2016 LifeRing Bylaws

Adopted by the
LifeRing Constitutional Congress on February 17, 2001, at Brooksville, Florida;
as amended by the
Second Annual Congress on March 17, 2002, at Berkeley, California;
Third Annual Congress on March 2, 2003, at Brooksville, Florida;
Fourth Annual Congress on March 28, 2004, at Berkeley, California;
Sixth Annual Congress on March 28, 2006, at Berkeley, California;
Tenth Annual Congress on June 6, 2010, at Denver, Colorado;
Thirteen Annual Congress on June 2, 2013, at Denver, Colorado;
Fifteen Annual Congress on May 31, 2015, at Salt Lake City, Utah;
and the Sixteen Annual Congress on June 5, 2016, San Diego, California.

Preamble

We the members of LifeRing Secular Recovery, in order to establish a free-standing, democratic recovery support network based on abstinence, secularity and self-help, adopt the following Bylaws:

Article 1. Purposes

LifeRing is chartered as a nonprofit corporation (LifeRing, Inc.) to serve recovering alcoholics and addicts, and persons involved in relationships with them, and the general public, by holding meetings and public forums and similar activities, and by publishing and disseminating educational materials relative to alcoholism, addiction and recovery therefrom, and by engaging in all other activities incidental or appropriate thereto, all based on the principles of abstinence, secularity and self-help.

Article 2. Name

The meetings, public forums and similar activities dedicated to the aforesaid purpose shall have the name “LifeRing Secular Recovery.”

Article 3. Membership

The only requirement for membership in LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings is a desire to abstain from the use of alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs.

Article 4. Meetings

4.1. Two or more persons who come together for the purpose of abstinence, secularity and self-help using the LifeRing name constitute a meeting of LifeRing Secular Recovery.

4.2. A meeting may come together either face-to-face or via electronic communication, except as otherwise provided in sections 5.1 and 6.7 below.

4.3. Each LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting shall be bound by the LifeRing Meeting Charter contained in Article 11 of these Bylaws.

4.4. Meetings of LifeRing Secular Recovery are self-supporting, and are autonomous and independent except insofar as their activity affects other LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings or the LifeRing organization as a whole.

Article 5. Annual LifeRing Congress

5.1. The meetings of LifeRing Secular Recovery, through their delegates, shall assemble face-to-face on a regular annual basis as the LifeRing Congress.

5.2. Each public LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting may select one delegate to the Congress.

> 5.2.1. A meeting is public for the purposes of these Bylaws if it convenes in a location accessible to the public and if its location, day and time are posted in a manner likely to give public notice. The term "location" shall also include Internet address.
>
> 5.2.2. The date that a meeting must be in place in order to be eligible to send a delegate to the annual Congress shall be forty-five (45) days before the Congress. [Added 2002.]

5.3. Each member of a LifeRing Secular Recovery meeting may cast one vote for a Congress delegate and, in case of membership in more than one meeting, may select the meeting in which to cast that vote.

5.4. Procedures for electing meeting delegates shall be consistent with generally accepted principles of democracy and fairness, striving for simplicity and consensus. At meetings at in-patient facilities and at halfway houses and similar institutions with highly transient populations, or in the event any meeting fails to elect a delegate, the convenor shall be recognized as the delegate. [Second sentence added 2002 and amended 2013.]

> 5.4.1. Each delegate's name, contact information, and basis of eligibility for serving as a delegate shall be registered with the Registrar, who will set the registration deadline; this will be published three months in advance of Congress. [added 2013 and Amended 2016.]

5.5. Each registered delegate may cast one vote at the Congress, without regard to the number of unique qualifications held by that delegate. [Amended 2013.]

5.6. Current members of the Board of Directors, officers, and current Regional Representatives shall be delegates to the Congress. [Amended 2010.]

5.7. The LifeRing Congress is the supreme deliberative and legislative body of the organization.

5.8. The two-thirds majority of the Congress is binding on the Board of Directors and on the officers and operational entities.

5.9. The Congress may not abrogate or substantially amend the fundamental purposes for which LifeRing is chartered.

5.10. Robert's Rules of Order shall apply to the procedures of the Congress to the extent they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with procedural rules the Congress may adopt.

Article 6. Board of Directors

6.1. LifeRing Inc. shall have a Board of Directors consisting of nine members. [Amended 2006.]

6.2. Board members shall serve three-year terms.

6.3. Three members of the Board shall be elected at each Congress. [Amended 2006.]

6.4. The Board of Directors shall have the following powers and duties:

6.4.1. The Board shall control the budgets and audit the finances of the operating entities in such a way as to implement the consensus of the Congress and to safeguard the financial integrity of the organization.

6.4.2. In order to protect the good name of the LifeRing organization, the Board shall have the power to suspend or revoke any charter, to refuse to issue a charter, or refuse to recognize a meeting as a legitimate LifeRing entity in cases where a group, or its convenor, persistently and substantially violates a fundamental principle of LifeRing, Inc. as to abstinence, secularity or self-help, or persistently and substantially violates a policy statement currently published by LifeRing. Such actions may be appealed to the Annual Meeting Congress at the request of the meeting convenor involved. [as amended by congress in Salt Lake City and voted on by the general delegation in the 2015 election]

6.4.3. The Board shall supervise, appoint, and remove the officers defined in Article 7 and the coordinators of the operating entities defined in Article 8.

6.4.4. The Board shall have the power to form temporary working committees, advisory bodies, and task forces as may be required.

6.4.5. The Board shall make an annual written report on its activities and its financial stewardship to the Congress.

6.4.6. The Board shall set the time and place of the next Congress.

6.4.7. The Board shall comply with all provisions of the law applicable to nonprofit charitable corporations.

6.4.8. The Board shall have the power to grant a charter to one not-for-profit organization in each geographical jurisdiction, empowering that organization to issue and to suspend or revoke meeting charters within that geographical jurisdiction, on terms consistent with these Bylaws. [Added 2004.]

6.4.9. The Board shall have the power to appoint and remove Regional Representatives. Such Regional Representatives shall provide support to existing meetings and encouragement for the formation of new meetings within a region specified by the Board, including one or more on-line regions. The responsibilities of the Regional Representatives shall be specified by the Board. [Added 2010.]

6.4.9.1. The Board shall conform, if practicable, the boundaries of the Regional Representatives to the boundaries of any not-for-profit organizations established under Article 6.4.8. [Added 2010.]

6.4.9.2. Regional Representatives may appoint Area Representatives within a portion of their Region to assist them. [Added 2010.]

6.5. A Board member shall be a person in recovery from a substance addiction, a member of LifeRing Secular Recovery, at least 21 years old, and shall have abstained from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs continuously for at least two years prior to commencing service.

6.6. A Board member who knowingly consumes alcohol or illicit or non-medically indicated drugs shall be deemed to have resigned effective immediately.

6.7. Annual meeting. The Board shall meet face-to-face each year at the conclusion of each annual Congress, if feasible; and newly elected directors will begin their service at the commencement of that meeting, unless the election is decided by Absentee Ballot as described in Article 12, in which case the previous holders of those seats may vote at that board meeting. [Added 2003 and Amended 2013.]

6.8. Special meetings. The Board may also meet at such other times and places as may be appropriate. Except at the Annual Meeting described in paragraph 6.7 any mode of electronic communication which permits all directors to communicate in real time with all others shall be lawful for purposes of a Board meeting under these Bylaws.

6.9. Any director may convene a Board meeting by giving written notice at least seven days in advance to all other Board members stating the time, place and proposed business of the meeting. Any notice, consent or waiver that must be given in writing under these Bylaws may be given via email.

6.10. Five directors shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Board. [Added 2003 and Amended 2013.]

6.11. The Board may take action without a meeting, or may meet on shortened notice, provided all directors consent to the action and/or waive notice in writing. These consents and/or waivers shall be made part of the minutes.

6.12. If a Board member is absent from three or more board meetings in any twelve-month period, or persistently and substantially acts in a way that injures the good name of the organization, the remaining directors, upon giving at least thirty days written notice and opportunity to be heard, by their unanimous vote may remove that director from the Board. [Amended 2016.]

6.13. In case of a premature vacancy on the Board, the remaining Board members shall elect a replacement to serve until the next Congress, at which time a special election shall be held to fill any unexpired term.

6.14. Board members may serve successive terms without limitation.

6.15. No Board member or officer shall have the power to bind the corporation to any contract or to pledge its credit or incur any other liability or obligation without prior authorization by the Board.

6.16. Board members shall serve without compensation. No Board member shall receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with service to LifeRing, Inc. or its entities.

6.17. The Board, at the first meeting after the conclusion of the Annual LifeRing Election, shall elect a Chair of the Board of Directors for the following year. The Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Board as a whole. Actions to elect or remove the Chair shall require an absolute majority of the Board (five votes). The Chair shall be empowered to represent the Board to outside entities and shall take on other responsibilities as the Board shall assign. [as amended by congress in Salt Lake City and voted on by the general delegation in the 2015 election]

Article 7. Officers

7.1. LifeRing Inc. shall have the officers required by law, namely an Executive Director, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. In addition, the Board may appoint one or more Coordinators to serve under the direction of the Executive Director. Said Coordinators shall have such responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

7.1.1. The Executive Director shall serve as the organization's chief executive officer, shall comply with the duties required by the law for such an officer, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

7.1.2. The Treasurer shall comply with the duties required by the law, shall keep the books and render financial reports, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate. [Amended 2010.]

7.1.3. The Secretary shall comply with the duties required by the law, shall keep minutes of Board meetings, and shall have such other responsibilities as the Board may delegate.

7.2. The officers shall be appointed by and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

7.3. An officer shall be a person in recovery from a substance addiction, a member of LifeRing Secular Recovery, at least 21 years old, and shall have abstained from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs continuously for at least one year prior to commencing service.

7.4. An officer who knowingly consumes alcohol or illicit or non-medically indicated drugs shall be deemed to have resigned effective immediately.

7.5. Officers shall serve without compensation.

Article 8. Operational Entities

8.1. LifeRing shall maintain a Service Center and a Press and such other operational entities as the Board may establish subject to ratification by the next following Congress.

8.2. Service Center

8.2.1. This entity shall be known as the LifeRing Secular Recovery Service Center.

8.2.2. The purpose of the Service Center shall be to serve the meetings. Toward that end, it shall:

8.2.2.1. Publish and maintain an online list of both face-to-face and electronic LifeRing Secular Recovery meetings.

8.2.2.2. Act as a reference for meeting space providers and supply them with required documentation concerning the status of LifeRing, Inc. and of the particular meeting.

8.2.2.3. Maintain an Internet presence for LifeRing Secular Recovery.

8.2.2.4. Operate as an information and referral service for the meetings using all appropriate media.

8.2.2.5. Operate a speakers' bureau.

8.2.2.6. Conduct workshops and similar educational events for convenors and other members and the general public.

8.2.2.7. Provide a source of supplies for meetings.

8.2.2.8. Receive and account for financial contributions from the meetings.

8.2.2.9. Do all other things necessary and appropriate for the creation of new meetings and the support of existing ones.

8.3. Press

8.3.1. This entity shall be known as LifeRing Press.

8.3.2. LifeRing Press shall publish and distribute pamphlets, books, and other-media publications for the purpose of educating members and the general public about the purpose and methods of LifeRing Secular Recovery.

8.4. Professional Advisory Board. The Board of Directors shall establish the LifeRing Professional Advisory Board, consisting of professionals in the chemical dependency treatment field and in related areas who are sympathetic to the aims of LifeRing Secular Recovery and are in a position to assist with the progress of the LifeRing organization. The powers of the LifeRing Professional Advisory Board shall be advisory only. [Added 2006.]

Article 9. Principal Office

The principal office of the corporation for the transaction of business is located in Alameda County, California. The corporation may establish additional offices as may be lawful and appropriate.

Article 10. Amendments

The Congress may amend these Bylaws by a two-thirds majority, except that the Congress shall have no power to amend the Articles of Incorporation of LifeRing Inc. or any statement in these Bylaws that appears in the Articles of Incorporation.

Article 11. LifeRing Meeting Charter

LifeRing, Inc. hereby grants the _____ (location or Internet address) meeting this charter to display the LifeRing logo and to use the name, "LifeRing Secular Recovery" and any short forms thereof, to promote abstinence, secularity and self-help. This charter is valid so long as the Meeting remains actively dedicated to these goals. For the duration of this charter, LifeRing Secular Recovery Service Center promises to list the Meeting on the LifeRing meeting list, to notify the Meeting of any publications or events that may affect it, to include the Meeting in the democratic internal decision-making process of LifeRing, Inc. pursuant to the LifeRing Bylaws, and to serve the Meeting's needs to the best of its

ability. In turn, the Meeting promises to keep the LSR Service Center informed of the current name, address, phone number, and if applicable, email address of at least one contact person for the Meeting, to notify the Center promptly of any change in its meeting time, place, Internet address if applicable, or description, and to support LifeRing, Inc. financially to the extent the Meeting sees fit. LifeRing, Inc., owner of the LifeRing logo and of the service mark "LifeRing Secular Recovery," is chartered as a nonprofit corporation to serve recovering alcoholics and addicts, and the general public, by organizing meetings dedicated to sobriety, secularity and self-help, and by providing educational information toward that end. By "sobriety" LifeRing means complete abstinence from alcohol and illicit or non-medically indicated drugs.

[Signatures on behalf of LifeRing Inc. and of Meeting]

Article 12. Absentee Elections [Added 2013.]

12.1. Matters considered by Congress pertaining to the following shall trigger a subsequent Absentee Election:

12.1.1. Proposed Bylaws amendments ratified by Congress.

12.1.2. Elections for positions on the Board of Directors.

12.1.3. Those directives described in Article 5.8 and ratified by Congress.

12.2. Each registered delegate may cast one vote in the Absentee Election, without regard to the number of unique qualifications held by that delegate.

12.3. For motions specified in Section 12.1, a simple majority vote at Congress shall constitute ratification for a subsequent Absentee Ballot vote.

12.4. Elections specified in Section 12.1 shall proceed according to a customary standard voting method approved by the Board of Directors no less than thirty days prior to Congress and specified in the Absentee Ballot.

12.4.1. The Board of Directors may authorize a form of preferential voting.

12.4.2. The Board of Directors may authorize that a plurality shall elect.

12.4.3. The lowest-ranking winning candidates for elections to the Board of Directors shall receive the shortest-term seats.

12.5. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Registrar for the Absentee Election, and the Registrar's responsibilities shall include the following:

12.5.1. Prepare the Absentee Ballot for approval by the Board of Directors, including all measures ratified by Congress.

12.5.2. Receive absentee votes from delegates.

12.5.3. Verify the validity of each vote.

12.5.4. Tally the votes and certify the results.

12.5.5 Publicly post the results within ten days of the close of voting.

12.6. The Absentee Ballot shall be publicly posted by the Board of Directors within ten days of the close of Congress, and voting shall commence immediately and continue for thirty days past the date of public posting.

Article 13. Motions and Nominations to Congress [Added 2013.]

13.1. Motions and nominations submitted to Congress by delegates in absentia must be submitted in writing to the Registrar at least thirty days prior to Congress.

13.2 The registrar shall present absentee motions and nominations to Congress.

13.3 All absentee motions are subject to amendment by Congress.

13.4 The Registrar, with approval by the Board of Directors, shall publish uniform guidelines outlining documentation required of all nominees three months in advance of Congress.

[End]