

This Society belongs to its members. No officer, board, or committee has the authority to redefine our governing documents without the consent of the membership. The meaning of our bylaws must remain consistent and reflect the intent of the Society when they were adopted, not the views of any particular administration.

Members must be able to rely on a stable and predictable understanding of our governing documents. When the meaning of the word "woman" was changed without a bylaw amendment and without a vote of the members, the authority of this assembly was bypassed. That is the governance crisis before us today, and why this Resolution is necessary.

Many members have faced intimidation, exclusion, and retaliation simply for disagreeing with this unauthorized reinterpretation. Chapters were told they could not discuss the Resolution. Members were warned that supporting it could affect opportunities within DAR. Committee appointments were denied or revoked, communications were restricted, and new organizing chapters were blocked because members at large supported this Resolution. State leaders attended chapter meetings and intervened when members attempted to raise the Resolution, disrupting orderly parliamentary procedure.

Regardless of one's position on the underlying question, every member should be concerned when debate is discouraged and members face consequences for expressing their views.

We have also heard unfounded claims that restoring the founders' understanding of woman would jeopardize DAR's tax exemptions. There is no evidence to support this assertion. In fact, legal analysis concludes this risk is extremely low. To suggest otherwise is simply an attempt to create fear.

This Resolution is about preserving the authority of the members and protecting the integrity of our bylaws.

I respectfully urge its adoption.