

**Introduction to the House of Delegates Working Group's  
Proposed 2024 Legislation  
July 16, 2024**

*The House of Delegates Working Group III was constituted to assess the House of Delegates composition and is tasked with making a recommendation to the House of Delegates following its review. The House of Delegates Working Group is comprised of three Coach members, three non-Coach, non-Athlete members, two 2-Year Athlete members, and four 10-Year/10-Year+ Athlete members. The full group is listed at the end of this document.*

Since November 2022, the House of Delegates Working Group III has (“HoD Working Group”) engaged in a logical and objective review process of the size and composition of the House of Delegates. The current House of Delegates composition has been in a “test phase” since the Annual Meeting of the House of Delegates in September 2021. The HoD Working Group concluded that the current size and composition of the House of Delegates is right for the sport going forward. The group came to this conclusion after a full 18 months of discussions in which the Group debated the pros and cons of numerous potential changes to this “test” size and composition. The HoD Working Group debated theoretical and best practice philosophies, as well as pure practical ideas. For instance, the committee debated whether a group of 100 coaches vote differently than a group of 250? If not, then why does the House of Delegates need 250 coaches as representatives? With a membership of over 400,000, is it unreasonable to have over 500 delegates? And finally, if the Board of Directors, made up of 15 people, is the leadership group that is nimble and able to navigate the organization through time-sensitive challenges, does it matter that the House is 500 large? The House of Delegates Working Group tried to answer all of these questions totally theoretically, and also through the lens of aqua-blue swimming goggles.

In addition, the HoD Working Group discussed every idea that members shared over the course of the last year, and more specifically, the last few months. This was done by offering respondents to the post-Annual Business Meeting survey an opportunity to Zoom with the Chair of the HoD Working Group. The HoD Working Group also proactively requested an opportunity to present the current status and thoughts on the size and composition of the House of Delegates on the LSCs Leaders Call and to the Zone Directors’ Council. Both were done at their respective January meetings, and feedback was requested. From the zooms, surveys and other feedback, the HoD Working Group debated the pros and cons of all the comments and suggestions made.

Below are two of the biggest challenges and desired changes that the HoD Working Group heard from the constituencies in the sport throughout the last 18 months. Hopefully, by reading through the notes below, delegates and members will trust that the HoD Working Group thoroughly addressed these issues, and that while one may still not love the conclusion that the HoD Working Group came to, will respect that this experienced group of coaches, volunteers, and athletes came to a logical decision that they sincerely feel is in the best interest of USA Swimming.

**(1) Per a request from the 10/10+ Athletes, the HoD Working Group discussed potentially paring down the size of the HoD significantly.**

Much to the discomfort of many on the HoD Working Group, USA Swimming owed it to the AAC to consider decreasing the size of the HoD to 150, or at least significantly, so that the 10-Year/10-Year+ Athletes would not continue to need a high multiplier (4.3 in 2023) to reach their 33% threshold through weighted voting.

**Pros for significantly decreasing the size of the HoD:**

- Delegates may have an easier time being heard with a smaller group.
- Perhaps with only 150 delegates, there'd be a better chance of going back to an in-person meeting.
- Perhaps the 150 delegates would take their job more seriously, knowing that people were depending on them to engage and vote.

**Cons of significantly decreasing the size of the HoD:**

- USA Swimming has been successful with a large HoD. Even when some legislation has been contentious, after the vote, the membership moved forward in a positive way.
- The highest score on the post-ABM survey conducted in 2023 was that the House of Delegates legislation directly impacts swimmers/members on the local level. Therefore, USA Swimming cannot afford to lose the voice of the LSC representatives.
- Along the same lines, with a membership of over 400,000, a large House of Delegates allows more people to feel represented.
- With the feeling of a disconnect between the membership and leadership, now would not be the time to decrease delegate size.
- A large House of Delegates prepares our future leaders in the sport.

**Conclusion:** The HoD Working Group felt that the Cons outweighed the Pros so the proposed legislation keeps the size of the House of Delegates to 517 members. The committee is VERY grateful to the 10-Year/10-Year + Athletes for being willing to continue to use weighted voting to achieve their required 33% vote.

**(2) After giving the 10/10+ Athletes their 33%, could the remaining 67% be split evenly between the coaches and non-athlete/non-coaches (our volunteers), or at least increase the percent of non-athlete/non-coaches in the House of Delegates?**

**Pros for increasing the percent of non-athlete/non-coach representation in the House of Delegates:**

- This would give all three main constituencies in the sport an even amount of representation.
- This would give the non-athlete/non-coaches (our awesome volunteers!) a much larger voice in the sport. The volunteers do what they do out of sheer love of the sport of swimming, perhaps are more objective in some ways since they don't have a financial stake in the sport, may stop volunteering if they don't feel an integral part of

the sport, and they bring skillsets from their professional work outside of swimming to our sport.

**Cons to increasing the non-athlete/non-coach percentage in the HoD:**

- In order to increase the non-athlete/non-coach percentage, the percentage of either the coaches or the 2-year athletes (or both) would need to be decreased.
  - The coaches, who also love the sport as much as the volunteers, are invested financially and most don't get rich (at least financially) by being a coach. The coaches are in the trenches daily and like the volunteers, see all aspects of the athletes and sport.
  - The 2-year athletes represent 99.9% of the athletes in the sport. In addition, they are usually very engaged in the governance side of the sport

**Conclusion:** After discussion, the HoD Working Group felt that the coaches, since their livelihood is dependent on the sport and are working in the sport with the athletes daily, should have equal weight in the House of Delegates as the athletes. In addition, the input of the 2-year athletes is strongly valued. Therefore, the HoD Working Group agreed that while it truly values all that the non-athlete/non-coaches bring to the sport, the combined 41% of athlete representation should be matched by the coaches.

A note is in the record to ensure that a process is put in place for the volunteers to have a forum and conduit that allows for a strong voice in USA Swimming.

**At this moment, there's a need to pass permanent legislation that will bring USA Swimming into compliance with the updated USOPC by-laws. The House of Delegates Working Group III hopes to achieve that by getting the required super-majority (2/3) positive vote on this legislation.**

The current Working Group would like to thank the first two Working Groups for their time and effort in doing the initial tough work on this issue! They gave the current group a great launch point for starting their deliberations. In addition, the HoD Working Group thanks ALL for the feedback given by the membership and for your passion for our sport. Please reach out to any members of the House of Delegates Working Group III to discuss additional thoughts.

Contact info for the House of Delegates Working Group:

Mary Plant, Chair (10-Year+ Athlete)  
[MTMPlant@aol.com](mailto:MTMPlant@aol.com)

Julie Bachman (non-Coach, non-Athlete): [julie.bachman@gulfswimming.org](mailto:julie.bachman@gulfswimming.org)

Jamie Bloom (Coach): [jamie.bloom@ymcatriangle.org](mailto:jamie.bloom@ymcatriangle.org)

Tristan Formon (Coach): [tristanformon@gmail.com](mailto:tristanformon@gmail.com)

Ryan Gibbons (2-Year Athlete): [RyanKippGibbons@gmail.com](mailto:RyanKippGibbons@gmail.com)

Jennifer Gibson (Coach): [jennigibson60@gmail.com](mailto:jennigibson60@gmail.com)

Madison Kennedy (10-Year Athlete): [madisonjkennedy@gmail.com](mailto:madisonjkennedy@gmail.com)

Katie Meili (10-Year Athlete): [catemeili@gmail.com](mailto:catemeili@gmail.com)

Matthew Rigsbee (2-Year Athlete): [mrigsbee2000@gmail.com](mailto:mrigsbee2000@gmail.com)

Mary Turner (non-Coach, non-Athlete): [myturner525@gmail.com](mailto:myturner525@gmail.com)  
Ron Van Pool (non-Coach, non-Athlete): [ronvp@aol.com](mailto:ronvp@aol.com)  
Amanda Weir (10-Year Athlete): [amandajoweir@gmail.com](mailto:amandajoweir@gmail.com)