

Convicted Felons Prohibited from Holding Office – Our Responsibility

Recently a motion was made on the forum, and defeated, to amend the P&Ps to prohibit convicted felons from holding a state office. It was not defeated because the CB reps didn't care if felons have such a role. There was confusion since we did not know what suddenly brought this on (Dave will clarify), as well as other concerns. Some felt the motion didn't go far enough by not including branch offices, and there was the question of how to learn whether a member had a felony conviction in the first place.

We do not have the ability, nor should we, to record check each new applicant. We're a writers club, not the FBI. Some felt that asking an applicant if he/she had a felony conviction would be insulting, and would probably result in someone lying, or being embarrassed by having to admit there was a conviction. None of which is a good way to start a relationship with a new member. There is a way around it.

I think we'd be in agreement that we don't want a convicted felon in any position of responsibility and that needs to be clear at the outset of membership. I believe that can be accomplished without asking the question by adding the following statement to each branch's membership application:

I acknowledge, and agree, that if I ever have been, or will be in the future, convicted of a felony, I will be ineligible to hold a branch or state office.

The applicant signs this as part of the application. The applicant admits nothing but is put on notice of what is off limits. Privacy rights are respected. If this is acceptable to everyone, we still need to discuss how we handle the issue with current members. Suggestion: 1) Create an addendum to those membership applications already completed with the above statement to be signed, or 2) Create a sheet with the above statement heading it and have it available for members to sign as they convene for a meeting, to be matched up with a current members' list until all have been advised.

Lastly, a simple amendment to the current P&Ps should cover this new requirement. The following seems to be an appropriate place to put it:

XI – Committees and Specialty Directorates

3. By-laws, Policies and Procedures, and Standards

C. Ethics and Standards

- (ii) Officers, directors, and event chairs must show personal integrity, must be free of conflicts of interests, and carry out their duties in a professional manner. *Anyone convicted of a felony will not be eligible to hold an office.***

Submitted by Jeanette Fratto, Orange Branch

