

Procedures Related to Social Policies and Social Actions

Adopted by the Machar Board under Article III, Section 7 of the Bylaws

A. Relevant bylaw provisions

Under Article III, Section 1 of the bylaws, the Board of Directors manages Machar. Under Article III, Section 6, a majority of the quorum at a Board meeting suffices for a decision.

Adoption of social policies is an exception to this general rule. Article III, Section 7 requires not only a Board supermajority (at least two-thirds) but also a membership consultation:

The Board may adopt policies on issues of social concern consistent with Machar's commitment to tikkun olam, the ancient Jewish dream of repairing the world and may endorse actions consistent with such policies. Social policies shall be adopted and social actions endorsed after due deliberation by the Board and with an opportunity for input from the members, according to written procedures that shall be disseminated to members. Adoption of a social policy or endorsement of a social action shall be made by at least a two-thirds vote of those directors voting at a meeting, except that if there is not time to present the proposed policy to the members in writing in advance, an expedited approval method may be used. Expedited approval shall require that a majority of directors vote and shall require at least a two-thirds vote of those directors voting. A position adopted by expedited approval shall be temporary and subject to non-expedited consideration within two months.

B. Purpose and scope of this document

This document embodies the “written procedures” called for in Article III, Section 7. It states the procedures to be followed whenever a Machar member wants Machar to adopt, amend, or repeal a policy on an issue of social concern. It also states the procedures to be followed when a member wants Machar to endorse a new social action under a previously adopted policy, support a charitable activity, or participate in an advocacy event like a demonstration.

Article III, Section 7 requires that these procedures “be disseminated to members.” Although this phrase doesn’t necessarily imply member comment, the Board will adopt final procedures only after members are afforded an opportunity to comment.

The bylaws do not define the key terms “issues of social concern,” “a social policy,” or “a social action.” The Board understands these terms as follows: An

issue of social concern is one that involves a condition or practice in society that has a significant impact on the well-being of people and the fairness with which they are treated or on the environmental and climate-related conditions that are a prerequisite to human flourishing. A policy related to the issue is a formal statement by Machar, based on its fundamental principles, of the approach that ought to be taken to address the issue, especially by public officials or others in positions of power. A social action is a specific instance of how Machar will advance or disseminate its policy position.

This document refers to “Machar members,” which means dues-paying members as defined in Article I, Section 3 of the bylaws. These procedures apply to members of the Board. If a Board member submits a request described in this document, at a Board meeting about the request the member may only present information and answer questions; the member may not participate in the Board’s deliberations about the request or vote on it.

This document refers to Machar leadership positions in the singular. If a position is shared (e.g., Co-Chairs of the Tikkun Olam Committee), any of the individuals holding the position may carry out the action described.

Nothing in this document is intended to apply to individual activities by Machar members, including communications through the community listserv or other means to encourage Machar members, as individuals, to speak or act on an issue of social concern.

C. Proposing a new social policy

A Machar member who proposes adoption of a social policy shall prepare a written proposal containing the following elements:

1. A summary of the issue;
2. The statement that is proposed as Machar policy, including a description of actions that Machar foreseeably would be expected to take in furtherance of the policy, such as joining a multi-organizational statement or participating in a legislative process;
3. A justification for approval, including the proposal’s relationship (if any) to policies adopted by the Society for Humanistic Judaism;
4. An estimate of the costs, if any, associated with the actions proposed; and
5. If the member believes that there is insufficient time to submit the proposal to the Machar membership in advance, the circumstances that justify expedited, temporary approval.

The member shall submit the proposal to the President, the Rabbi, the Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee (or an equivalent successor committee), and, if costs are anticipated, the Treasurer. The Chair shall promptly circulate the

proposal to the members of the Committee. After receiving any comments from the Committee members and the Rabbi, the President shall add the proposal as an agenda item at the next Board meeting, if feasible.

If the proposal has been submitted for approval under Section 7's *regular* procedure, the Board will decide by ordinary majority whether to present the proposal, as submitted or as revised by the Board, to the membership for comment. The comment period will be not less than 21 days. After the comment period, the Board will consider whether to approve the proposal as presented to the membership. The Board's options are:

1. Approve the proposal as submitted to the membership or with only non-substantive changes, requiring a two-thirds majority;
2. Revise the proposal substantively and, by ordinary majority, re-submit it to the membership; or
3. Table the proposal, if the vote falls short of a two-thirds majority.

If the Board approves the proposal, the approval encompasses adoption of the policy, endorsement of identified social actions, and endorsement of future social actions subject to the procedures in section F below.

If the proposal has been submitted for approval under Section 7's *expedited* procedure, the Board will decide whether to approve the proposal temporarily, as submitted or as revised by the Board, requiring a two-thirds majority. If the Board approves it, the interim policy will, within two months, be presented to the membership for comment. The comment period will be not less than 21 days. After the comment period, the Board will decide whether to continue the policy. The Board's options are as stated above.

D. Proposing an amendment to an adopted policy

A Machar member who proposes that a previously adopted social policy be amended shall follow the procedures in section C above, tailoring the request to the changes that the member wants the Board to approve. The Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee and the Board shall likewise follow the procedures in section C above.

E. Proposing repeal of an adopted policy

Repeal of a previously adopted social policy is itself a policy statement of sorts. Although repeal alone doesn't indicate what Machar now regards as proper social policy, it does imply that Machar no longer supports the old policy. Therefore, the Board has concluded that the process under Article III, Section 7 should be followed for repeal of a social policy.

A Machar member who proposes that a previously adopted policy be repealed shall follow the procedures in section C above. If the member simply proposes repeal, the request shall contain a justification for doing so. If the member also proposes a new policy to replace the prior one, the elements of the request stated in section C shall be included. The Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee, the President, and the Board shall likewise follow the procedures in section C above.

F. Identifying new actions under an adopted policy

As noted in section C above, a proposal for policy adoption is to include a “description of actions that Machar foreseeably would be expected to take in furtherance of the policy.” This description will help the Board and membership better understand the implications of a general policy stance. Yet, as time passes, Machar’s participation might be sought in other actions – that is, actions that were not identified at the time of adoption. To deal with this possibility, the following review procedure will apply to new actions under an adopted policy:

1. A member may request that Machar take an action that the member believes is within the scope of an adopted policy but was not identified at the time of the policy’s approval.
2. This request shall be submitted to the Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee, and, if costs are anticipated, the Treasurer.
3. The Chair shall review the request promptly. The Chair shall approve the request if the Chair concludes that: the requested action is within the scope of the adopted policy; is not materially different from activities already contemplated or carried out in furtherance of the policy; and, if costs are anticipated, the Treasurer advises the Chair that the costs are covered by a current budget item. The Chair shall notify the President of all approvals.
4. If the Chair has a reasonable doubt whether these criteria are met, or if anticipated costs are not covered by a current budget item the Chair shall refer the request to the Board.
5. The Board, applying these criteria, may approve or disapprove the request by ordinary majority. If the Board disapproves it because the proposed action is considered beyond the scope of existing policy, the member is free to submit a proposal under section D above that would expand the existing policy to include the requested type of social action.

G. Participating in a charitable activity

This section addresses formal Machar endorsement of a charitable activity, such as through use of the Machar banner at a fund-raising event or of modes of communication that connote Machar’s sponsorship or institutional support

of the activity. It does not apply to a Machar member encouraging other members, as individuals, to support a charitable activity.

Charities typically seek to ameliorate the effects of poverty, ill health, or discrimination by providing direct services or enhancing public awareness of a need. Machar support of this kind of activity, whether through fundraising or joining a direct service project (for example, congregational support of volunteer activities on Christmas Day), does not invoke Article III, Section 7. This special procedure in the bylaws does not apply to the full range of Machar's *tikkun olam* activities but rather only to the subset involving policy advocacy. Yet, some charities are themselves vehicles for advocacy; they have an explicit public policy agenda that they pursue, for example, through lobbying or litigation. Even a traditional health and welfare charity might occasionally venture into policy advocacy. Machar support for an activity of this kind may well be subject to Article III, Section 7.

To ensure that this distinction is adhered to, the following procedure applies:

1. A member may submit to the President a request that Machar support a charitable activity.
2. The President may solicit comment from the Tikkun Olam Committee and the Rabbi prior to discussion at a Board meeting, and, if costs are anticipated, the Treasurer.
3. If the Board determines that (i) the activity is of a type traditionally engaged in by health and social welfare charities (for example, direct services, carrying out a public education campaign, advancing medical research, or fundraising in support of these activities); (ii) Machar's support will not be taken as endorsing a specific public policy position; (iii) any costs are reasonable and can be accommodated in the current budget; and (iv) Machar's support is otherwise in the congregation's interest, the Board may approve the request by ordinary majority.

H. Participating in an advocacy-oriented demonstration

Machar occasionally has participated in a public event like a march, rally, vigil, or other demonstration. This section describes the procedure to be followed if a member wants Machar to participate in such a demonstration – by, for example, displaying the Machar banner or identifying itself as a sponsor.

If participating in the demonstration is believed to be a social action within the scope of a previously approved policy, the member who seeks Machar participation should follow the procedures in section F above.

If participating in the event is *not* within the scope of a previously approved policy, the question arises whether compliance with Article III, Section 7 is a prerequisite to Machar participation. Although a demonstration is a form of

protest or advocacy on a public policy issue, participation may amount simply to an expression of sympathy for the goals of the event and solidarity with the organizers, not the adoption of a formal policy. Moreover, the regular Section 7 process of advance consultation with the membership would not be feasible for quickly-scheduled demonstrations, and after-the-fact consultation under the expedited process would be pointless.

However, given that participating in a demonstration outside of previously adopted policy is potentially sensitive, the Board has concluded that a special procedure is warranted:

1. A member may submit to the President a request that Machar participate in a one-time demonstration such as a march, mass meeting, rally, or vigil. The request shall discuss the goals of the demonstration, identify the organizers, and specify the nature of Machar's participation, including whether participation entails any costs.
2. The President may solicit comment from the Tikkun Olam Committee and the Rabbi prior to discussion at a Board meeting, and, if costs are anticipated, the Treasurer.
3. If the Board determines that Machar's participation in the event is consistent with Machar's principles and is otherwise in the congregation's interest, the Board may approve the request, requiring a two-thirds majority.

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