

Motion 1: Minority Reporting at the World Service Conference

S-Anon World Service Conference, July 12, 2019

A. MOTION: Move that the following wording be added to the World Service Conference Charter, Section VIII. Conference Procedure:

- If, after efforts have been made to bring a motion to an “in order” status, a motion finally is ruled “out of order” for presentation at the World Service Conference, the motion maker may either:
- Submit a one-page summary of the motion, including supporting reasoning, for inclusion in the WSC Final Package, or
 - Summarize their motion in a two-minute, in-person presentation at the WSC. The motion will not be formally entertained or discussed at that time.

B. BACKGROUND AND INTENT: Since the early 1990s, the S-Anon fellowship has solicited Motions for discussion at the World Service Conference (WSC). Beginning in 2004, the World Service Conference Committee (WSCC) was charged with managing “all aspects of the World Service Conference,” which includes setting the Agenda. In setting the Agenda, the WSCC must review the motions submitted. If a motion is inappropriate in some way, it is returned to the originator with an explanation and a request to revise and resubmit. Experience has shown that discussion of inappropriate or “out-of-order” motions can be disrespectful of the time and attention of WSC members and S-Anon group members in general. The WSCC uses the following criteria to judge if a motion is ready to be considered by the WSC.

- Does the motion call for concrete actions or changes that would impact S-Anon as a whole?
- Is the action called for in the motion legal and in compliance with regulations governing 501c3 nonprofit corporations?
- Is the motion calling for action that is within the WSC’s “Traditional” role and not about corporate/legal functions of the BOT?
- Does the motion align with the principles of S-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts?
- Is the motion about an action that has already been or is being taken on an issue?
- Is the motion language respectful, and does it clearly state what is actually being proposed?
- Does the motion cover all information requested in the Motion Form, and is it limited to two pages in length?

If a motion does not meet these standards, local groups and members—who are S-Anon’s ultimate authority—cannot be expected to understand what is being proposed, and reasonable discussion cannot take place at the WSC. *The WSCC has offered in the past, and will continue to offer, feedback and assistance to motion makers aimed at bringing their motion into agreement with the stated criteria.* Nevertheless, a motion maker whose motion is finally judged to be “out of order” still deserves the opportunity to be heard by the WSC. The intent of this motion is to provide an opportunity for motion makers whose motions are found to be “out of order” to bring their concerns before the WSC.

C. SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

- Concept Two: “The S-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.”** BOT Standing Committees are service arms of the Conference. As such, they hold delegated, rather than ultimate authority. The WSCC, as a service arm, is granted the delegated authority to apply criteria to determine if motions submitted for the WSC are “in order.”
- Concept Three: “The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.”** A service arm (the WSC Committee) may exercise its judgment in interpreting and applying its authority, but that

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includes being accountable to the service arm that delegates the authority (BOT/WSC), and ultimately to the S-Anon groups. Applying the spiritual principle of “trust,” we can trust our leaders (WSCC members) to exercise their delegated authority wisely and remain committed to being accountable for their decisions.

- **Concept 5: “The Rights of Appeal and Petition protect minorities and assure that they be heard.”** The right of Appeal supports all levels in the S-Anon service structure, empowering each group and member to express an opinion that differs from the majority without fear of judgment or punishment.
- **Concept 12: General Warranties of the Conference, 5. That although the Conference serves S-Anon...it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.** The spiritual principle of Participation comes into play here. We make certain everyone involved has equal opportunity to participate, taking special care to hear Minority Opinions on an issue.

D. FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Finance Committee does not project any financial impact on the fellowship if this motion passes.

E. ARGUMENT PRO: The S-Anon fellowship has not found a way, over the years, to get comfortable with the reality that not every motion that is submitted for consideration is appropriate for presentation to the WSC. It is not practical to guarantee that all motions submitted, no matter how unclear, illegal, or ill conceived, will be presented and discussed by the World Service Conference. Authority has been delegated to the WSCC to apply approved criteria, and the criteria are applied to each motion that is received. If a motion needs to be revised, a member of the WSCC works with the motion maker to help them state their ideas in a form that is useful for debate and discussion, but sometimes, motion makers reject that kind of assistance. The maker of an “out-of-order” motion still has the right to be heard in some manner. We want everyone to have his or her say, as Concept 4 suggests: “Participation is the Key to Harmony.” When the WSCC applies the agreed upon criteria, using their wisdom and experience, and decides that a motion is “out of order,” passage of this motion would allow the “out-of-order” motion maker an opportunity to be heard in another way – via a “minority report.” Passage of this motion would not directly affect most local groups. It is only when a group or individual member decides to submit a motion to the WSC that these processes and procedures come into play, but **it is in the interest of every group to be able to trust that should they wish to make a motion to the WSC, their voice will be heard.**

F. ARGUMENT CON: Right now, it would not take very much time to hear a two-minute presentation from each “out-of-order” motion maker who wished to be heard; but it could tend to take more and more time as the fellowship grows. Likewise, to add one-page summaries of out-of-order motions could add too much material to the already lengthy WSC Packet.

G. DOCUMENTATION: If this motion passes, it will change the WSC Charter by adding a section. It will also need to be included in the S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual, WSC section, and recorded in the decision database maintained by the WSO.

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