

**Federations Or State Advocacy Structure – Each State Decide, But
With Fund Controls**

I believe the approach I outline below may make the resolution of the Federations/State Advocacy Structure question (and several other strategic planning items that are linked to it) much easier and simpler, while also eliminating much of the controversy surrounding this issue.

No matter how much they're doing or how well they're doing it, many Federations (and some National Executive Board members) oppose Federations being replaced by a State Representative/Congressional District Liaison structure.

If the State Representative/Congressional District Liaison approach is proposed, that opposition could jeopardize other changes if the fervor of the opposition spills over into opposition to other proposals.

Why not leave the structure in each state up to the leaders in that state? That stands a much better chance of gaining approval than proposing that Federations be eliminated either immediately or eventually, especially if funding would still be available. **But more importantly, we should only be concerned with results, not the structure or means.**

There may be good reasons why a State Representative structure would work better in some states while a Federation would be better in others (especially where a Federation is running smoothly with good advocacy, etc.). A state could even elect to have some variation of both structures. **So long as they get the job done in advocacy, recruiting and whatever else we would like to see done at the state level, why should we care?**

Whatever they decide, state leaders would submit an annual budget stipulating what they plan to do – with emphasis on advocacy and recruiting – and what it will cost, before funding is approved. They would also report their current funds balance. This process would replace the current automatic 10% Fund process. The states could get more or less than 10%, with those who are maintaining large bank accounts getting little or nothing until they spend down those amounts.

Eliminating the 10% Fund would be controversial, but it would not be as controversial as eliminating Federations entirely, which is what many in the field are expecting to have to fight. Under this proposal they could continue in existence if they wish and still receive funds, but in a way that makes much more sense. The current 10% process is highly wasteful. It reflects, in reality, an arbitrary number with no basis in terms of demonstrated need. Overall, I suspect there would be significant savings with this approach over the 10% Fund process (spending money that is currently in banks would by itself produce major savings immediately for NARFE).

I know states aren't used to submitting many things for approval, but this would be the concession they would have to accept for the freedom to structure themselves as they

please. And there is precedence for the field to justify requests for funding from National – it's already done for supplemental and cost-sharing requests.

At the end of the year, through either a report from them or our own observations, or both, we see how they did. Those results would influence what they get for funds the next year.

Q: If the Strategic Planning Committee/Strategic Planning Team/National Executive Board feel strongly, based on the Future of NARFE Committee report and other studies, that the State Representative/Congressional District Liaison approach makes the most sense, don't we have an obligation to push for it as the required structure?

A: Given that some Federations are effective and that some have tried Congressional District Liaisons and found problems with its implementation, we could simply help those who are interested in the concept and let others continue as they wish but with funding for all now justified and the results monitored.

Q: With a range of state organizational structures, who would Headquarters look to as the "point person" or primary leader within a given state to communicate with? Wouldn't this complicate communications?

A: This shouldn't be a concern that drives this issue's resolution. But in any event it would be the State Representative or the Federation President, or – in cases where a hybrid structure is adopted – whomever the state designates.

Q: If an underperforming state elects to keep its Federation structure but continues to fail to make any significant contributions to NARFE's mission, what do we do then?

A: We work with them to improve their role or help them transition to a State Representative/Congressional District Liaison structure. But we haven't lost anything. In fact, we've gained savings, since we're no longer giving away funds with no results.

Q: Can we count on accurate and complete reports from the states as to what they've done with the funds National provides?

A: That depends in large part on the questions we ask. For example, I expect we'd want the number and dates of contact with each Member of Congress. In recruiting, the Marketing Department could identify how many new members were recruited by the field in each state. Beyond that, so long as we have Regional Vice Presidents, they can play a major role in evaluating states' activity. I know, for example, pretty much what each of the states in my region are doing in advocacy and recruiting at the moment. And if a state fails to submit a budget or report, the loss of funding would be a major incentive for conscientious officers in the state to correct the situation promptly. I can't foresee any state refusing to cooperate over the long term, since that would be equivalent to saying they plan to do nothing to contribute to NARFE's mission.

Q: What about the burden on Headquarters of reviewing all those budgets and reports?

A: Again, so long as we have Regional Vice Presidents, they can handle most of the evaluating and only budgets/reports that the Regional Vice President has been unable to bring up to an acceptable standard would be brought to Headquarters attention. But if Regional Vice Presidents are phased out, it also should be fairly easy for Headquarters staff to divide up the review responsibility for the 50 budgets/reports among several offices or staff members. This should be seen as an important Headquarters function – after all, it directly affects mission execution throughout the country, and it could be argued that Headquarters should have been doing something like this all along.

