

NATIONAL COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025

8:30 a.m. Central Time

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(CART provided by a live stenographer.)

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CART Provided By:
JLE Stenography, Jodie Eckard, CRC

LEMONS: Good morning. Please take your seat. At this time, please turn off or silence your cell phone. This meeting is scheduled for 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

It is important for us to get through all of our business on schedule. Also if you are a voting member and did not register when you entered the room, please do so now in order to get a voting card. I am Keith Lemons, NCRA President. Your Chair is honored to call the meeting to order on the 2025 Annual Business Meeting of the National Court Reporters Association here in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The next three agenda items require a vote of the membership.

In preparation for that vote, please get out your GREEN Voting Card.

The first item of business is the report of the Credentials Committee. President-Elect Cindy Isaacsen is the Chair of the Credentials Committee.

ISAACSEN: Mr. President, the Credentials Committee reports That there are 46 voting members registered for the Business Meeting at this time.

A quorum is no fewer than 25 Voting Members present.

By direction of the Credentials Committee, I move the adoption of the Credentials Committee report.

A second is not required.

LEMONS: The question is on the motion to adopt the Credentials Committee's report as presented.

Is there any discussion?

Those in favor of the adoption of the report of the Credentials Committee please raise your GREEN voting card.

You may lower them.

Those opposed please raise your

GREEN voting card. Seeing none, motion carried.

There is a majority in the affirmative and the report of the Credentials Committee is adopted. A quorum is present and the voting body of this meeting is established.

The next business in order is -- I'm sorry. I can barely see this because of the --

The next business in order is the Adoption of the Standing Rules. President-Elect Cindy Isaacsen is the Chair of the Rules Committee and will give the report.

ISAACSEN: Mr. President and members, the Standing Rules for this meeting are included in the Annual Business Meeting handout which you can find on the NCRA app. By direction of the Rules Committee, I move that the Rules included in the NCRA app be the Rules of this meeting.

LEMONS: The vote is on the adoption of the Meeting Standing Rules as provided in the NCRA app. If there is no objection, the meeting standing rules will not be read.

Since there is no objection, the rules will not be read. Is there any discussion on the rules?

Are you ready for the vote? The question is on the adoption of the meeting standing rules as provided in the NCRA app.

Those in favor of the adoption of the Meeting Standing Rules please raise your GREEN voting card.

You may lower them.

Those opposed please raise your GREEN voting card.

You may lower them.

There are two-thirds in the affirmative and the Annual

Business Meeting Standing Rules are adopted.

The next business in order is the Adoption of the Agenda. The Agenda is also included in the NCRA app.

Is there any objection to approving the agenda as presented, subject to emergency changes as determined by the chair?

Since there are no objections, the agenda is approved as presented, subject to emergency changes as determined by the chair.

In accordance with meeting Rule #8, minutes of the Annual Business Meeting will be approved by the following committee:

Greta Pedersen, RMR, Chair

Jenny Melius, RPR, Member

Thank you for doing this important work.

The Chair would like to introduce to you those who are seated at the head table.

To my right, your incoming president, Cindy Isaacsen, RPR, of Shawnee, Kansas.

On my far left is our Executive Director Dave Wenhold, CAE, PLC, of NCRA Headquarters, Reston, Virginia.

Our General Counsel Jeff Altman of Washington, D.C.

And, our Parliamentarian Pat Reymann, PRP, of Victoria, Minnesota.

The Chair would now like to introduce your 2024-2025 Board of Directors. As your name is called, will each Board member rise and remain standing. Please hold your applause until after all names are read.

Once again, President-Elect
Cindy Isaacsen.
Vice President Cathy Penniston
Secretary-Treasurer Stacey
Potenza
Immediate Past President Kristin
Anderson
Director RandiAnn Harvey
Director Kelly Linkowski
Director Lynette Mueller
Director Carol Naughton
Director Margary Rogers
Director Patricia White
Please join your officer in
thanking them for their hard
work on your behalf this past
year.

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to skip Cathy Peniston. Stand up. I only
had half an eye on this stuff.
Our captioning today is being
provided by Jodie Eckard, CRC,
with JLE Stenography, from
Ankeny, Iowa.

Thank you, Jodie.

The next business in order is
the report of the Nominating
Committee. Here to present the
report is Nominating Committee
Chair Kristin Anderson.

ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.

President. First, I'd like to
thank the committee for their Hard work. As you know, we meet every
year in the committee. There's eight members and alternate now.
Everybody was there and prepared. It was an honor to serve with them
this year. I would like to recognize the committee. I'm not sure who
is here, but these are the people who served this year.

Brenda Blackburn

Michael Bouley

Cassy Kerr

Allison Kimmel

Stephanie Leslie

Jacqueline Rupnow

Jennifer Sati

Kimberly Xavier

Merilee Johnson

As you know, the Nominating
Committee meets and interviews

candidates and then selects a slate of nominees to present to the membership. The slate that was presented to the membership in January 2025 was as follows:

Directors: 3-year term:

Dana Hayden, RMR, CRR, CRC,
Fayetteville, Ark.

Shellene Iverson, RPR, Portland,
Ore.

Secretary-Treasurer

Stacey Potenza, CRC, McKinney,
Texas

Vice President

Carol Naughton, RDR, Virginia
Beach, Va.

President-Elect

Cathy Penniston, RPR, CRI,
Wauke, Iowa

This completes the report of the
Nominating Committee.

LEMONS: Thank you, Kristin, for
your leadership and dedication
to the nominating process.

In accordance with Article 6,
Section 2 of the Constitution
and Bylaws, Cindy Isaacsen, RPR,
will automatically assume the
office of President of the
National Court Reporters
Association at the close of this
meeting.

According to parliamentary
procedure, if there is only one
candidate for an office, that
candidate shall be deemed
elected by acclamation. Since no
petitions were received by the
March 30 deadline for the
positions of president-elect,
secretary-treasurer, and
director, the Chair declares the
following are elected by
acclamation.

President-Elect: Cathy
Penniston, RPR, CRI, Wauke,
Iowa

What's going on with this, Cathy? We can't get your name right. I don't understand.

Secretary-Treasurer: Stacey
Potenza, CRC, McKinney, Texas

Directors, 3-year term:

Dana Hayden, RMR, CRR, CRC,
Fayetteville, Ark.

Shellene Iverson, RPR, Portland,
Ore.

(Applause)

As you know, petitions were
received by the March 30
deadline placing an additional
name in nomination for the
office of Vice President.

The chair appointed the
following as members to serve on
the Election Committee with
approval by the Board.

Chair Members:

Alan Peacock

Doug Bettis

Darlene Devlin

Nadine Garrett

Dennee Vadell

The responsibility of the
Elections Committee was to
verify that the candidates met
the requirements set forth in
the NCRA Constitution and
Bylaws; to supervise and conduct
the election and pre-election
activities; and to report the
election results as soon as they
become available.

The chair expresses gratitude to
the members of the Election
Committee for their dedication
to this important process.

Would Alan Peacock, Chair of the
Election Committee, please
approach the stage to give the
Election Committee report.

PEACOCK: Good morning. Petitions (Applause)

I can and will speak slowly and clearly so our captioner doesn't shoot
me later. Good morning.

Petitions were received by the

March 30 deadline placing an additional name in nomination for the office of Vice President. The petition was reviewed and verified as eligible.

There were two candidates for the office of Vice President: Carol Naughton, RDR, Virginia Beach, Va.

Margary Rogers, RPR, CRI, Washington, D.C.

According to Article 9, Section 3, of the Constitution and Bylaws, members voting by electronic mail and other authorized means of electronic transmission for contested elections had a period of 24 hours to vote once the online voting period began.

The election opened at 9:00am Eastern on June 23 and closed at 9:00am Eastern on June 24. All eligible voting members for whom NCRA had an active e-mail address received an e-mail containing a link to the secure voting website.

The bylaws also state that the person receiving a plurality of votes cast by the Voting Members shall be elected for such position.

The result of the online election for the office of Vice President was certified by an independent online voting service, and is as follows:

A total of 1350 (16.3%) of eligible electors voted in this ballot.

Carol Naughton, RDR, received 976 votes, 73.5%

Margary Rogers, RPR, CRI received 352 votes, 26.5%

That is the report.

For the office of Vice President, there were 1350 votes cast. According to our bylaws, a plurality of votes elects. Carol Naughton received 976 votes. Margary Rogers received 352 votes. Therefore, Carol Naughton is elected Vice President. Congratulations, Carol!

(Applause)

LEMONS:

The 2025-2026 Board of Directors will be installed tomorrow morning during the Premier Session beginning at 8:30 a.m. Please welcome your Secretary-Treasurer Stacey Potenza, CRC, who will give the annual Secretary-Treasurer's report.

POTENZA: Good morning. All right. My name is Stacey Potenza. It is my honor to serve as your secretary-treasurer. I want to thank you for allowing me to serve in an association I believe deeply in. My screen keeps going blank. I'm sorry. All right. Okay. I know. I know.

LEMONS: We have a technical difficulties.

POTENZA: Okay. Technical difficulties. All right. Again. I'm going to start again with my gratitude for your trust and the opportunity to serve an association that I believe in deeply. Not just because of what we do, but because of who we are. Fiercely talented, endlessly adaptable, and passionately committed to preserving and evolving the profession. Each year the speech is one part audit, one part financial forecast, and one part reality check. It is all grounded in transparency, strategy, and care. As secretary-treasurer, I don't take lightly the responsibility to safeguard the resources. They are your resources. I'm hereto speak to you not just as your leader, but as a fellow leader in the profession and association and the people who make it all possible. The work of financial stewardship is never done alone. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the members of the 2025 audit committee for their commitment and service. Carol nun, Meredith, Kelly, and Patty. They have shown up every month preparative, and determined to show they are aligned with the values and goals. Judgment, candor, and attention to detail help keep the association fiscally accountable. I'm grateful to their contributions.

In accordance with the bylaws, secretary-treasurer chairs the finance committee which functions as the audit committee and oversees the audit.

Sorry.

I have run this a million times. It has not done this until I'm on stage. All right.

One of the most important responsibilities -- thanks. Thank you. All right. We'll do this one more time. All right. One of the most important responsibilities is overseeing the annual audit process. It is a mirror, and clear objective reflection of the financial position and as us that we are in compliance with professional standards. I'm pleased to report this for fiscal year 2024 Rogers and company issued a clean, clear audit opinion. No weaknesses were found and the internal controls and the report affirms that our financial statements present a fair and accurate picture of NCRA's finances. This is year affirmation that we operating with integrity and diligence. In summary for the year ending December 31, 2024, the combined change in net assets for associations in NCRA, NCRF, and PAC, was \$11,018. Contributions \$22,074 and PAC, \$109. The portion is attributable to investment returns of \$535,000. We reflect a loss of \$575,000. A concerning but honest indication of where we are financially. Despite the operating deficit, we continue to invest in what matters most. In you, our members, through education, mental health support, scholarship programs, and tireless advocacy at the federal and state levels and our provision expanding outreach to students and launching resources like the career day tool kit and public policy engagement to protect our livelihood and in our association with right size staffing. In the past five years, we have decreased staff line item numbers by 500,000. We have smarter use of the office space. We got rid of the hefty piece and saved \$250,000 and scalable technology to support growth and meet members where we are.

As of May 2025, we're going to talk about the current state. We're operating at a loss of \$159,000. Our revenues are tracking below last year and below the budget amount. We have tracked the expenses, but the biggest challenge remains for the year declining membership revenue. Even with a gain of \$315,000 in investment revenue this year, our current model is not sustainable long term.

This is a business reality. Like all businesses, we must evolve or risk eroding the very services that our members count on. Where do yours go? We owe you clarity. The learning center houses more than 400 sessions with a significant portion offered for free to NCRA members. Our investment in the complete court reporting handbook, staffing the call center, and learning center, while all essential come with real cost. Totally upwards of \$195,000. We've absorbed the rising cost such as increased paper and printing cost for the JCR, increased health insurance cost for staff, increased AV and food and beverage cost at convention. Can you believe that a gallon of coffee is \$149? Yeah. Here and in almost every hotel in most cities. We seriously subsidize the legislative boot camp to encourage leaders

to come advocate for themselves and you. The cost to update the analysis for the RPR is \$25,000 each and so on and so on. We haven't passed on the cost for five years. We've also add new programs like A to Z, Career Launcher and the new Learning Management System. So many more new programs with the staff same staff and same budget. Let me be more direct. No one on the Board of Directors is compensated in any way. The volunteer leaders from the Board of Directors to committees, including the chairs on the members, often decline expense reimbursements. Many sponsor student attendance at conference without seeking recognition. So many donate their own money to help members succeed. I could give you a laundry list of philanthropist that don't want to be thrown. That flies in the face of not wanting to be known.

As the secretary-treasurer, I see the numbers. Your leaders put the money where their mouth is. From the Executive Director, board members, to the committee service. I've heard the term money grab. And on social media a few times. What does money grab actually mean? I look it up on Merriam-Webster, it is the greedy pursuit of making money especially when done without regard for cons. Nothing is a money grab. It is all on the service. Every single service has you and me the member in mind. It is personal. You've likely seen rumors online suggesting it is unnecessary and that it is another money grab. Let me assure you nothing can be further from the truth. Many associations raise dues every three years. It is in five years since ours were adjusted. The truth is this. Dave, our Executive Director, as saved the association more money than most of the people have ever known. Sorry to do this to you. He personally has refused raises by his own request for 11 years. He's declined all benefits, no medical, dental, 401(k), and life insurance, that saves us over \$500,000. He got us out of a lease saving \$15,000 annually. He donates to NCRF himself and raised another \$5,000 for PAC in a single weekend. He will be leaving \$25,000 to the legacy fund in due time. He could be making so many more. He's organic. He chooses us. He chooses to serve his community and his profession although I'm secretary-treasurer of NCRA, if I may speak for a moment, Stacey Potenza.

LEMONS: You can if Stacey if you speak slower.

POTENZA: Let me be direct. This is not a lecturing, it is not a money grab. It is a necessity. We have to raise dues, because we haven't since 2019. Even as the cost of doing business as steadily risen. Inflation, rising technology costs, rising coffee costs. The need to obtain top-tier staff and services contribute to the situation. We heard your feedback last year when the \$50 proposal failed. This is the concerns and discipline. We've cut close. There's no more extra fat to trim. Without cutting deep into the benefits that matter the most. I urge you, not just the secretary-treasurer, but as a fellow working caption and advocate to vote yes for the increase. We can't afford not to.

I also want to acknowledge the bylaws amendment up for discussion regarding the voice writers. The board has taken a neutral stance as is appropriate for a membership-led amendment. We are here for the process, not to sway the decisions. We want to hear from you. As a secretary-treasurer, dues paying member, and active captioneer, I must speak plainly. You have to recognize more members equal more revenue, and that's what we need if we're going to remain viable and open. We must be open to creative solutions. I won't tell you how to vote. Sustainability requires thinking. I think you know what I'm saying. Read between the lines. Ask me in the hallway about the type of captioners that I employ. Anyway. In closing, thank you. Thank you for showing up in the room and in your daily work. Thank you for your dedication to the profession and to one another. It is an honor to serve alongside a board that cares this deeply and overworked staff that works this tirelessly and members who continue to man the progress with passion, integrity, and grit. I love steno. I love all of you. I'm proud of what we've accomplished together. I'm hopeful for what's next. If only we had the courage to face it. Thank you for your opportunity to serve. Thank you for your patient. Let's continue shaping the future of this association together. I'm asking you for a vote yes on the dues increase. Our future depends on that.

LEMONS: Hold on a second. Thank you, Stacey for the valuable service. Thank you also to NCRA's Vice President, please stand. Of finance and human resources, Daphne. Stacey will continue.

POTENZA: They recommended a proposal to change the due be put before the membership to vote at the annual business meeting. The Board of Directors recommends that the member dues be raised to \$300 for registered members, associate member dues be raised to \$179, associate member \$160, student \$5:00, and retired to \$165. Any change in annual dues for any class membership from that of the previous year shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and electronic mail and other means of electronic transition as shall be authorized and determined by the Board of Directors. Mr. President on behalf of the Board of Directors, I move that dues be amended as fallows. Report or member dues, participating from \$300 to \$330, international members from \$150 to \$165. Associate member dues U.S. from \$179 to \$197. Associate member dues international from \$145 to \$160. Student member dues will remain at \$55. Retired member dues from \$150 to \$165.

LEMONS: The question is on the adoption of the amendment to the dues as recommendations by the NCRA Board of Directors. Before I allow members to speak, please welcome our Executive Director, Dave Wenhold, who wishes to speak on the adjustment.

WENHOLD: Thank you. I wanted to talk from the heart. I'm the guy that has the logistics from day to day. We've got everything, folks. We've held the line as long as we can. The \$30 increase is eight cents a day. \$30 is a couple pages of transcript over the course of a year.

This is an investment in your organization. You've got a caring staff. Stacey mentioned all of the things that I've given back to the organization. I do that because I have so many friends here. I love this profession. I've wanted to survive. And quite frankly, we cannot survive without your vote of yes. This doesn't fix it. This just helps us and as we continue to do programs like A to Z and everything else that we've done in the five years without an increase, that will cost money. Everything has gone up in five years as you know this. I understand that people don't want to pay more. I get it. I get it. But this is your association. It is yours. If this folds, we're all in trouble. Staff can go get another job. Who is going to advocate for you out there? Who is going to be the ones putting together great CEU opportunities for you? People come to the convention every year. I see the same people again and again. Why? Because this is your community. There's value to that. I ask you this question, is it worth eight cents a day? I'm going to leave you with that. Thank you.

(Applause)

LEMONS: Thank you, Dave. Now members who wish to discuss the change in dues whether will approach the microphone. When approached, please identify yourself by name, city, and state. There are two microphones. Over there and one over there. I can't see you. Go ahead.

SPEAKER: Mel Melanie Humphrey. Yeehaw. For the last two years, we've heard the same statements. We need the money. Let me backdrop for a moment. I am in favor of the dues increase or adjustment. I would like an explanation of why two years ago we needed \$50, last year we needed \$50, now we need \$30. Are we going is to be back again next year for \$20? An extrapolation would be good. I am in favor of an increase.

LEMONS: The explanation is: it didn't pass twice at \$50. We need the \$50. If we can get some, we can recoup. We're asking \$30 so it will pass and we don't fail as an association.

(Applause)

LEMONS: Is there any further discussion? I'll hold for another 30 seconds. Can anybody see if they want to discuss it? Okay. There will be no further discussion. The dues amendment must be approved by a simple majority of the voting members voting by electronic mail or other means of electronic transmission. According to the bylaws in the meeting, the final voting on dues shall take place on the secure online web site. The voting shall open within two hours after the close of the meeting and shall remain open for 24 hours. The announcement of the results will be placed on the NCRA web site. At the end of the meeting, the Chair will give you instructions for voting. I guess now it is my time to talk to you as President for the President's address.

Technical glitch here.

(Applause)

LEMONS: I want to thank you for the opportunity to be able to serve you as President the past year. Has it all been a bed of roses, but times a bed of thorn. We've done everything that we had told you we would do. I've done everything I told you. I've redone the brand, kept NCRA first and foremost in decisions, run through difficult situations, the board has upheld me and given me great confidence and the ability to do the things that we've done this year, because of the great team that I've led. I would really like one more time to say thank you to the 2024-2025 Board of Directors. Thank you so much.

We have 27 minutes to talk about. I know people were saying it is kind of funny. I heard this. I got 27 e-mails from NCRA. How can deal with that? I got 27 to 50 e-mails per day. You learn how to deal with something like that or something that you have -- that you feel strongly about and you have a passion for. So I have a passion for court reporting. That's why I'm here. Next year I step back and become a past-President. Some say the wisdom to the board. I guess you can just call me the wise guy. I would like to close this with talking about our due's adjustment. There's a gentleman in -- you've probably seen him on YouTube by the name of Mike Goodwin who has a routine called my two things to worry about. This is my take on Mike Goodwin. Regarding the due's adjustment, there's two things that you have to worry about. Passes. Nothing to worry about. If it doesn't pass, two things to worry about. The association can maintain our essential services and member benefits for now. You have nothing to worry about. Two, the association loses essential services and things like dental coverage. You are broke without dental insurance. If you have no lawsuits against you and remain healthy, you have nothing to worry about. You get sued, and you get a septic abscess, two things to worry about. One, it gets better. You got nothing to worry about. Two, if it gets worse, two things to worry about. One, are you going to live? Are you going to die? If you live, nothing to worry about. If you die, two things. Are you going up? Are you going down? If you are going up, you got nothing to worry about. If you are going down, two things. Original or extra crispy? Let's make sure you have nothing to worry about and vote yes on the dues adjustment. Resistance can be fatal as shown you. I thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: A long time ago, he always shows up and is good at parliamentary procedure and being corrected in board meetings. As he said, he stands by. This year was not an easy year for Keith. There was times he called me and I had to talk him off of the ledge. Vice versa. That's one of the things they don't know. The Executive Director and all of the past Presidents I worked with know this. It is a very close relationship. On Saturday nights and Sundays and midnight and texts and calls, Keith has always been there. And I

wanted to say thank you for that. At the end of the say it is your dedication to the organization that people should be appreciative of and you've given up so many hours of your life to this organization. Not being paid. Take your time away from family. That's lots. It is easy to throw rock at the organization. I think where the big bad deep state. There's no conspiracy here. We're all working for the same to make your lives better. I just want to say thank you. This flag was flown over the capital in your honor. I know you know. Keith is up there lobbying with us. He's up there visiting. This is special to me. I want to thank you very much on behalf of the staff and the rest of the Board of Directors and give you this beautiful flag in honor of your service to NCRA. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Applause)

LEMONS: That brought a tear to my eye.

Sorry. I told you my script now.

The next business in order is consideration of proposed bylaws amendments. You can view the Proposed Bylaws Amendments on the NCRA app or on the screen. Since the amendments have been provided to the members previously, if there is no objection, neither the Bylaws Committee Chair, nor the Chair will read them in their entirety.

Since there is no objection, the Bylaws Committee Chair will not read the amendments in their entirety.

Members who wish to discuss the proposed bylaws amendments will approach the aisle microphone. When recognized by the chair, identify yourself by name, city and state.

According to our bylaws and the rules for this meeting, members will have three minutes to speak on each proposed amendment and may only speak twice to the same question without permission of the members present. Members will be given a warning when 30 seconds are left on the timer.

The final voting on bylaw amendments shall take place electronically, on a secure online website. The voting shall open within two hours after the close of the meeting and shall remain open for 24 hours. The announcement of the results will be placed on the NCRA website. Since we are amending the NCRA Constitution and Bylaws, the vote required will be a two-thirds vote and will be done online as previously described. Amendments that contain consequential amendments are adopted as well, in a single vote.

At the end of this meeting, the Chair will give you instructions for voting.

Tami Keenan, Chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will present the bylaws amendments. The Chair now recognizes Tami Keenan.

KEENAN: Good morning. Good morning. Gosh. On behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of bylaw Amendment #1 - Article 8-Nomination and Election of Officers and Directors, Section 3-Preparation of the Slate of Nominees, subsection c)

This amendment is submitted by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

You can view the amendment on the screen or in the NCRA app. What you will view on the screen only indicates the sentence(s) with the changes being proposed. This proposed amendment will shorten the timeframe for eligible members to add their names to the ballot for the

Board of Directors.

LEMONS: The question is on the adoption of the proposed amendment to Article 8, Section 3, subsection c) as shown on the screen. The proposed amendment is also available in the NCRA app.

Is there any discussion?

Since we are amending the NCRA Constitution and Bylaws, the vote required will be a two-thirds vote and will be done online as previously described. Tami, please continue.

KEENAN: On behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of bylaw Amendment #2 - Article 8-Nomination and Election of Officers and Directors, Section 3-Preparation of the Slate of Nominees, subsection f) This amendment is submitted by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

You can view the amendment on the screen or in the NCRA app. What you will view on the screen only indicates the sentence(s) with the changes being proposed. This proposed amendment will clarify that members have 48 hours to submit their candidacy for a vacancy in a special election following notification, rather than by the close of the initial election.

LEMONS: The question is on the adoption of the proposed amendment to Article 8, Section 3, subsection f) as shown on the screen. The proposed amendment is also available in the NCRA app.

Is there any discussion?

Since we are amending the NCRA

Constitution and Bylaws, the vote required will be a two-thirds vote and will be done online as previously described. Tami, please continue.

KEENAN: I'm going off script for two seconds. These lights are brutal. Bear with us as we read.

On behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of bylaw Amendment #3 - Article 2-Purposes and a consequential amendment to Article 16-Affiliated Units. This amendment is submitted by 15 members who were verified as eligible. The amendment refers to allowing voice writers as members of NCRA.

I will now read the conclusion as submitted and noted in the amendment:

"Bringing voice writers into the Association is a forward-thinking move that promotes unity, strengthens the profession, and ensures a more sustainable future for Realtime translation services. By embracing different methods of capturing the spoken word, the same way the pen writers did for steno many years ago, the Association can better serve its members, their clients, and the courts that rely on them."

I will now read the proposed amendment to Article 2, Purposes:

"Definition: In the context of this document, "reporting" and "captioning" shall mean the use of technology whereby an individual verbatim reporter or an individual captioner uses a stenographic machine, uses the human voice to speak into a mask, or reports manually using

technologies are collectively referred to as "reporters" and/or "captioners."

There is also a consequential amendment, Article 16-Affiliated Units, that will be changed if the original amendment is adopted. If the original amendment is not adopted, the bylaw language will remain as is.

You can view the amendment on the screen or in the NCRA app. The screen view only shows Article II-Purposes as redlined. LEMONS: The question is on the adoption of the proposed amendment to Article 2, Purposes and the consequential amendment to Article 16-Affiliated Units. The proposed amendment is also available in the NCRA app.

Is there any discussion? Left to right.

SPEAKER: I'm with Stephanie with California association. As everyone knows, California has recently adopted voice writers over the last two and a half years or so. It has provided a huge boom in our membership, many our unity, and in our efforts legislatively to stave off digital threats. It's been a huge asset and could not have come at a more perfect time. I think the same would be true nationally. I urge everyone to vote yes to this amendment. Thank you. (Applause)

LEMONS: Over here.

SPEAKER: Patricia Nelson, Franklin, Tennessee. I spent a lot of time and research putting my thoughts together with the example of real world consequences. Voice writers got an hour-long webinar. Mine would take approximately ten minutes. I would like to read them in full.

LEMONS: The rules is three mines.

SPEAKER: Okay. I did use ChatGPT. Is it your preference because it will be easier and faster? Apologies to the captioner. Several respected colleagues have proposed amendment amending NCRA's institution and bylaws to include -- goals I support. However I cannot support this amendment as written. Rather than modifying article III section 3A which defines the membership, the proposal alters the article II, purpose, changing the foundation of our organization. No revisions were made to the membership section which

is where such inclusion should occur. It removes the word stenographic 38 times and verbatim 20 times obtaining shouldn't be used their. Removing it broadened the definition and potentially opening the door to digital recorders who call them reporters. We are at risk of losing our identity and what makes us distinct at a time when mislabeling and misrepresentation is ramped. NCRA needs to look at scope and statements. The tag line. This should shift us closer to star, including digital, which leaves machine hand. A webinar explains why it needs altering rather than just membership would have been helpful. The recent united by skill focused solely enjoys writing and ignored meaningful questions, including the number of certified voice writers. In 2024, there were five. Five. Realtime is where our past diverge. Not the input, but output. Voice writers using CAT software, Dragon can misfire from lack of training or illness. This is likely attributing to the number of certifications. Those not using CAT systems. We fill similar roles. We compete in education. Students are being swayed to switch to voice writer as the easier route which undermines the challenging skill path. It should support machine schools, not subsidize alternatives that weaken our ranks.

>> Time.

SPEAKER: Okay. Read the language. It belongs in the membership section. My full remarks are posted in the NCRA officials freelance groups and protect your read project. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Start the timer. I'm Tammie from Little Rock, Arkansas. I've been a dues paying members of NSRA/NCRA since 1979. That's correct. 1979. My first comment I really appreciate our secretary and treasurers remarks. There are times it is not about dollars. There are times it is about integrity of the record and ending output. I want to say amen and hallelujah to the previous speakers comments. I read them online. I agree wholeheartedly. I come from a state that is probably 90% mask. Has been my whole career of 40 years, last October, and I can tell you that I texted my business partner one day waiting to provide CART in court. My question to my business partner was what is the difference in a mask reporter who just pushes buttons but does not speak into the mask and digital reporter? I've seen it. I worked in my courthouse for 16.5 years. I worked side by side. I'm helpful that the California voice mask reporters are much more professional than the ones I worked for. I've watched them from the time of sitting in a court room and sitting tapes, so they don't stick together. But not talking into the mask. It is digital reporting 101. It is one tiny step from a digital reporting that we're try to fight with this organization. I know there are very mask reporters out there. I ask with the five nationally certified voice writers, or voice reporters. They are not writers. We're writers. They did a news article on channel 4 KARK in Little Rock two years ago, interviewing our Arkansas president. They showed a shorthand

pen writers. I don't know where they got that. 30 seconds. Go watch KARKs is Channel 4 and you'll see how chanced the digital reporting is.

Thank you.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: Stephanie, Omaha, Nebraska. I will be the incoming President in October of our association. I have mixed feelings about amendment. I'm going to point out a few things. Why does stenographic have to be removed instead of the inclusion of voice writing. Reporters in our state, everybody calls themselves a court reporter regardless of their method. I think the wording as written is ambiguous. I think reports manually using simples. We have somebody who is in ER who fools people because she took theory and never finished theory after two or three years and sitting with her machine in the court room and tries to write so people think she's taking down the method stenographically. She is not. I think the language is ambiguous. It needs to be way more specific. Thanks.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm Jenny Melius. These comments are from Josh Edwards.

These comments are from Josh Edwards in New York City.

Thanks to Jenny Melius for reading my statement. And, of course, thanks to our captioner.

I support the bylaws amendment that would allow voice writers to join NCRA. Stenographers, due to their ironclad devotion to steno, may not fully understand voice writing. Both methods require highly trained human beings. Both methods require countless hours of practice to achieve at least 95% accuracy. Both methods attach a certification page to a transcript, signifying that a human being attended and paid close attention to the proceedings to produce that transcript.

Moreover, over a dozen state associations and USCRA accept voice

writers. Yet currently, only stenographers can join NCRA. The

bottom line is
that voice writers are court
reporters too, and they deserve
the benefits of
membership in our association. I
urge you to vote yes on the
amendment.
Thank you.

Just quick with my time remaining, I want to speak as myself, Jenny Melius from Colorado. I don't know that the amendment will be a huge boom in membership for the association as one of the 15 sponsors from the amendment. That's not my reason for wanting this to go forward. I think we know the threats of digital and ASR coming into the industry. Voice writers will help us by working together and joining forces in the industry to protect the integrity of our profession moving forward. Thank you.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: Good morning. Sherry from Riverview, Florida. I'm going to continue Patricia's comments. I've heard arguments comparing this to pen writers. Machine shorthand will not replace them. NVRA has fiercely advocates for voice writers and achieving wins in California. NCRA has not achieved similar success for its machine writers. Cannot form a task force with NVRA to share goals and have distinct identities. Why have separate organizations at all? Who will advocate specifically for machine stenographers? A recent e-mail from voice script, a company boasting 40% of our clients are stenographers and voice writers highlights the risk. Without clarification, they will use our inclusion as validation to inflate their influence. In July, TCRA had to remind -- it is Textra Deposition Reporters, I'm sorry, they had to remind the standards and caution against using AI and backup audio. Ultimately with, this is a symbolic gesture and one with real consequences. Words are our business. The words of this proposal do not modify membership criteria. They redefine. If the intent was to include voice writers, a single word, voice, could be added. Instead we risk handing future leaders a broadly redefined mandate that erodes our identity. I will vote no and urge you to carefully consider both current and proposed language before casting your vote.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: My name is Armenia from San Antonio, Texas. I didn't prepare anything. I'm going to wing it. I've done a lot of studies on how many machine writers are getting certified in Texas. I can only speak for Texas. How are in Texas versus the growing number of voice writers in Texas. Since Texas did away, anybody can walk in and take a test to get certified in Texas now. In the last I've been following since COVID, the number of voice writers has doubled every year. Last year 70 voice writers certified compared to 25. That was

because we were up from the previous year's up 10 and 10 and 15. That's how many machine writers are getting certify versus voice writers. Why? Of course, voice writing is easier. There's an influx of self-talk voice writers coming on the platform. The integrity of the record is not in addition for them. They are able to use, because it is AI, they were getting certified with Microsoft Word and not even using CAT software. There's videos that you can learn on YouTube. Just like everybody wants to compare head writers to going -- where are we going to be when the easier route and the shorter route is voice? Who is going to stand up for the machine writers? We have a valuable skill and special skill; one I think everybody in the room worked hard to obtain. We continue to work at our craft every day. I'm in a room with very elite court reporters. If the education is going to be split now, if we allow voice writers in and the numbers didn't increase, who is going to be working to promote and preserve the method of machine writing. Now if it wasn't better or as equal or still working, then there would be an argument. But it is not. I -- I am not bragging, I'm in a room with a lot of people, who have 99.95% on a daily basis. I don't have to change mechanisms every hour or do anything. I don't have to rely on my backup audio. There's a big difference. My main concern is preserving our very elite skill that I don't think should go away. We are very valuable to the profession. If NCRA standards dividing it.

LEMONS: To my right.

SPEAKER: Hello. Sheryl from Westminster, California. I'm also just speaking off the cuff here. I've been a little bit divided about the amendment. As we know in California, voice writers are certified. I'm a deposition reporter in California. I had the opportunity to see voice writing transcripts there. I will tell you they give me concern. I think that one issue with voice writing is the fact that due to the fact that the school tends to be a little bit quicker than steno, people are coming out of high school a little bit more quickly and not necessarily getting the full robust training that we got as stenographers. That being said, voice writers are certified in California. I think there's a real divide between steno and voice. I think for that reason, they are not coming to educational seminars. They are not allowing themselves of the tools to become more professional and more adept at their craft. If we don't give them a voice, how are we going to educate voice writers to become as good as us. At the end of the day, attorneys don't really care. Some do. At the end of the day, you have a voice writer and steno. If you are unprofessional, it looks bad on all of us. If we are not giving voice writers a seat at the table, they are going to be able to show up here and -- why are the things happening? They think that stenos hate them. And we do. I think we have to do a better job at accepting that while it may not be our method, it is a method. It certainly is better than AI. They are certified and they are getting the job done. They

saved us in California. There was bill after bill after bill being written to replace court reporter. Judges in California wanted to get rid of us. They couldn't save the seat.

LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: We need to look at how to educate voice writers to deliver the best practice. I think passing this amendment is the way. Thank you.

LEMONS: To my left.

SPEAKER: Matthew Moss, Lane, Minnesota. I'm one of the signers of the amendment. I support its passage. I also become the President of the Georgia now court reporters -- sorry, Georgia Court Reporters Association that was the Georgia Shorthand Association. Among the changes in the presidency was not only to the name, but a completely unified vote to open our membership to voice writers. I oversaw the effort. Because of that, there are still people willing to volunteer to step up and be members of the board of that association. That association now has a voice writer as President who started her career as a digital reporter. Whom I met at the required orientation and I let her know about stenography and voice reporting. She studied steno for several years and got to about 140 before making her switch to voice. That's the method she uses now. The association still has somebody willing to volunteer to lead it.

In Colorado, we made a similar change when I was Vice President. That board is now half voice writers. I would point to the fact in the state associations, the people who volunteer their time to help keep us in the courts are typically the same small group of people, a very small percentage. Many states in the Colorado are benefiting from having opened their membership to voice writers. I was told by the membership in Georgia if we didn't have voice writers in the courts in the 90's, we would have wiped out a long time ago by electronic recording. I wanted to make that point and I'm grateful for the folks who use the method who have chosen to lead and develop their skills. I have seen real-time output from voice writer that has looked fantastic. We can make the remarks about the quality of the method. I also know that when I'm not practicing and working my best to do my real time and output, it is not always the sharpest either. It is on all of us to continue to always be better. We should do that together.

(Applause)

LEMONS: To my right.

SPEAKER: I'm Kristy Smith. I'm from Texas. I wanted to share my views. I'm kind of the -- not sure how I want to vote on this yet. I'll tell you I'm a 38-year court reporter. I come from a small community. I worked at the beginning with pen writers, voice writers, Texas has all three methods as valid. I love all of those reporters. I think they are great reporters. I did see the pen writers go away. In the last three years, I retired as a reporter and I become a

teacher. I'm certified CRI, with NCCA. My concern is steno will go away. The reason I feel that way is if we let them in the association we're not being championed. We don't have somebody fighting for us. Like I said, I'm not and I haven't taken a stand. I'm not writing to give my opinion on that. At our convention, I brought students two years ago. Voice writers were there in the student section. They were having conversations to try to talk my students out of doing steno. And going into voice. I have worked the last three years non-stop building the curriculum and teaching steno and being a champion for steno. It has become disheartening for me as reporter who has dedicated to be undermined at my association. I feel like that's my safe place to go. My students are being not attacked, but, you know, coerced into switching to voice, because it is an easier method. As they or say it is an easier method. I have two students that have left my school and gotten certified after four months. When they could not get past 100 or 120 words per minute. They only gave it a year; right? They don't want to dedicate. They work full time. They have children. They are not dedicating the time to practice their steno. They are going to voice. They are getting certified. It's been very disheartening to me who has spent so much time trying to fight for our profession. I want to keep our associations fighting for what we have.

LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: I don't want my students to feel like they should jump ship. I wanted to get my perspective from that as a reporter and instructor. What I'm saying I feel like this could be damaging to steno in the end. That's my concern. I don't have anything against voice. That's my concern that I wanted to voice.

LEMONS: Thank you.

(Applause)

LEMONS: To my left.

SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm Jennifer Oliver. I'm here representing the Kansas Court Reporters Association. I'm a steno writer. I'm a proud steno writer, as we all are. My dire concern with us being more proud of our method is that we will be eradicated. In Kansas, if it weren't for the voice writers who have recently been taking our state exam, we would be having many more seats open in court rooms. I know in my district personally; our chief judge is very impatient. He's a great person. he doesn't have a lot of patience. He's concern we are going to get reporters. We have two transcriptist that are transcribing. I look for this to be a trend in my state. We cannot fill the seats. I'm here to flee to the organization. We have some terrific voice writers out there also. I would like to see us partner with the voice writer reporters and partner if we see areas that we can help them form those channels to where we can help them advance their education. Perhaps they don't have the level we feel like they should or any other way to build their strength. I would love to see

the organization trend toward solidarity and realize that we need the seats filled with humans, whatever the methods are. Keep AI out of the court room. Let's stand together. If that means NCRA needs to develop a task force or different set of committees or whatnot to enhance the voice writers training, then we do it. I just think we can all co-exist and stand in solidarity. I am pleading. Please. Let's build the chairs. Thank you.

LEMONS: Little guy over here.

SPEAKER: Lance Oviaott. I've had mixed feelings when it first came up. I've known about voice writing for many years. I've been a court reporter for 30 years. My father was a court reporter. It's been part of my life since I was a little child. When I first got married, my mother and wife had to come up with a rule that family dinners and going out to dinner with my parents, my father and I were only allowed to ask each other during the meal how to write that. They got really tired of us just talking steno all the time. I love steno. I love my machine. Here several years ago, I was experiencing a lot of pain. I had nerve in both elbows and carpal tunnel in both wrists. I was told to take time off of work. Which I can't, because I support my family. So I've been transitioning to voice writing and learned a lot about voice. A lot more than you can learn in an hour presentation. It was with great difficulty that I did that, not because of the transition being hard, but because of my love for steno and my love for NCRA. My father was the -- I think he was the -- he was on the board that implemented certification in Idaho. I served as President of the Idaho association twice. I've served as President of the Wyoming association five times. And now I'm going to be a past President again. But I think that voice is what has saved us in Wyoming. As I said before we, we have open seats I'm not able to fill. The judges were like, I guess we're going to have to go to electronic reporting. We have to have something. We are so rural. There's nobody for us. We have allowed voice writers in the state. They have to be certified. I think my involving them and inviting them to participate with us in NCRA, we can make them better. We can strengthen the academics that I don't think they -- a lot of them are getting in their education. This is a way that we can help them improve their skills by involving them with us.

LEMONS: Time.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I urge you to support the amendment.

LEMONS: My little friend. Lance and I are fellow Wyoming natives. I was actually belittling Lance. To my left.

PAT GRAVES: Monument, Colorado. I speak in favor of the amendment. I speak in favor of the inclusive amendment. I speak in favor of the amendment that is focused not on only methodology, but is focused on service. Who do we serve as court reporters. We serve clients, we serve plaintiffs, defendants, we serve the judge, we serve the court system. As captioners, we serve people who need captions.

Clients actually want very high quality and they will migrate to very high quality. That will be humans. Humans are important. I think what we're missing out here is the audio and speak recognition is really the big threat for our organization and our profession. We need to stop the fighting. I agree with several speakers ago. We need to educate voice writers. Frankly, we need to continue to educate steno writers. And attorneys and judges and the people they serve. I beg of us, all of us, stop fighting about methodology and focus on who we serve and why we serve them. We serve them for the protection and the guardianship of the record and we serve people who use captioning to make sure they have an equal and level ground to start on. Thank you. Again I support the resolution.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: Thank you. Tami Keenan, Battle Creek, Michigan. I want to clarify something that was brought up quite a while ago. The removal of the stenographic 30 times and the removal of the word verbatim 20 times. As long as it is in the definition that you have stenographic, you have an individual verbatim reporter, or individual reporter using a stenographic machine that defines who the reporter or captioner is. Removing stenographic and verbatim the repeated times throughout the bylaws does not take away those words. It just you do not have to have that repeatedly once it is defined. I just wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

(Applause)

LEMONS: To my left.

SPEAKER: I'm Paula. Vice President -- Paula Kugelman. I'm the Vice President of the Virginia Court Reporters Association. I feel I have an obligation to say that our association voted as a board to support this amendment. We are a state who has steno writers in our organization and have for a long time. There are a number of voice writers who switched from steno due to impairments. I don't know if you know Tory Pittman. She's a very accomplished voice writers that competes in inner steno. She's very, very good. She spoke at convention just last year in Washington, D.C. I also wanted to point out as someone who recently helped my daughter find a court reporter program, there are many, many incomplete court reporter programming out there who are putting the workers into the field, who also cannot produce a good transcript. There aren't programs like many of us went to where you get everything and you'll go out knowing how to put together a transcript completely. We've got our own issues with our education within our own field of stenography. The secondly, I also feel it is an individual choice. How many stenographers are working right now who are not attending these conferences who are not involved in the state association who are not trying to improve their skills? It is a very individual thing as far as that goes too. I do believe we need to embrace voice reporters. It's been very great for our state. It is one of the things that has helped us to come back

to digitals. The attorneys notice. They know when they are getting a digital transcript. They know when they are getting a transcript from a voice writer or steno writer. They tell us. The ones we have relationships with, they tell us. They know. They will turn away the digital reporters when they show up to the depositions. I just wanted to point that out. The education and the product can be bad even within stenographers.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: I'm Amy Donman. When I was in court school, we had classrooms full of big hair in the 80's. They had people on waiting list. It was such a great career. We don't have that anymore. The school enrollment has declined. When I'm in Indiana and we don't have any certification there, it is a free for all. Anyone could show up and do whatever they would like on the transcript. But when the clients get the transcripts, they make the decision I'm never going to do that again. We have excellent voice writers. We have excellent machine stenographers. I feel like we need to get qualified, certified, humans in the seat who are passionate about the record. Whatever their method is. I think that's the most important thing to keep our profession afloat.

One summer, my husband was out town. I took it upon myself to pull out the electron hedge trimmers and trim the hedges. I was wearing gloves and sliced the fingers. Had I not been wearing gloves, my career would have been over. If not, I would lost my fingers. It took a month to heal. I think we need voice writing as an option. Every profession has bad actors. Stenography is no different than any other. My first job I worked under a pen writer her profession did not go away because I was a machine writers. I could provide rough drafts and as technology came out, real-time writer. Technology is changing. We need to have people in the room who care about the record. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

LEMONS: To my right.

SPEAKER: Good morning. Amie First. I live in Orlando, Florida. I actually have a question if anybody knows the answer. So far from the meeting I've gathered that Florida, Georgia, Texas, California, Colorado, and Virginia have voice writers as members of their state association. Is there just a half a dozen states that have that? Or is there a lot more? I'm just asking the question if anybody knows it. Thank you.

LEMONS: I believe the answer is somewhere north of 15. It is 16 or 19. Can't remember exactly. SPEAKER: Good morning. Pamela Utter. New York City, New York. I also have a question kind of following on Amie's question. What is the population that we're talking about potential membership and equal sign and dollar sign. I just ask for that. That would be helpful. When speaking about quality and inclusion certification, something I would like to share for

everyone's benefit, the NDRA has done a fantastic job advocating for their method with legislative legislation across the country. In September 2022, a bill was passed allowing voice writing as an acceptable method in Colorado California. In January 2025, another was passed for the skills portion of the California CSR. As someone with an RMR and CRR who was required to take the skills portion of that test, I was blown away. Then in about two years' time, someone from NVRA lobbied hard enough to get it passed. While I have to -- excuse me. While 20 years later, I've taken -- I went to California twice. I bemoan the fact that I was required to pass a 200 word per minute, when I passed the 260 RMR. The certified voice reporter does not have to take the skilled portion, but the CRR does. Was NCRA involved in the discussion? To me, this is delusion of my credentials. Since NVRA has been so successful, why not form a task force with them to pursue shared goals and maintain distinct identities. There are 50 people who propose the amendment and maybe some of that group could organize it. Our differences make us unique and special. If all reporting methods are housed under the same umbrella, why do we need the organizations? Who is going to advocate for machine stenographies. It is not a both side's issue. It is how quickly the billing and organization would be to throw us under the bus for both sides. If standing together means taking the value for behavior. I'm not and partaking in sorry, I'm not interested. Is there how we want NCRA to treat us when the --

LEMONS: Time please.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

>> SPEAKER: Yvette Hinze. I'm one of the 15 signers. I'm hoping to answer a question that was just presented. First, during NCSA, we asked the question who has voice writers involved. It was more than half. There were many state associations that were already thinking about including them. So that was huge. Also, you had just talked about California might be able to talk about this more. But it is coming. I believe they are working on it. Maybe Dave can say more about that. But NCRA has been involved in the discussion of getting reciprocity for California. They did not just ignore everybody. It is coming. There's more stuff. Everybody keeps saying the 15 people. These 15 people. It was way more than 15 people. As a matter of fact, there were two different groups that proposed the amendment. Laura had warned us that, hey, this is coming from two of you. Why don't you guys group together? So the two groups went together and put this on and only the first 15 people got their names added to the list. It happened in half a day. It happened again. She could probably tell us the exact number of people that add names. It was more than just 15 people. And my attempt as the signers of the amendment was so we could have certified, professional, human being making a good job. As was mentioned earlier, there are some bad stenographies out there that produce really crappy transcripts. Education, education,

education. Some people are worried about if we put a hand out to voice writers that will no longer exist. I'm scared we're no longer going to exist if we don't join forces with them. We need them to fight -- LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: -- beautiful transcript that attorneys can use to fight. Thank you.

LEMONS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm Shanna Gray. I'm the President of the Los Angeles County Court Reporter Association in California. I wanted to bring some clarity about the reciprocity bill that was just discussed. No one from NVRA was lobbying for the change from California. That was actually license reporters, people working on legislation in the state to make sure we get as many people licensed as possible in California to fill our court positions, because that's crucial in California that we keep officials in the courts. We are looking at legislation to improve the number or increase the number of licensed professionals in the state of California. NCRA was working to get the same reciprocity or partial reciprocity. California is very strict and does an occupational analysis. Quite frankly, NVRA's testing where are in person and they have proctors. They were able to quicker through the process as a result because of the way the testing is. But the good news is that our state board has just recently state and approved NCRA RPRs to get partial reciprocity as well. It takes another step. Now the law has to be amended. That's something that's working on. I'm happy to say. We are trying to pop up and support. Because they feel left out because of the fact that, you know, now voice writing is a thing. We do have switching to get out of school faster. People need to eat. Our voice writers in California do work very hard. They are very concerned with getting their realtime where they need to be. They do attend the extra classes. Those that have become officials with me and my colleagues now in LA pay for training. Trainer software. I can only speak for the voice writers that I've met in California.

LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: They are working hard to get their method. They want to be the best they can be. It is something to think about. Very quickly. It was interesting to me. I had issues with the way it was rewritten. The explanation that it sounds like they just removed which just makes sense to me as long as it is still there in the definition. I think it would be good if -- LEMONS: Time.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

LEMONS: Is there anybody else who would like to speak to this?

SPEAKER: I've not spoken on the issue, Mr. President, yet.

LEMONS: Well. Please speak.

SPEAKER: But I am happy to yield the floor if anyone would rather speak. I'm Melanie Humphrey Sontag from Wyoming. Yeah yeehaw. I'm one of the people that voted in the 20when it was addressed. There

been a lot in the voice writing profession, machines did not put pen writers out of business. Pen writers paved the way for the association. This association holds the line on setting the bar on professionalism, ethics, we are the guardians of the record. I'll take a step back for a moment and say I plan to vote in favor of the amendment and including the voice writers in the membership. I don't believe it is going to be a boom for the membership. I don't believe there are people knocking on the door eager to throw money at NCRA. I don't think this will affect the bottom line financially. I think it will expand the ability to provide qualified, realtime reporters, whatever method, I don't care if you use the stone tablet and chisel. If you put out a product for the consumers, you are guardian of the record and you should be part of the NCRA. I think a later step down the road can incorporate some of the testing mechanisms. I think it is wonderful that California is allowing the NVRA certification to help pave the way to state certification. I hope NCRA is on the train. Sounds like we are. One of the things that was brought up in the recent Vice President election is the value of the National Court Reporters Foundation career launch program. That can help bridge the gap between what is currently perhaps a lack of education. The career launcher program by NCRF is a module to help them bridge the gap from school to professional reporting.

LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: Thank you. No matter the method, NCRA is the gold standard. I believe NCRA sets the bar high. I believe everyone guarding the record should be allowed to be a member of NCRA when they are ready and I hope we have the tools to bring more qualified professionals to the field. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Donna from Ashbourne, Virginia. I was a past President in 2020 to 2022.

LEMONS: Would you mind speaking closer to the microphone?

SPEAKER: Association. We had voice writers. I was President in 2000. That's when they came in. We are still here. Nothing bad is going to happen. I have a voice writer that I'm mentoring. It is no different than me mentoring a stenographer. She was so bright. I wish I was what she is in the 28 years old. I can appreciate the opposition statements. This is to clarify what the amendment is really about. This is not an intent to release stenography. It is not a stealth mission to rewrite the identity or invite the digital reporters, it is a targeted effort to expand membership eligibility to include voice writers, qualified professionals doing the same work with similar certification under similar pressure. The claim that the amendment changes the purpose of NCRA is misleading. It doesn't eliminate our roots. The word stenographic isn't being removed out of hostility, it is being upgraded to make sure we have skilled, certified, verbatim reporters. We now co-exist with voice writers. We are not bred, fragmentation is. The high standards, regardless

of the method, that's what the proposed language supports. We don't lose identity by welcoming skilled colleagues. We should write to advocate for quality against automation. No. Five RVRMs doesn't mean voice writers lack talent. It shows that we need to create pathways and raise standards together. This is not the fallback method. Voice writing is hard. Just like steno, it takes years of training. These aren't people taking shortcut. They are professionals who care about accuracy, ethics, and the future. The amendment does one thing. It opens the doors to highly trained professionals who will stand beside us in the court room and advocacy work. Vote yes. Thank you.

(Applause)

LEMONS: Any people wish to speak as first-time members? Please continue.

SPEAKER: I'm off of the cuff now. Patricia Nelson, Franklin, Tennessee. I've heard everybody's comments. I want to say I agree with many of them. I'm not anti-voice. I think there are a lot of talented voice writers. I just think they have an extra hurdle. They are at mercy of their software. One of the things that I heard a lot of people say is, well, you know, if we bring them in, we can help educate them and bring them to the standards. We also heard this morning that NCRA is broke and needs money. It costs money to do all of those things. Let's say ten voice writers join the association to make \$3,000 now we have to create a committee to, and have the standards for the voice and study that and work on that. That all costs money. We don't know that they want to join. I do think if it were to pass, it needs to be under the membership and members. We don't want to change the definition. We can change it. It needs to be under membership. This was coached as a membership amendment. This is not a membership amendment. This is a definition of -- we don't need to redefine courts. If we want to involve them in, they can come in. We don't need to redefine court reporters. We are the association that reports us. Nowhere in the tag line does it stay stenographic in our tag line. It just says court reporters and captioners. AAERT. No one is championing us. I want to say that someone is championing us. I saw a couple of months ago someone posted on Facebook in the court reporter group, mask writer was there and they called him the digital. All of the machine writers.

This was your opportunity to education him. It is not our opportunity to education the attorney. Maybe that attorney got back a really essential transcript. That's why he thought she was digital.

LEMONS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: We need to educate ourselves. There are standards that compare us. So many people came up to me and said I don't know any of that. Please read my full speak. ChatGPT did lose my voice and did not come across with what I wanted to say. If everyone would please read it. Those are my full thoughts. Thank you for your time. (Applause)

LEMONS: The chair will recognize himself for a minute. I'm not going to take 30 minutes. I want to talk to you as Keith Lemons, retired court reporters. You know Melanie and I go way back. She was in Gillette, Wyoming, and I was in Casper, Wyoming about five years ago. So was Melanie. Melanie and I loved to debate. Rarely do we say the same things exactly the same thing. The only thing I'm going to tell you is I agree with every word that Melanie said. Except for yeehaw. Tami? That's the end of the discussion on this one. You can continue.

K EENAN: I'm in shock. Mr. President, that concludes the report of the Constitution and Bylaws.

I would like to thank Vice Chair

JoAnn Leger, and Members, Lance

Boardman, Debbie Dibble, and

Yvette Heinze for their hard

work. Also the extraordinary, wonderful, Laura Butler. We can't do anything without her. Let's give her a hand.

Stand up.

(Applause)

(Applause)

LEMONS: Okay. I guess we don't have to adjourn it yet. Since there's no objection to business, constitution and bylaws is closed.

According to our Constitution

and Bylaws and the rules for

this meeting, the final voting

on Constitution and Bylaws

amendments and dues adjustments

shall take place electronically,

on a secure online website. The

voting shall open within two

hours after the close of the

meeting and shall remain open

for 24 hours. The announcement

of the results will be placed on

the NCRA website.

As a reminder, only

Participating Members who are

verbatim stenographic reporters

verbatim stenographic reporters

and/or stenographic captioners

and Registered Members who are

verbatim stenographic reporters

and/or stenographic captioners,

as well as Retired Members,

Retired Lifetime Members and

Honorary Members who have been

verbatim stenographic reporters

and/or stenographic captioners,

shall be eligible to vote.

At the end of this meeting, the Chair will give you instructions for voting.

Is there any new business to come before the meeting?

According to Article 9 of the Constitution and Bylaws, voting for constitution and bylaws amendments shall be by electronic means.

All eligible voting members for whom NCRA has an active e-mail address will receive an e-mail within two hours of the close of this business meeting. The e-mail will contain a link to the secure voting website. At the secure website, you will be asked to enter your NCRA ID number followed by your NCRA online password. Once logged in, Members enter the secure voting website and vote.

Online voting will be open for 24 hours and will open within 2 hours of the close of this meeting. Members will be able to vote via their own phones, tablets, or computers for the -- carrier pigeon. Length of the 24-hour voting. If you have a carrier pigeon, please see me. The official results shall be posted on the NCRA website as soon as available.

SPEAKER: I don't mean to interrupt. I have a comment when you have a pause.

LEMONS: Pardon me?

SPEAKER: I don't mean to interrupt. I have a comment when you have a pause. Not a carrier pigeon. A pause in your thoughts. Now that I've interrupted you, this might be a good time. Aisles. Melanie Humphrey Sontag again from Wyoming, yeehaw. I wanted to thank everyone in the room. When we started there was 46 people. Now there are almost 90. This is impressive. You guys sitting here, the watches online, the streaming, the information that's being shared, we are taking part in the association. This is a big darn deal. It is nice to look around and see you people that got up early today, made your way here. There are times that there are ten people in the room. Thank

you all for being here today. Nearly 100. Thank you.

LEMONS: Chair recognized Dave Wenholt.

WENHOLD: Real quick. We've all been in contentious board meetings. This is an important meeting for us. I want to take a moment to say thank you for respecting opinions. I wish the country would have conversations in this way. I say this with all due respect, this is how it should work. Thank you for your participation. Thank you.

LEMONS: Now for the moment you all been waiting for.

This ends my presidency. I get ready to hand the gavel over to Cindy. She's been a pain -- just kidding. We've had a great relationship. I look forward to making sure her presidency is successful. At this time, I'm going to hand you the gavel. You are it.

(Cheers and applause)

(Cheers and applause)

LEMONS: Before I hand you this microphone, you get 30 secs.

SPEAKER: Clearly the person that wrote that doesn't know me very well. I want to thank Keith for guidance and leadership. I want to thank the board. As Keith knows and every other past President knows, you don't do much without your exceptional board. I have an exceptional board this next year. I also want to thank our very exceptional membership. Without our membership, we could do nothing. Thanks for your support, grace, patience, and love. And this next year, we're going to do a lot. Hold on to your seats, because a lot is going to be going on. I look forward to it. I look forward to serving you in the next year. We had a great time last night at my suite. If you haven't met my husband, he's the bartender with the bestest drink machine. He enjoys serving you as I enjoy serving you. I look forward to the next year. Thank you all.

LEMONS: The NCRA Board of Directors and I appreciate your participation in the Annual Business Meeting. As Dave and I said, without you we couldn't do this. Thank you for being concise and loving to one another. If there's no further business and no objection, we will adjourn.

Hearing no objection, the 2025 Annual Business Meeting of the National Court Reporters Association is adjourned. Seminars begin at 1:00. The next meeting begins at 2:00 p.m.

We'll see you this evening at 6:00 p.m. for the welcome reception and expo hall. Thank you.