

From the RVC:

A current topic of discussion among the members of the American Mensa Committee is the question of how to fill a vacancy in the office of Regional Vice Chairman. For all other AMC members, the process is simple: if an office becomes vacant the other AMC members simply elect a replacement to serve until the next election. For the first four decades or so of American Mensa's existence, the same procedure was followed for RVCs, but a few years back our legal counsel advised us that this is not allowed by the corporate laws of New York, which govern our operations. In the following two national Mensa elections, proposals were put on the ballot to provide a new method of choosing a replacement RVC, either by holding a special election, or by allowing the Local Secretaries of the affected region to make the choice, but although both proposals received a majority of the votes cast, neither one was approved by the two-thirds vote necessary to pass an amendment to our by-laws. Other possibilities have been raised, but so far none appears likely to get the required two-thirds vote. The result is that if there should be a vacancy in the office of RVC, the remaining AMC members will elect a non-voting representative for that region, who will have all the privileges of an AMC member except the right to vote.

Now there are two ways of looking at this situation: some of my colleagues on the AMC argue that simply having a voice at AMC meetings satisfies the most important requirements of regional representation, and it is true that in my three years on the AMC I have never seen a motion which passed or failed by one vote, so in practice perhaps just having someone present to speak up for the region's members is sufficient. On the other hand, there is a question of principle involved: if I pay the same dues in Oklahoma as a member across the state line in Kansas, but the Kansas member has a voting representative on the Board of Directors and I don't, doesn't that devalue my membership in some way?

For now, there seems to be a strong preference on the current AMC in favor of the status quo, and in a way I find that understandable. After all, we've tried twice to get you, the members, to approve a new way of solving this problem, and both of our proposals have been rejected. Perhaps that indicates that you're all happy with the current system. Consequently, in the absence of a strong protest against the non-voting representative arrangement, I don't see any change happening. On the other hand, it may be that most of you aren't aware that I would effectively disenfranchise you by resigning my office, or by moving out of the region, which would have the same effect. Do you care?

You have elected me to represent you, and it is my intent to do so to the best of my ability, but I have to know what's important to you and what isn't. If this is something you think we need to pursue further, please contact me at rvc6@us.mensa.org, or by mail at 9920 Ridgehaven Drive, Dallas, TX 75238.

Roger Durham