



*Improving the lives of women and girls
through programs leading to social
and economic empowerment.*

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

Be It Resolved 2015

A compendium of Soroptimist International of the Americas’ resolutions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD 2

PROCEDURES GOVERNING FEDERATION RESOLUTIONS 3

GENERAL 4

2014:1 Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women

2010:3 Ethnic Diversification of Soroptimist Membership

PROGRAM 5

2010:1 Prostituted Women and Girls

2010:2 Vote

FOREWORD

Resolutions proposing awareness, advocacy and action to promote Soroptimist aims have been adopted by clubs since the federation was formed in 1928. The American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs (as the federation was known then) adopted two resolutions at its first convention in Washington, DC, in 1928. The federation adopted three more resolutions during the Philadelphia convention in 1930.

Resolutions have been numbered according to the year and order in which they were adopted. For instance, resolution number 2004:1 Parliamentary Procedure was proposed in 2004, and was the first one adopted. When referring to a resolution, you should use both its number and its title.

This compendium was developed in conjunction with the federation's 75th anniversary project to establish an archives at federation headquarters. Staff archivist/records manager Lisa Mangiafico compiled, in chronological order, every resolution adopted by the federation. These were then grouped into categories by topic and reviewed by the 1994-95 Laws and Resolutions Committee. The committee eliminated resolutions that had been accomplished, and those that were superseded by a subsequent resolution. This compendium represents those resolutions considered to be currently in effect until their purpose is deemed accomplished or they are amended, reaffirmed or rescinded by the clubs through action at convention and a mail ballot.

Resolutions become an important and integral part of the program at the federation level. They guide the use of limited federation resources, and focus awareness, advocacy and action on those subjects of greatest importance across the federation. To encourage clubs to participate more fully in this process, the federation Board of Directors has adopted procedures governing resolutions (see page 3). This book is updated each biennium.

Federation resolutions are not meant to duplicate the position statements adopted by Soroptimist International and published in "Where We Stand." Clubs undertaking a study of the Soroptimist position on a topic should be aware of any pertinent position statements and/or resolutions in existence.

We hope you will find this booklet interesting, and that it will encourage your club to propose new resolutions or to comment on existing ones.

PROCEDURES GOVERNING FEDERATION RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolutions shall be related to matters of great importance, have broad concern and be international in scope. Topics should be of relevance and significance to the Soroptimist mission of improving the lives of women and girls. There shall be no resolutions on partisan political matters, resolutions commending living individuals or memorializing deceased members. Resolutions regarding Federation policy, administrative or structural matters will be referred to the Federation Board of Directors for prompt consideration and disposition.
2. Resolutions shall continue to be active until rescinded, or until their purpose has been deemed accomplished by the Laws and Resolutions Committee, with the concurrence of the Federation Board of Directors.
3. Clubs and regions are encouraged to review all resolutions and submit comments and recommendations to the Laws and Resolutions Committee. In addition to receiving all new proposals, the Laws and Resolutions Committee shall review all existing resolutions that have been in force for ten years for relevance to Soroptimist programs, timeliness, change of opinion and new information. By recommendation of the Laws and Resolutions Committee, notice to reaffirm, amend or rescind such resolutions shall be included in the call to convention at which action is to be taken. Resolutions in force for fewer than ten years may also be reviewed and recommended for action by the clubs.
4. When drafting proposed resolutions, the preparer should be aware of germane existing resolutions and Soroptimist International position statements listed in "Where We Stand" to avoid redundancy. Include measurable objectives and timeframes. Questions to be answered when considering topics include:
 - What, precisely, is the concern, problem or opportunity implied by the topic?
 - How does the topic relate to the objects of Soroptimist?
 - What specific awareness, advocacy or action by Soroptimist clubs is needed?
 - How would accomplishing the resolution benefit women or girls or the organization?
5. Resolutions of an emergency nature that may arise after the deadline for submission, may be introduced for consideration at convention in accordance with Federation Bylaws, Article XIII, Section 12.02.

GENERAL

2014:1 Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women

WHEREAS, the mission of Soroptimist International of the Americas is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment, and

WHEREAS, the Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women (formerly known as the Women's Opportunity Awards) program is SIA's major program because it has proven results in improving the lives of women and their dependents that have been confirmed by independent studies, and

WHEREAS, the Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women is the centerpiece of SIA's efforts to increase our collective impact and grow public awareness of our efforts, and

WHEREAS, approximately 25 percent of SIA clubs still are not participating in the program, and

WHEREAS, SIA can grow its collective impact and recognition only through the support of the federation, regions and clubs,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that in order to positively contribute to SIA's mission, impact and recognition, increased participation in the Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women program by all clubs and the growth of existing support shall be encouraged and facilitated by all means available at club, region and federation levels.

(adopted 2014)

2010:3 Ethnic Diversification of Soroptimist Membership

WHEREAS, there have been major changes in ethnic culture and composition, particularly in North America, since the founding of Soroptimist in 1921; and

WHEREAS, women are assuming positions of leadership in management, business and the professions more often; and

WHEREAS, diversity of occupations, cultures and ethnic groups promotes different perspectives, raises tolerance and increases understanding through a heightened awareness of needs; and

WHEREAS, the Soroptimist organization seeks to continue its service to society as a representative and powerful force in advancing human rights and the status of women; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Soroptimist clubs in all nations of the federation shall invite to membership eligible representatives of all ethnic segments of the community that they serve; and

RESOLVED, that Soroptimist International of the Americas supports these efforts by including ethnically diverse women in all membership and public relations material.(adopted 1990, amended 2000, reaffirmed 2010)

PROGRAM

2010:1 Prostituted Women and Girls

WHEREAS, prostitution is a form of violence against women; prostituted women and girls are repeatedly beaten and raped with 68% of them meeting the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; and

WHEREAS, selling one's body to 5-20 men per day is not a career "choice," and

WHEREAS, studies show that 89% of prostituted women would leave prostitution immediately if they could; and

WHEREAS, there is no other occupation with a higher homicide rate than prostitution; and

WHEREAS, prostitution allows the trafficking of women and girls to flourish; and

WHEREAS, most prostitutes are beholden to others who control them and their earnings; and

WHEREAS, many in society continue to think of prostitution as a crime with no victims; and

WHEREAS, violence against women will not be stopped nor gender equality achieved as long as there is tacit approval for buying and selling the bodies of women and girls: and

WHEREAS, the only country to criminalize the buying of sex and decriminalize the selling of sex (Sweden) is also the only country that has decreased trafficking and prostitution; and

WHEREAS, the legalization of prostitution with the goal of "reduction of harm" is insufficient protection of basic human rights;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Soroptimist clubs condemn prostitution as violence against women and undertake the following activities in order to end the prostitution of women and girls and decrease trafficking:

1. Support laws and programs that assist the victims of prostitution and do not treat them like criminals
2. Advocate for laws that criminalize the buying of sex
3. Encourage education (including workshops with former prostitutes) for purchasers of sex
4. Promote school programs that teach young people about healthy intimate relationships
5. Fight efforts to legalize prostitution
6. Work to change the attitudes about prostitution from the "world's oldest profession" to the "world's oldest oppression"
7. Have frank and open discussions about prostitution with the men and boys in our lives and the effect it has on women, girls and relationships
8. Oppose efforts to treat prostitution as a legitimate occupation

(adopted 2010)

2010:2 Vote

WHEREAS, Soroptimist International of the Americas believes in the power and importance of voting in order to effect change at the local and national level; and

WHEREAS, informed citizens exercising their right to vote is a cornerstone of democracy; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that each and every Soroptimist exercise the right to vote and encourage other citizens in the community to become informed about the issues, register and vote.

(adopted 1950, amended 2000, reaffirmed 2010)