

REGIONAL CONSTITUTION

OF

FAR WEST REGION USY

(Edited 3/22/2016)

PREAMBLE

We, the representatives of United Synagogue Youth, affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, recognizing that the youth must perpetuate Judaism and be cognizant of the historical and cultural background of our people, do hereby ordain this as the Constitution of the Far West Region United Synagogue Youth (USY).

ARTICLE I

NAME AND AREA

- A. The English name of this organization shall be Far West United Synagogue Youth. The Hebrew name shall be Ha-Ma'arav.
- B. The area of Far West Region shall be comprised of: Southern California, Arizona, Southern Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Hawaii.

ARTICLE II
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

SECTION 1 – Aims:

- A. The aim of the USY movement is to offer opportunities of Jewish Youth to continue and strengthen their identification with Judaism and with the Synagogue as the central agency of Jewish Life, to give Jewish youth an awareness of the essential harmony between the ideals and traditions of Judaism and democracy and to give an awareness of the State of Israel. USY seeks to develop a program based on the personality, needs, and interests of the Jewish teenager.

SECTION 2 – Objectives:

- A. **Education:** A knowledge of Jewish heritage and ideals is essential to creative Jewish living; therefore, Far West Region dedicates itself to the ideals of Jewish learning by:
1. Encouraging its members to attend existing institutions of Judaic learning;
 2. Encouraging its chapter to establish program for group study; and by
 3. Encouraging its members to participate in individual study and learning.
- B. **Religious Worship:** Religious practices are a major part of being a complete Jewish person. Far West Region accepts the duty of encouraging religion in its members' minds, actions, and home life by:
1. Encouraging its members to attend services regularly;
 2. Encouraging its members to initiate religious practices both inside and outside of the home (i.e. Kashrut and Shabbat);
 3. Encouraging its chapters to initiate religious programming; and by
 4. Encouraging its chapters to develop worthy programs in the areas of religious worship, ritual and Kashrut.
- C. **Culture:** Jewish culture is one of the oldest and most beautiful in the world. Far West Region feels that Jewish culture should be perpetuated in the following ways:
1. Encouraging its members to study Jewish culture;
 2. Encouraging chapters to initiate Jewish cultural activities as part of their programming; and
 3. Providing Jewish cultural activities on the regional level.
- D. **Social:** Since social and recreational activities are necessary parts of life, Far West Region will:
1. Encourage chapters to participate in social and recreational activities; and
 2. Provide social and recreational programs on the regional level.
- E. **Community Service:** Far West Region sees the need of an outstanding Jewish community to serve as an environment suitable to the growth of today's Jewish teenagers by:
1. Organizing appropriate social action programs on chosen situations;
 2. Taking active part in Jewish Community welfare work; and
 3. Helping chapters to develop worthy programs in these areas.
- F. **Israel:** Far West Region recognizes the importance of the Jewish homeland, Israel. Far West Region feels the importance of coupling Israel awareness and education with Jewish education and will promote Israel by:

1. Organizing appropriate Israel awareness and education programs on the Regional level;
2. Encouraging its members to visit Israel; and
3. Helping chapters to develop worthy Israel awareness and education programs.

ARTICLE III **MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Jewish youth groups within the areas of Far West Region which are in agreement with this Constitution and the international constitution, are eligible to become members of Far West Region, provided that:
1. The chapter has been chartered by the International Organization;
 2. The chapter is part of a congregation of which at least one of its affiliates is associated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism;
 3. The age limit for members of Far West Region shall be extended from the Seventh Grade or thirteenth birthday (whichever comes first) to the nineteenth birthday or the August following the Senior year in high school (whichever comes first). Each member chapter may set its own age limit within these guidelines;
 4. Each synagogue may have a Kadima (pre-USY), Junior, and Senior chapter as determined by the youth commission of each synagogue; and
 5. Members must be of the Jewish faith.

ARTICLE IV **AFFILIATION, SUSPENSION, AND REINSTATEMENT**

SECTION 1 – Affiliation

- A. Any group eligible for membership under Article III of this constitution may affiliate with Far West Region filling a written application with the Regional Office and paying a fee. Said application shall be subject to the approval of the President's Cabinet and youth commission of Far West Region.

SECTION 2 – Suspension

- A. Any affiliated chapter may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the Regional Board for a violation of this Constitution or any other rules and orders of this Region, or by the Regional Director. All members with a vested interest in the chapter in question should refrain from voting.
- B. A suspended chapter shall be denied, for the period of suspension, all rights and privileges accorded the member chapters.

SECTION 3 – Reinstatement

- A. Any chapter that has been suspended may be reinstated before the expiration of the suspension by a two-thirds vote of the Regional Board or by the Regional Director.
- B. A chapter shall automatically be reinstated to full membership privileges at the conclusion of their suspension period.

ARTICLE V
REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1 - Officers

- A. **The officers of Far West Region shall be:** the President, Executive Vice-President, Programming Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President, Membership/Kadima Vice-President, Communications Vice-President, and Parliamentarian.
- B. The qualifications for a Regional Officer shall be:
1. **President:** Anyone shall be eligible to be elected to the office of President if the person in question has been a member of the Regional General Board and Chapter Board for two non-concurrent terms, or Far West Cabinet. He/she must also be entering his/her junior or senior year of high school and have been a member in good standing of USY for one year prior to elections. Furthermore, he/she must have attended 60% or more programs and events of the chapter to which they belong one year prior to elections.
 2. **Elected officers:** Anyone shall be eligible to be elected to the offices of Executive Vice-President, Programming Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President, Membership/Kadima Vice-President, and Communications Vice-President, if the person in question has been a member of the Regional Board or President's Cabinet for at least one term prior to elections. Furthermore, he/she must have attended 60% or more programs and events of the chapter to which they belong one year prior to elections.
 3. **Parliamentarian:** A Parliamentarian must be appointed by the newly elected officials at Regional Convention with the President's consent. The Parliamentarian shall be appointed in accordance with the following qualifications:
 - a. Has been a member in good standing of USY for one year prior to Regional Convention;
 - b. Has been a member of the Regional Board or a Chapter Board for at least one term prior to elections;
 - c. Has not been a member of the President's Cabinet.
- C. **Standards for Far West Region Officers:** Officers will be required to maintain the following minimum standards:
1. **Study:**
 - a. Participation in some form of Judaic studies approved by the regional Director of a minimum of six hours monthly;
 - b. Attendance at a minimum of six t'fillot monthly; and
 - c. The display of reading ability of Hebrew prayers and blessings.
 2. **Kashrut:** all officers shall observe dietary laws whenever possible in private, and at all times in public.
 3. **Shabbat and Holidays:** all officers are required to observe Shabbat and holidays. Travel is permitted only in accordance with the "Responsum of the Rabbinical Assembly." Officers will refrain from working, taking all school exams, or participating in or attending secular functions on Shabbat and holidays.
 4. **Attendance:** all officers must attend a minimum of 50% of all regional functions and 60% of all programs and events of the chapter to which he/she belongs.

5. **Interfaith Dating:** as leaders of USY, the officers serve as accessible Jewish role models (dugmaot) to the USY constituency. In that capacity, they are expected to aspire to become ideal Conservative Jews, reflecting a strong commitment to Jewish survival and the performance of mitzvot. Therefore, officers will strive to model healthy Jewish dating choices. These include recognizing the importance of dating within the Jewish community and treating each person with the recognition that they were created Betzelem Elohim (in the image of God).
- D. **Duties and Powers:** The Regional officers shall have the power to perform duties associated with their offices in "*Robert's Rules of Order – Newly Revised*," except as more specifically enumerated in this Constitution.
1. **President:** The President shall:
 - a. Preside at all meetings of the President's Cabinet, Regional Board, and all plenary sessions of Regional functions;
 - b. Have the power to appoint and remove all chair-people with the approval of the Cabinet;
 - c. Be vested with the executive powers of the Region and shall be its accredited representative;
 - d. Report to the Regional Convention and the International Organization regarding the state of the Region;
 - e. Serve as an ex officio member of all committees;
 - f. Assign to each officer jurisdiction over specific chapters in the Region;
 - g. Hand records to the succeeding President.
 2. **Executive/Programming Vice-President:** The Executive Programming Vice-President shall:
 - a. Assume the duties of the President in the President's absence;
 - b. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - c. Coordinate and lead Ruach and Slowach sessions at Regional Events;
 - d. Supervise the design and sale of Regalia, with the President and Regional Director's approval;
 - e. Serve as an ex officio member of all committees;
 - f. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - g. Hand records to the succeeding Executive Programming Vice-President.
 3. **Israel Affairs Vice-President:** The Israel Affairs Vice-President shall:
 - a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - b. Coordinate and supervise all Regional projects pertaining to all aspects of programming related to Israel Affairs, including Regional Convention and Encampments;
 - c. Oversee all standing committees related to programming and Israel Affairs;
 - d. Publicize and promote Israel within the Region and encourage its members to visit Israel;
 - e. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - f. Hand records to the succeeding Israel Affairs Vice-President.
 4. **Religion/Education Vice-President:** The Religion/Education Vice-President shall:
 - a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;

- b. Coordinate and supervise all Regional project pertaining to all aspects of religion and education;
 - c. Oversee all standing committees related to religion and education;
 - d. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - e. Hand records to the succeeding Religion/Education Vice-President.
- 5. Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President:** The Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President shall:
- a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - b. Coordinate and supervise all Regional project pertaining to all aspects of social Action and Tikun Olam;
 - c. Oversee the Regional Tikun Olam program;
 - d. Oversee all committees related to Social Action and Tikun Olam;
 - e. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - f. Hand records to the succeeding Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President.
- 6. Membership/Kadima Vice-President:** The Membership/Kadima Vice-President shall:
- a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - b. Be responsible for the implementation of all aspects of USY/Kadima expansion and retention;
 - c. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - d. Hand records to the succeeding Membership/Kadima Vice-President.
- 7. Communications Vice-President:** The Communications Vice-President shall:
- a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - b. Be responsible for all Regional communication, including the region's Social Media platforms and regional newsletters, whether in the form of paper, video, or digital media;
 - c. Be responsible for maintaining the Region's online systems, such as website and mobile services;
 - d. Assist the Executive/Programming Vice President with the design of Regalia;
 - e. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - f. Hand records to the succeeding Communications Vice-President.
- 8. Parliamentarian:** The Parliamentarian shall:
- a. Assist the President in carrying out his/her duties;
 - b. Assure that all meetings of the President's Cabinet and the Regional Board are conducted in accordance with "*Robert's Rules of Order – Newly Revised*" and be knowledgeable with these procedures, as well as this Constitution;
 - c. Maintain and distribute accurate minutes of all meetings of the Regional Board, President's Cabinet, and all plenary sessions;
 - d. Be considered a chairperson and attend all Presidents' Cabinet meetings with a vote, unless in the event of a tie vote;
 - e. Supervise Regional Elections with the President;

- f. Have liaison to committees, chairmanships, and chapters as assigned by the President;
 - g. Hand records to the succeeding Parliamentarian.
- E. The length of the term for each office shall be one year. If an officer was elected/appointed midyear, his/her term will end at the following Regional convention.

SECTION 2 – President's Cabinet

- A. The President's Cabinet shall consist of Elected Regional Officers and the Parliamentarian.
- B. Cabinet meetings shall be called at the discretion of the President, or two Regional Officers. Five officers shall constitute a quorum.
- C. The Cabinet shall act as the main advisory body of the Region and shall approve appointments to the regional Board made by the President.

SECTION 3 – Regional Board

- A. The Regional Board shall consist of the President's Cabinet, Regional Chairpersons, and Chapter Presidents.
- B. Meetings of the Regional Board shall be called at the discretion of the President, or by written petition signed by half of its members addressed to the President.
- C. A minimum of three meetings per annum shall be held, and a quorum shall consist of a majority plus one of the Regional Board members.
- D. Appointments to the Regional Board made by the President can be rejected by two-thirds vote of the Regional Board.

SECTION 4 – Impeachments

- A. Impeachment proceedings against any officer may be initiated upon the receipt of written charges signed by one-third of the members of the Regional Board. These charges shall be submitted to the Executive Vice-President unless he/she is the subject of the charges, in which case the President shall forward them. A copy of the charges will be sent to the officer involved, who may submit an answer to said charges within fourteen days after posting by the Communications Vice-President. The communication Vice-President shall forward both the charges and the answer to all Regional Board Members within fourteen days of the receipt of the answer, or, if no answer is submitted, within fourteen days after receipt of the charges.
- B. The President, with due justification, can ask for an officer's resignation and enforce an automatic impeachment with the backing of his Cabinet by a two-thirds vote, not including the officer in question. Otherwise, a two-thirds majority of the Regional Board shall be necessary to remove an officer.

SECTION 5 – Vacancies

- A. If the office of President is vacated, then the Executive Vice-President shall become President. The President's Cabinet, upon approval by the Regional Board, shall fill the vacancy of Executive Vice-President.
- B. Vacancies of any other office in the President's Cabinet shall be filled with the approval of the Regional Board.
- C. Vacancies must be filled within five weeks of occurrence.

- D. If the term of office is more than one-half complete at the time of vacancy, then it is up to the President's cabinet to fill the vacancy if they feel it is required.

SECTION 6 – Probation

- A. If any Regional Board member fails to fulfill his/her duties or violates the Regional or International USY standards, he/she may be put on probation.
- B. The definition of a Regional Probation will be as such:
 - 1. If a board member fails to fulfill his/her duties or violates the Regional or International USY standards, he/she may be told that he/she is being put on probation for the period of one month to improve his/her status. If after one month there is no improvement, he/she will be asked to resign by the President.
 - 2. After one month the decision of his/her improvement will be decided by the Honors Council.
- C. Probation will be decided by the President with a majority vote by his/her Cabinet. The cabinet may also enforce probation with the agreement of the President. Either the President or his/her Cabinet may veto the probation.

SECTION 7 – Committees

- A. There shall be standing committees.
- B. Committee members shall be appointed by the chairperson with the approval of the liaison officer.

ARTICLE VI
ELECTIONS

SECTION 1 – Nominations

- A. An application shall be filed for each office by the date set by the President's Cabinet. Applications will be distributed three months prior to the elections.
- B. All nominees shall have a parent's or guardian's, youth director's advisor's, and Rabbi's consent to run for office.
- C. All nominees shall submit to the Parliamentarian a list of qualifications with their applications.
- D. All candidates shall undergo an Honors Council to review his/her qualifications as well as discuss the standards and responsibilities of Regional Officers.
- E. A list of qualifying candidates will be announced periodically over a three-month period prior to elections.

SECTION 2 – Voting Delegates

- A. All members of the President's cabinet and the Regional board shall automatically get a vote at elections if they are present.
- B. Affiliated chapters will be given one vote for every ten paid chapter members. If a chapter is allotted more votes than delegates present at the election, the chapter's allotment of votes shall be reduced to the number of delegates present at such elections. The number of delegates per chapter will be determined by the records maintained by the Regional Office.
- C. The President's cabinet and the Regional Board members shall not be chapter delegates.
- D. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

SECTION 3 – Campaigning

- A. All candidates are permitted to give speeches. Candidates for the office of President are permitted five minutes to speak; all other candidates are permitted three minutes to speak.
- B. A candidate's forum will be held in which delegates will be able to have the candidates answer their questions. Those running for the office of President shall answer five questions; all other candidates shall answer three. All questions shall be submitted to the Parliamentarian, written out on paper. If the Parliamentarian is running for office, questions shall be submitted to the appropriate alternate.
- C. All candidates will be permitted to have candidate's sheets. These sheets will include information about the candidate's background and a brief statement from the candidates and shall be distributed prior to elections at the Regional convention.
- D. Campaigning is restricted to speeches, candidate's forum, and candidate's sheets.

SECTION 4 – Elections

- A. Elections will be conducted and votes counted by the Parliamentarian with the assistance of the Regional President. If either is a candidate for office, the President shall appoint an appropriate substitute. The Regional Youth Director shall supervise all ballot counting. All opposed candidates are permitted to have an overseer present while the ballots for his/her office are being counted.
- B. The offices will be voted upon in the following order: Communications Vice-President, Membership/Kadima Vice-President, Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, Programming/Israel Affairs Vice-President, Executive Vice-President, and President. Each officer voted upon will be decided and successful candidates announced before moving on to the next office.
- C. For a candidate for an opposed office to be elected, he/she must receive a majority of votes. If no candidate receives that majority, the election committee shall conduct an instant runoff, consisting of additional rounds of ballot counting to simulate a runoff election.
 - 1. When voting for opposed offices with more than two candidates, voting delegates will rank in order of preference all candidates for that office. A voter will mark on the ballot paper by placing the number 1 next to the name of their first choice candidate, the number 2 next to the name of their second choice candidate, the number 3 next to the name of their third choice candidate, and so on until all candidates on the paper have been ranked.
 - 2. All first choice votes are counted, and if any candidate receives a majority, that candidate is elected. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and all ballots are recounted as one vote for each voter's highest-ranked candidate who has not been eliminated. This process of eliminating the candidate with the fewest votes and recounting all ballots shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the valid votes in a round and is declared elected.
 - 3. If a ballot has no more available choices ranked on it, that ballot shall be declared "exhausted" and not counted in that round or any subsequent round. Ballots skipping one number shall be counted for that voter's next clearly indicated choice, but ballots skipping more than one number will be declared exhausted when this skipping of numbers is reached. Ballots with two or more of the same number shall be declared exhausted when such duplicate rankings are reached unless only one of the candidates with the duplicate ranking is an advancing candidate.
- D. Candidates running unopposed will be voted on by acclamation and require only one vote to be elected.
- E. Abstentions are considered as not voting and will not be included in the percentage of votes cast.
- F. "No" votes and write in votes will be declared null and void and will be treated as abstentions.

ARTICLE VII
FINANCES

SECTION 1 – Dues

- A. Regional dues will be determined by the Regional Youth Commission.
- B. All chapters not paying their dues by a date designated by the Regional office shall be denied all rights and privileges of membership as long as such dues remain unpaid.

ARTICLE VIII
ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1 – Convention

- A. A regional convention shall be held annually, at a time and place determined by the Regional Director and the Regional youth Commissioner.

SECTION 2 – Far West on Wheels

- A. Far West on Wheels shall be held annually, at a time and place determined by the Regional Director and the Regional Youth Commissioner.

SECTION 3 – Installation of Officers

- A. Installation of Officers shall occur at the installation banquet held during the Regional Convention.

SECTION 4 – Leadership Training Encampment

- A. A Leadership Training Encampment shall be held annually, at a time and place determined by the President.

ARTICLE IX
HONORS COUNCIL

- A. An Honors Council will be composed of the President, Executive Vice-President, Parliamentarian, and the Regional Director. It shall be chaired by the Executive Vice-President.
- B. The Honors Council shall review cases of questionable conduct and be part of the elections process to review potential candidates.
- C. Three out of the four members must be present for the meeting to be conducted.

ARTICLE X
REGIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR

- A. The Regional Youth Director shall assist in coordinating all Regional business and shall act as the advisor to the Regional Cabinet with ultimate responsibility over all USYers.

ARTICLE XI
HONORARY MEMBERS

- A. Past Presidents of Far West Region United Synagogue Youth and Regional International Board Members are Honorary President's Cabinet Members.
- B. Honorary President's Cabinet Members shall not have voting privileges.

ARTICLE XII
INTERNATIONAL SUPREMACY

- A. The Constitution of the International United Synagogue youth shall be the supreme Law of this Region. No laws, resolutions, or regulations shall be passed which are in direct conflict with the policies of the International Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII
AMENDMENTS

- A. This Constitution may be amended at the plenary session of any annual Regional Convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates in attendance, or by a three-fourths vote of the Regional Board.
- B. The Constitution shall automatically be amended to be in conformity with the International Constitution.
- C. Proposals may be made by any USYer with a petition signed by a minimum of forty paid members.