serve in their place in order of seniority, determined by the number of votes (highest to lowest) received during their election, when required. The five elected members will meet immediately following their installation and elect from among themselves a President of the Commission. The Grand Lodge Arbitration Commission shall follow the procedures established in the Supreme Judicial Code.

## **Article 14a. Membership Commission**

The State President shall appoint a State Membership Commission Chairperson and five (5) members of the Commission one (1) from each Local Lodge. The duties of the State Membership Commission are as follows:

- (a) To develop ideas, projects, and programs to increase general and At-Large membership.
- (b) To report through its chair or designee at each State meeting the status of membership and a summary of the Commission's activities during the preceding period.
- (c) To make a detailed report through its chair or designee at every State Convention on its activities during the past biennium.

## **Chapter 6**

### **State Delegates**

## **Article 15. Definition and Requirements**

The State Delegates are the representatives of the Local Lodges and shall be elected only by the Local Lodges of which they are members. They shall remain in office for a period of two years from the regular meeting of the Grand Lodge following their election and until their successors are elected. The State Delegates are elected in the proportion of one for every ten members of each Local Lodge and fraction thereof above five members, as of December 31 of the even-numbered year preceding the Convention as reported to the State Financial Secretary. Each Local Lodge shall elect one Alternate State Delegate for each of its State Delegates. (See Articles 25 and 34 for eligibility requirements for State Delegate and alternate State Delegate.) The State Delegate who cannot attend the Grand Convention shall so notify the President of his or her Local Lodge at least seven days before the Grand Convention. The President shall appoint an Alternate State Delegate as a State Delegate in accordance with Article 19. The President shall serve as chairperson for the State Delegates of the Local Lodge.

The Recording Secretary of each Local Lodge shall mail to the State Recording Secretary at least two months before the Grand Convention a list of the names and addresses of the newly elected State Delegates and Alternate State Delegates of the Local Lodge.



The expenses of the State Delegates attending the Convention shall not be paid from funds of the Grand Lodge. Each State Delegate shall be provided with an identification card called a "credential" issued by his or her Local Lodge on forms provided by the Grand Lodge bearing the name of the Local Lodge, signed by the President and the Financial Secretary, who testify that the State Delegate is in good standing with the Local Lodge.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Vacancies**

#### **Article 16. State President, State First, & Second Vice President**

In case there is a vacancy, for any reason, in the office of State President, the State First Vice President shall assume the office for the remainder of the term. A vacancy in the office of the State First Vice President, for any reason, shall be filled by the State Second Vice President.

#### **Article 17. Immediate Past State President**

If the office of Immediate Past State President becomes vacant, it shall be filled from among the past State Presidents in the inverse order of their tenure in the office of State President, for the remainder of the term.

#### **Article 18. State Officers**

Vacancies in the other State Offices shall be filled by the Grand Council holding an election by its members at the next regularly scheduled Grand Council meeting no sooner than thirty days following the date the vacancies occurred, from among the members of the Grand Lodge, to fill such vacancies for the remaining term. Notice of the time and place of the election shall be given to all Grand Council members by written or electronic mail at least thirty days in advance of the meeting at which the election shall take place. The Delegates need not be present to be elected at the Grand Council meeting.

#### **Article 19. State Delegates**

When vacancies occur among the State Delegates due to resignations, deaths, or other causes, the President shall appoint persons in their order of voter preference, as established by the Local Lodge, from the list of elected Alternate State Delegates to fill the vacancies. After such a list is exhausted, the Local Lodge President shall appoint delegates as authorized by the Local Lodge delegation.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Finances**

#### **Article 20. Fiscal Management**

The fiscal affairs of the Grand Lodge shall be managed under the following conditions:

- a. The fiscal period of the Grand Lodge begins on April 1 of each odd-numbered year and ends on March 31 of the second year following.
- b. At the Grand Convention, the State Trustees shall audit the final account of the last administration.
- c. At the Grand Convention, the Grand Lodge shall review and approve the budget for the next biennium. The proposed budget shall be included among the items forwarded to the members of the Grand Lodge in accordance with Article 5 of the Bylaws.
- d. Checks for the payment of expenses shall be signed by the President, the State Treasurer, and a third State Officer recommended by the State President and approved by the Grand Council.

#### **Article 21. Income**

The Grand Lodge derives the necessary funds for its existence from the following sources:

- a. The Per Capita Tax is determined by the Grand Lodge and payable not later than ten days after the end of each calendar quarter.
- b. A Charter Tax of \$15 for a newly formed Local Lodge.
- c. Judicial fees in accordance with Article 66(d) of the Supreme Judicial Code.
- d. Revenue received from the sale of regalia and supplies.

#### **Article 22. Expenditures**

The expenditures of the Grand Lodge shall be for the following purposes:

- a. To pay the Per Capita Tax due to the Supreme Council within thirty days after the end of each quarter.
- b. To pay the expenses of administration in accordance with the terms of the biennial budget approved by the delegates at the Grand Convention. No expense voucher for administrative or miscellaneous expenses over the amount of \$50 shall be paid without the approval of the Grand Council.

No expenses shall be reimbursed in any budget category over the amount approved for that category at the Grand Convention, unless actual income exceeds the projected income in the biennial budget and authorized by mail or email ballot. Extraordinary or unexpected matters involving expenditures of funds which arise and require resolution prior to the next Grand Council meeting may be resolved by the Executive Committee in session, or at a special meeting of the Grand Council.

- c. To pay the extraordinary expenses which are authorized by the Grand Lodge or the Grand Council within the time limits permitted by the laws of the Order. In no case shall the General and Special Funds of the Grand Lodge and/or any of its institutions and

commissions be disbursed and distributed among the members of the Grand Lodge and/or the members of the Local Lodges.

- d. Granting awards, prizes, reimbursements, and scholarships for academic studies and/or achievements to members of the Grand Lodge and/or the members of the Local Lodges is not precluded by section c. above.

### **Article 23. Unreimbursed Expenses**

The Grand Lodge, at its regular meeting, before proceeding with the election, shall determine the unreimbursed expenses of the State Recording Secretary, State Financial Secretary, and State Treasurer. Such amounts shall remain unchanged until the next regular meeting.

### **Article 24. Allowances**

The allowances to be allotted to the State President and the National Delegates attending the Supreme Convention shall be determined in the budget of the Grand Lodge and approved in the Grand Convention. They forfeit this allowance if, without important reason, they fail to take part in any of the sessions of the Supreme Convention.

The allowances to be allotted to the State Officers attending the Grand Convention shall be determined in the budget of the Grand Lodge. They forfeit this allowance if, without important reason, they fail to take part in any of the sessions of the Grand Convention.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Eligibility and Terms of Office**

#### **Article 25. Officers & Delegates**

Only those who have been regular members of a Local Lodge for one year prior to the Grand Convention shall be eligible to serve as State Delegate or Alternate State Delegate for that Local Lodge, except as otherwise provided by Article 19 and Article 27. Only those who have been regular members of a Local Lodge for six months or more may be eligible to serve as officers of that Local Lodge, except for the positions of President and Vice President where one-year membership is required. Local Lodges may, in their Bylaws, adopt more restrictive eligibility requirements for Local Lodge Officers, subject to review and approval of such Bylaws by the Grand Council.

#### **Article 26. State Officers**

Only Grand Lodge members as defined in Article 2 of these Bylaws who have been duly seated at the Grand Convention by the Credentials Committee and have served as members of the Grand Lodge for one full term shall be eligible for election as a State Officer, other than State President. Only those members of the Grand Lodge who have served one full term as a State Officer shall be eligible for election to the office of State President.

## **Article 27. Terms of Office**

A member may be elected as State President for two consecutive two-year terms and may thereafter be a candidate for the same office for a third consecutive term only if no other member has been nominated for the position.

A National Delegate may be elected for two consecutive two-year terms.

A member may be elected to the same office of the Grand Council (other than the office of State President) or to the same office in a Local Lodge for two consecutive terms and may thereafter be a candidate for the same office for additional consecutive terms only if no other member has been nominated for the position.

## **Article 28. Exceptions & Exclusions**

The provisions of Article 25 shall not apply to Local Lodges which have been in existence less than two years. The provisions of Article 25 and Article 26 shall not apply where eligible and willing candidates for office are not available.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Membership Requirements**

#### **Article 29. Age**

Applicants for regular membership in any Local Lodge shall be not less than 16 years of age. There shall be no maximum age limitation. Junior members may be enrolled in the Local Lodges if they are under 16 years of age.

All eligible persons under 25 years of age shall be admitted to membership in Local Lodges without payment of any initiation fee, provided such persons pay Local Lodge dues for twelve months in advance. Also, the Grand Lodge shall provide without charge to the Local Lodges membership pins for such new members and shall pay the initiation fee due to the Supreme Lodge for them.

Local Lodges have the discretion to recruit children as junior members and may use a reduced individual or family dues structure. Voting rights are reserved for those 16 years of age and above. Members under the age of 18 years shall not have the right to hold the offices of President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, or Orator. Junior members shall not be counted as regular members, shall not pay per capita tax, and shall not count towards a Local Lodge's representation in the Grand Lodge.

## **Article 30. Approval of Application**

An applicant shall be a duly admitted member after his or her application has been approved by a majority vote of the Local Lodge.

## **Article 31. Social Members**

Social members may be admitted to the Local Lodge as long as their number does not exceed twenty-five percent of the total membership of the Local Lodge. Social members may participate in social, cultural, and athletic activities of the Local Lodge including service on committees, and, unless otherwise provided in the laws of the Local Lodge, may attend regular and special business meetings. Social members shall have the right to vote and hold any office except President, Vice-President, or State Delegate. In addition, per capita taxes must be paid on all Social members.

## **Article 32. Honorary Members**

Honorary members created by the Supreme Lodge in accordance with Article 2 of the Supreme General Laws shall be granted precedence after the State and Local Lodge Officers in any and all functions of the Order. Honorary members shall have all the rights, privileges, and duties of regular members except that their dues shall be waived, including the per capita tax related thereto.

## **Article 33. At-Large Members**

Members At-Large are those individuals who are qualified for Regular Membership but who, for whatever reason, do not want to regularly attend meetings, hold any kind of office or belong to a Local Lodge. At-Large Members shall be admitted to the Order in Virginia if they receive the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Grand Council. At-Large Members may participate in social, cultural, and athletic activities of the Order and may attend regular and special meetings. At-Large Members shall not be initiated, introduce motions, vote, or hold office. At-Large Members shall pay such dues and assessments adopted for At-Large Members by the Grand Council. Applications for At-Large Membership must be submitted to the State Financial Secretary to be considered for approval by the Grand Council at its next quarterly meeting.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

#### **Article 34. Incompatibility**

It is the policy of the Order to distribute the offices in the Order among the greatest possible number of members. To this end, members of the Grand Lodge of Virginia and those Local Lodges under its jurisdiction shall be ineligible to hold more than one elective office

concurrently in the Order with the exception of a Local Lodge officer serving as State Trustee. (Excluding the offices of National and State Delegates.) Local Lodges may implement more restrictive rules if they choose, however, no officers can serve in more than one office of President, Orator, Financial Secretary or Treasurer.

### **Article 35. Memorials**

In case of the death of a State Officer, the Grand Lodge shall provide for a floral or other tribute, the amount to be determined in the budget for each fiscal period.

### **Article 36. Columbus Day**

On the Columbus Day celebration each year, the Grand Lodge shall place a wreath on selected monuments to Christopher Columbus in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The State President shall appoint a committee for this ceremony. The cost of each wreath shall not exceed the sum determined in the fiscal period and to be paid from Grand Lodge Funds.

### **Article 37. Honors to Officers**

Whenever National or State Officers, either individually or collectively, officially attend the functions, festivities, and the initiation ceremonies of the Local Lodges or pay official visits to them, they shall be accorded the honors due to them as prescribed by the laws of the Order.

### **Article 38. Ritual**

The Ritual of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, as adopted by the Grand Convention, is the uniform method of conducting orderly meetings and ceremonies of the Local Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

### **Article 39. Transfer of Members**

Members who desire to transfer from one Local Lodge to another must request transfer through the Financial Secretary of the Local Lodge to which the transfer is desired. Establishment of the effective date of transfer will be determined by the State Financial Secretary as the first day of the month after the date when the transfer was received by the Local Lodge to which the transfer is desired. The pro-rated dues will be forwarded to the member's new Local Lodge from the Financial Secretary of the Local Lodge from which the transfer was made within one month after receiving notice of such transfer from the State Financial Secretary.

### **Article 40. Promulgation & Effective Dates**

These Bylaws and any amendments hereto become effective upon their approval by the Supreme Council. Following such approval, the Grand Council shall cause the distribution of the Bylaws and any amendments thereto to the Local Lodges.

## **Article 41. Amendments**

Proposals to amend the Bylaws and the Ritual of the Grand Lodge may be made by the General Council, the Council of any Local Lodge, or any regular member of a Local Lodge. A copy of such proposals shall be sent to the State Recording Secretary at least three months before the opening day of the Grand Convention.

The State Recording Secretary shall immediately forward all proposals to the Chairperson of the State Bylaws Committee. Such Committee shall report to the Grand Convention its recommendations concerning the proposals received. The Committee's recommendations shall be included among the items forwarded to the members of the Grand Lodge in accordance with Article 5 of these Bylaws.

Not less than two-thirds of those present or by electronic means and voting at any Grand Convention shall be necessary to adopt any amendment to these Bylaws and the Ritual of the Grand Lodge.

The State Orator is authorized to revise paragraph numbers, punctuation, cross references, and such other editorial and conforming changes as may be needed in connection with the adoption of any amendments made to these Bylaws or to the Ritual of the Grand Lodge.

The Local Lodge is authorized to permit its Orator to revise paragraph numbers, spelling errors, cross references, and such other conforming changes as may be needed in connection with the adoption of any amendments made to Local Bylaws.

## **Article 42. Electronic Mail**

Electronic mail is an acceptable substitute for first class US mail for all members who have e-mail capability.

## **Article 43. National Delegates and Alternates**

The National Delegates are the representatives of the Grand Lodge in the Supreme Lodge. The National Delegates are elected by the State Delegates at the Grand Lodge convention. The number of National Delegates to be elected is to be at the ratio of one (1) for each five hundred one (501) members determined by the number of members of the Grand Lodge in good standing at the end of the quarter preceding the election; provided that the number of members shall be determined by those for whom the Grand Lodge paid the Per Capita Tax to the Supreme Lodge at the end of each quarter. The election of the National Delegates and their alternates shall take place at the same Grand Lodge Convention at which the Grand Council and Grand Lodge Arbitration Commission are elected.

The National Delegates are elected for the full term, and they are to be substituted by the alternates in the order of their election in case any National Delegate is unable to act.

The State Immediate Past President shall automatically be entitled to serve as National Delegate to the National Convention. An alternate National Delegate shall be elected at the State Convention.

Bylaw changes in accordance with National Bylaw changes at the 2019 and 2021 National Conventions and the Grand Lodge Convention in 2023:

1. Page 3, Art. 1, Add, **dba ORDER SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY IN AMERICA**
2. Page 3, Art. 4, Add, **April**
3. Page 13, Art. 34, Add, **with the exception of a Local Lodge officer serving as State Trustee.**
4. Page 7, Add, **Article 14a. Membership Commission (New Article)**
5. Page 12, Art. 31, Social Members, Add, **May hold any office except President, Vice-President or State Delegate**
6. Page 12, Art 34, Incompatibility, Add, **No officer can serve in more than one office or President, Orator, Financial Secretary or Treasurer**
7. Page 14, Art 41, Amendments, Add after two thirds of those present **or by electronic means.**
8. Page 11, Art 29, Age, changed minimum age for regular members from 18 to **16. Members under the age of 18 years shall not have the right to hold the offices of President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, or Orator**