

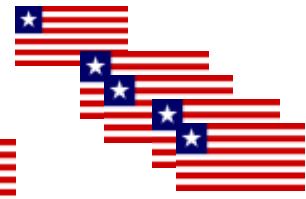
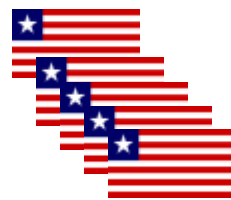
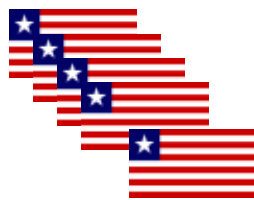
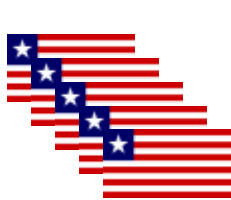


THE BY-LAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE LIBERIAN ASSOCIATION OF  
WORCESTER COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

PREPARED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW & AMENDMENT  
COMMITTEE

**PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE LIBERIAN  
COMMUNITY OF WORCESTER COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS.**

DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2009



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***The By-Laws and Constitution of the Liberian Association of Worcester County, Massachusetts. (LAOWC)***

***PREAMBLE: We the Members of the Liberian Association of Worcester County Massachusetts, in order to establish a truly non-profit organization, recognizing our cultural diversity and enhancing the common good of ourselves and posterity, and further realizing our interest and participation in a responsible self-governance, do hereby establish and ordain this by-law and constitution.***

ARTICLE I

***GENERAL PROVISIONS:***

**Section I.**

THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION: The name of the association shall be (THE LIBERIAN ASSOCIATION OF WORCESTER COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS) 'LAOWC'.

**Section II.**

MOTTO: The Motto of the association shall be "WORKING TOGETHER, PROGRESS IS SURE"

**Section III.**

**Organization Seal/Logo**

The organization shall have a seal bearing the name of the organization, and such other device or inscription as the president may determine, such as, a change of the form and design of the seal of the Association, with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. The organization may adopt such logo (s) as it may deem appropriate.

**Section IV**

**Principal Office:**

The principal office of the organization shall be located at P.O. BOX 3350 Worcester, MA, and shall remain therein, until changed by the Board of Directors.

Article II

**Purpose:**

**Section I.**

Goals: the goals of the organization shall be to promote the interest of, improve the quality of life of, and serve the needs of persons residing within any area serve by the organization

**Section II.**

**OBJECTIVE:**

The objectives for which the Association has been formed shall be, but not limited to the following; [fostering unity among Liberians and non-Liberians, make the Association economically independent, provide good leadership for the Community. (i.e. provide programs that will create the atmosphere for All Liberians and Non -Liberians to engage one another] and,

- (a) To promote unity, peace, mutual understanding and cooperation among her members and all people through educational programs and scholarship,
- (b) To undertake self-help projects which are beneficial to the people in general, with special emphasis on Liberians;
- (c) To promote a forum for the free exchange of ideas, arbitration of disputes, and to create enabling atmosphere for the cultivation of individual self-esteem, talents and leadership skills and,
- (d) To interact with other associations, clubs and organizations, with similar objectives, for the promotion of programs of general interest to our population.

Section III. **Powers**

Pursuant to the primary objectives, the Association shall be empowered to receive gifts, grants, legacies and donations, from any public or private source and to manage said income in accordance with the directions or expressed intent of the donors or grantee or in the absence of such directions, as the Association may determine, for the promotion of any and all of the above mentioned objectives.

Section IV. **Limitation of Powers**

The dissolution or liquidation of Association’s assets or properties shall not be accrued to the benefit of any particular individual(s) or group but shall be giving to other organization (s) with similar nature of functions of duties, and shall only be done after the settling of all the association’s outstanding debts or obligations.

ARTICLE III

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Section I.**

Membership of the Association shall be open to [All Liberians, Liberian Americans, Liberian Spouses, and Non-Liberians of good moral character. A person shall be eligible for membership after completing the requirements as indicated in this document, (i.e. Liberians holding a non-Liberian passport)].

## Section II

The Association shall consist of three categories of membership:

(a) Active Member: a person actively participating in the Association and in good financial standing with the association.

(b) Inactive Member: a person with a continuing interest in the objectives of the Association, who is not in good financial standing with the association and no longer participates actively in the Association's activities such as attend regular meetings of the association.

(c) Honorary Member: a person who becomes a life member by being honored for his/her outstanding contributions to the Association. Such a member may choose to be active or inactive. This membership does not pay monthly due but may make a donation to the organization.

(d). An application form will be required in completing a membership.

(e). A non-refundable monthly due of \$5.00 (five dollars) is require from each person who becomes a member. Monthly due shall be made payable on or before the official meeting held on the first Sunday of each month.

## ARTICLE IV

### ***Membership Privileges:***

#### **Section I**

Active Members in good financial standing with the association are eligible to hold office and to vote at the association regular meetings.

#### **Section II**

Inactive and Honorary Members of the association may attend meetings but without voting rights and are ineligible to hold office.

## ARTICLE V

### ***ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE:***

The administrative structure of this Association shall consist of unpaid trusted individuals directly responsible for but not limited to encouraging all members to work cohesively together for the longevity of the Association. The officer shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary General, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain.

## ARTICLE VI

### *QUALIFICATION OF OFFICERS:*

#### **Section I**

To be a candidate for an elected office, a person must meet the guideline for the office he or she is aspiring.

#### **SECTION II:**

**President:** Any individual aspiring for the position of president must have lived within Worcester County area for a minimum of two years and must have participated in the activities of the Association by either serving on a standing or an adhoc committee appointed by the president or volunteer his/her service (s) to the Association in whatever capacity, must be financially up to date with the association, and he/she must have attended the association meetings for at least twelve (12) months. He or she must be (21) Twenty-one years of age or older. Must have a minimum of a secondary education and must be of a good Moral standing in the community.

#### **SECTION III:**

**Vice President:** Any individual aspiring for the position of vice president shall have the same qualification and meet the same requirement as the president but with an age of twenty years or older.

#### **SECTION IV:**

**Secretary General:** Any individual aspiring for the position of Secretary General shall have lived within Worcester County area for a minimum of one year and must have participated in the Association's activities by either serving on a standing or adhoc committee appointed by the president or volunteer his/her service (s) to the Association in whatever capacity, must be financially up to date with the association, attends association meetings for at least twelve months. He or she must be (21) Twenty-one years of age or older. Must have a minimum of a secondary education, and must be of a good Moral standing in the community.

#### **SECTION V:**

**Financial Secretary:** Any individual aspiring for the position of Financial Secretary shall have lived within Worcester County area for a minimum of one year and have participated in the Association's activities by either serving on a standing or adhoc committee appointed by the president, volunteer his/her service (s) to the Association in whatever capacity, must be financially up to date with the association and not indebted to the IRS, attend association meetings for at least twelve months. He or she must be (21) Twenty-one years of age or older. He /she must have a minimum of a secondary education with a bookkeeping background, and must be of a good Moral department in the community.

## Section VI

**Treasurer:** Any individual aspiring for the position of Treasurer shall have lived within Worcester County area for a minimum of one year and have participated in the Association' activities by either serving on a standing or adhoc committee appointed by the president, volunteer his/her service (s) to the Association in whatever capacity, must be financially up to date with the association and not indebted to IRS, attend association meetings for at least twelve months. He or she must be (21) Twenty-one years of age or older. Must have a minimum of a secondary education, and must be of a good Moral deportment in the community.

## SECTION VII:

**Chaplain:** Any individual aspiring for the position of Chaplain shall have lived within Worcester County area for a minimum of one year and have participated in the Association by either serving on a standing or adhoc committee appointed by the president, volunteer his/her service (s) to the Association in whatever capacity, financially up to date with the association, or attend association meetings for at least twelve months (12). He or she must be Twenty-one (21) years of age or older and must be of a good moral person.

## ARTICLE VII

### *Duties and Responsibilities of the elected officers:*

#### **Section I:**

**The President:** The President shall have executive authority. The president shall preside over all meetings of the Association; the president shall be assisted by the vice president in the discharge of his/her official duties of the Association.

The president shall have the following power;

- (a). The president shall have the power to make appointment of individuals in good financial standing from among the membership with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.
- (b). The president shall appoint committee chairpersons from among the membership in good financial standing in the Association with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors
- (c). The president may in consultation with the Board of Directors, suspend or effect certain rights and privileges contain in this document and exercise emergency power as may be necessary and appropriate to save guard the association.
- (d). The president shall have the right to convene emergency meetings.
- (e). The emergency power vested in the President shall not include suspending the constitution or dismissing an elected officer.
- (f). The President shall ensure that a periodic quarterly financial report of the association is presented by the Financial Secretary on the first Sunday of the beginning preceding quarter of the calendar year at a regular meeting of the organization and copy served to the Board of Directors.
- (g). The President shall give an annual report of the administration at the end of each calendar year and copy served to the Board of Directors.

(h) .The President shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees and sub-committees, with the exception of an audit committee set up by the Board of Directors to investigate an allege financial malpractice by the administration.

## **Section II.**

### **The Vice president:**

He or She shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the president in his/her absence. He/She shall assist the President in carrying out his/her duties and responsibilities as directed by the President.

## **Section III.**

### **The General Secretary:**

He /she shall attend all general meetings and keep minutes of the entire proceedings. The General Secretary shall read minutes of all meetings. The General Secretary shall handle all correspondence of the organization, including, but not limited to issuance of citations for meetings. He /She shall be the custodian of all records of the organization (the Article of Incorporation) and shall perform other duties that the president may assign relative to the effective and smooth running of the association. In the absence of the General Secretary, the President shall appoint a member to serve as acting General Secretary and have full rights and duties as indicated. In the absent of both the president and Vice President, the General Secretary shall act as president.

## **Section IV**

### **Financial Secretary:**

He/ She shall be the chief Financial officer of the Association and one of the signatories to the Association's bank account; He/She shall receive all funds and monies belonging to the Association and turn said items (funds and monies) over to the Treasurer with appropriate documentation, and maintain accurate records thereof. He/ She shall make a brief monthly financial report at each meeting of the Association and copy served to the Board. He/She shall prepare all annual financial reports as maybe required for filing with government agencies or offices; and he/she shall served as ex-official of the finance Committee; and shall perform other duties as may be directed by the president relative to the financial management of the organization. He/she shall give comprehensive financial reports following a major fund raising program (s) at the subsequent general meeting of the Association.

## **Section V.**

### **Treasurer:**

He/ She shall be one of the signatories to the Association's bank account; He/She shall receive and deposit all monies collected by the Financial Secretary in the Association's account, he/she shall be responsible for all funds and monies belonging to the Association and maintain accurate records thereof. He/She shall also serve on the finance Committee and shall perform other duties as may be directed by the president relative to the financial management of the organization. He /She shall ensure that all funds collected (money and



checks, money order) shall be deposited in the Association's account within seventy-two (72) hours after a program is held.

**Section VI.**

**Chaplain:**

He/She shall be responsible to offer invocation and benediction at each meeting. He/She shall be a spiritual counselor to the organization and community. He/she shall serve on the grievance committee.

**Section VII.**

**Parliamentarian:**

He/She shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board, and shall serve as parliamentarian at all meetings.

Article VIII

***Term of Office:***

**Section I**

The term of office of all officers of the organization shall be two (2) years, however, the president and other elected officers shall have the right to seek a second renewable term. They shall serve until their successors are duly elected and installed. The general election shall be held on the last Saturday of April of the election year. The President elect shall set up a transitional team along with the Out going President for a smooth transition. The out going president (along with his General Secretary and Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain) shall give a complete report and transfer of all association's records to the TRANSITIONAL TEAM on or before the inauguration. Inauguration shall be on the last Saturday of June of the election year.

**Section II.**

**Authorized Signatures:**

All officers shall be authorized to endorse and accept on behalf of the organization all promissory notes, drafts, and checks. The signatures of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall be required to bind the organization to a negotiable instrument. In all instances, such signatures and authorities must be authorized /approved by the Board of Directors. The two bonded officers who are authorized signee to the Association's bank account (s) are the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer.

Article IX

***General Elections:***

## **Section I.:**

- a). Election of all officers shall be held once every two (2) years at a public place.
- b). Voting shall be by secret ballots.
- c). All elected officers shall be sworn in by the Chairman of the Board of Directors. In the event of his/her absence, the sworn in shall be conducted by any person designated to do so.
- d). only members in good financial standing, not obligated to the association (due) shall participate in the voting process.
- e). Challenges to the conduct and results of the election shall be made immediately within twenty four (24) hours upon the announcement of the election results in writing to the election committee. The Board shall take immediate steps with due diligence to dispose of all such matters during its setting. The Board shall have the power to investigate the conduct of the elections and institute corrective measures, if necessary. A winner is declared only when he or she secure a fifty-one (51%) of the total vote cast or single majority.

## **Section II. Election Commission:**

a). The Election commission shall be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors six (6) months prior to election; the commission shall consist of a chair person and two other members. The persons appointed to serve on the commission shall be active members in the organization. The commission shall be responsible for overseeing all elections and setting such rules as necessary for the proper conduct of the elections. Members of the commission shall not be member of any participating (political) camp.

b). The commission shall scrutinize candidates for qualification and eligibility, certify eligible voters, conduct elections, and declare results.

c). Voter Registration: The Election commission shall arrange for the registration of persons qualify to vote. A non-refundable voter registration fee of US\$5.00 shall be Assessed, all proceeds shall be applied towards the election and inauguration expenses. All proceeds assessed during the election process shall be deposited with the association's treasurer.

d). Absentee ballot: In the case of an emergency, whereby a member shall not be present to cast his or her vote, an absentee ballot shall be allowed provided he or she meets the guidelines of the election commission.

e). Any person running for the position of president must submit a full list of candidates on his/her team to the commission two (2) weeks, after been certify as a

candidate for the election. A team for an election shall constitute the following: President, Vice President, General Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasure and Chaplain.

f). The Election Commission shall be a Neutral and independent body; the President or The Board of Directors shall not dictate to the commission. The Commission through its chairman shall keep the president, the Board of Directors and the Community fully inform of her activities from the on set to the end of the electoral process. The chairperson of the election commission shall be the spoke person of the commission. The president with the full consent of the Board of Directors shall have the right to dissolve the election commission on grounds that the commission is no longer neutral or in violation of its duties and functions.

## Article X

### *The Board of Directors:*

#### **Section I.**

The Board of Directors shall be the final arbiter of constitutional issues. The Board of Directors shall consist of five members, and headed by a Chairman, Vice Chairman and a Secretary. The Chairman of the Board must be well articulate on issues of the community and neighbor organizations. The chairman of the Board and its members must be at least a community college student or its equivalent. If the Board loses the confidence of the Community on a particular situation, the community/organization can than meet under the chairmanship of any acceptable person from the community and select a four persons committee including any member selected by the Board of Directors to resolve whatever issues or situations that may have arise, the organization can than moved on to other business.

#### **Section II.**

*The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors shall be the following:*

- a) Make amendments when deem necessary with the consent of the general membership. A proposed amendment shall be submitted in writing to the general membership at a regular meeting of the association. All proposed amendments shall be considered ratified when approved by 2/3 majority of the membership in attendance. The Board shall oversee the administration of the association; however, the Board **is not and shall not be** the administrator of the association. The destinated signees of the accounts of the association shall produce evidence or document of not being indebted to the Internal Revenue

Services of the Federal and Local Government to the Board of Directors. The Board shall verify the status of the designated signers with IRS.

- b) Allocate resources of the organization and monitor the use of those resources.
- c) Review the annual work plans and approve the budgets of the organization as developed/prepare by the administration, (President and officers).
- d) Conflicts: Any member of the Board who is directly or indirectly involved in a matter under investigation, shall not be part of the investigating team, or exercise the right to vote in the determination of the final outcome. If the board member (s) affected is the chairman or any other official of the Board, such official shall be temporally suspended from performing his/her official duties until the investigation is conducted.
- e) Election of officers: The Board of Directors shall elect its own officers from its membership, and adopt written rules for its operation.
- f) All members of the Board of Directors shall be financially current with the Association, any Board member (s) who is not current with the Association shall be given two months (two consecutive meetings) to regularize his /her obligation, if not, by the third meeting that Board member shall be automatically consider suspended, and ban from participating in his/ her Board duties. At the fifth meeting of the Association, if that Board member (s) is not current or up to date financially with the Association, a by-election shall be held to replace the Board member (s).
- g) The Board of Directors shall not convene a general membership meeting without the approval of the President (administration).
- h) The general membership of the association shall at anytime convene a meeting to discuss issues of permanent importance affecting the association with recommendation (s) to the administration and a copy served to the board of directors.

## Article XI

### *Standing Committees:*

#### **Section I**

##### **Finance Committee:**

Duties shall include, but not limited to:

- a). Reviewing the fiscal condition of the organization
- b) Keeping abreast of funding sources
- c). Preparing an annual budget
- d) Fund raising activities

#### **Section II.**

##### **Rules and Resolution Committee:**

Duties shall include, but not limited to, the drafting into proper form, all proposed amendments to the by-laws and constitution, and the presentation of opinions on the constitutionality of all proposed amendments to the by-laws and constitution.

#### **Section III.**

##### **Membership Committee:**

Duties shall include but not limited to receiving and evaluating applications and request for admission to the association and submitting recommendations to the administration on memberships. This committee shall be responsible to lunch membership drives among the various communities the association serves.

#### **Section IV.**

##### **Social/Planning Committee:**

This Committee shall be responsible to organize events not limited to social events for the association; this committee shall be responsible to organize fund raising events in collaboration with the finance committee for the association. All national holidays' activities shall be taking care off by the social and planning committee. The Chairperson of this committee shall serve as vice chairperson on the finance committee. The social and planning committee shall be responsible for inauguration activities.

## Article XII

### *Meetings:*

#### **Section I:**

The Regular monthly meeting of the association shall be held on the first Sunday of each month of the year, unless otherwise designated. A quorum for all general meetings of the association shall consist of fifteen (15) members of the Association, whereas a simple majority shall constitute a quorum for meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **Section II:**

**Rules of Conduct:** Roberts's Rules of Order, revised, shall govern all meetings, except otherwise provided for, in the by-laws of the organization. At all times, members and officers are to conduct themselves with civility and decorum, respecting the rights, dignity and persons of other and themselves.

### Article XIII

#### ***Impeachment:***

Due process of the law shall be observed. Impeachment proceedings shall give the general membership the right to remove any elected officer from office in the event of loss of accreditation. If any elected officer engages in any unlawful activities such as extortion, abuse of power, neglect of duties and responsibilities, embezzlement, bribery, and using the organization for self gain, that officer shall be subjected to disciplinary action and or impeachment by 2/3 majority vote of the membership of the association at a regular meeting.

### Article XIV

#### ***Death, Sickness, and Birth:***

Any death occurring outside of the United States (Africa), the bereaved family shall be presented with a sympathy card on behalf of the organization. Sickness of any member requiring hospitalization, the organization shall present the sick member with a get well card. In the event of Birth in the community, the association shall present the proud parents with a congratulation card. In the event of death in the organization, the president shall evoke article 7, section 1d of the constitution to address the sad event.

### Article XV

#### ***Oath of office:***

Every elected officer shall be required to subscribe to the solemn oath of affirmation of office and duties as follows;

**I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT I WILL UPHOLD, PROTECT AND DEFEND THE BY-LAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE LIBERIAN ASSOCIATION OF WORCESTER COUNTY AND WILL FAITHFULLY AND HONORABLY DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF —SO HELP ME GOD.**

### Article XVI

#### ***Fiscal Year***

The Fiscal Year of the organization shall end on the last day of the month of June of the election year to June of the following year.

## Article XVII

### *Disagreement*

In an event of a disagreement on an issue (s) between the Board of Directors and the Administration, either one of them with the full knowledge of the other could call on an elder(s) (Pastors, Older statement, Respectable parents) in the community to kindly intervene and negotiate what ever differences that may exist among them. The decision from the elders is final. The other party (The Board of Directors or the Administration) shall participate in the selection of the elders.

## Article XVIII

### *Delinquent Member:*

#### **Section I:**

All elected officers of the Association shall not be delinquent or financially obligated to the Association, all elected officers (President, Vice President, Secretary General, Financial Secretary, and Chaplain) shall always be up to date financially with the Association, if any elected officer (s) is financially obligated to the Association, he/She shall be given two months (Two consecutive meetings) to regularize his/her obligation with the Association, if he /she fails by the third meetings, he /she shall be suspended until payment is made and by the fourth meeting if not current a by- election shall be held or the president can appoint someone to temporarily serve that position until at the appropriate time necessary for a by- election to be held either one of the two is preferable to the President.

#### **Section II:**

##### **General membership**

Any member (s) of the Association who is indebted or in arrear with the Association shall be given three months (three meetings period) or 90 days to settled his/her arrear with the Association, within the three months period contact should be made with the individual by the administration in reference to the arrear, if the individual (s) fails to settled his/her arrear with the association, he/she shall not be allow to participate in the association's activities (celebration of events, recognitions, enjoy other benefits as may be determine by the administration) until he/she settle his /her arrear. There shall be no financial negotiation/arrangement whatsoever by the administration or election commission with any expiring candidate (s) for any elected office (s) of the association.

## Article XIX

### *Exemption:*

All individuals elected in office before the adoption and approval of this by-laws and constitution that maybe in violation of this document (i.e. qualification for position) shall

be exempted from removal of office (s) until the administration term expired. All elected officers and member of the Association shall be held accountable to this by-laws and constitution following its approval by the president

ARTICLE XX

***ADOPTED:***

All other business not covered by this by-laws and constitution shall be decided by the general membership of the association during its regular monthly meetings as it deem necessary.

***With faith in the Power of the almighty GOD, WE THE MEMBERS OF THE Liberian Association of Worcester County and the Constitutional Review and amendment Committee hereby signed these by-laws and constitution.***

***Review, amended and completed in the city of Worcester, Worcester County, Massachusetts on this Fifteen day of February 2009.***

*Signed:*

*Constitutional Review Committee Members:*

**Rev. Jesse Gibson**

**Mr. Charles Artey**

**Mr. James Y. Massa**

**Mrs. Catherine Fannoh/ Vice Chairman**

**Mr. Charles K. Hiamah /Chairman**

Approved:

**Ms. Fatuma Zinnah**

**President of the Liberian Association of Worcester County  
Worcester, Massachusetts**



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*Signed:*

*Constitutional Review & amendment Committee Members:*

*Jesse Gibson*  
Rev. Jesse Gibson

*Charles Artep*  
Dr. Charles Artep

*James P. Massa*  
Dr. James P. Massa

*Catherine Sannoh*  
Mrs. Catherine Sannoh / Vice Chairman

*Charles A. Siamah*  
Dr. Charles A. Siamah / Chairman

Approved:

*Fatuma Zinnah 3/1/09*  
Ms. Fatuma Zinnah

**President of the Liberian Association  
of Worcester County, Worcester  
Massachusetts:**