

# **BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT**

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## **NATIONAL CONSTITUTION**

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### **DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT:**

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# **NATIONAL CONSTITUTION OF BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT (BIG)**

## **P R E A M B L E**

We believe that Blacks in government should have the opportunity for full, complete and equitable access to jobs, education, advancement, housing and health services, and that they must have recourse in adverse situations without discrimination because of race.

We further believe that Blacks should unite in order to obtain and secure the rights and privileges of full citizenship participation. It is necessary to develop a mechanism for inclusion, growth and power for all present and future Black employees in Federal, State and local governments.

Therefore, we, the members of Blacks In Government (BIG), in order to act as an advocate for the employment and general welfare of Blacks employed in Federal, State and local governments and to establish a national network of Black Federal, State and local government employees, do hereby establish this constitution for a national organization of Blacks in government.

(JAN 99)

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME**

- Section 1. The name of this organization shall be Blacks In Government (BIG).
- Section 2. The seal of the organization shall be in the form of two concentric circles and shall bear the words "Blacks In Government" inscribed in the space between the inner and outer circle and/or the letters BIG inscribed in the space inside the inner circle.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Section 1. To be an advocate of equal opportunity for Blacks in government.
- Section 2. To eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination against Blacks in government.
- Section 3. To promote professionalism among Blacks in government.
- Section 4. To develop and promote programs which will enhance ethnic pride and educational opportunities for Blacks in government.
- Section 5. To establish a mechanism for the gathering and dissemination of information to Blacks in government.
- Section 6. To provide a nonpartisan platform on major issues of local, regional, and national significance that affect Blacks in government .

## **ARTICLE III**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION**

- Section 1. National Organization. The national organization shall consist of persons, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, political affiliation, marital status or handicapped condition who have met the membership requirements prescribed herein.
- Section 2. National Officer. The National officers of Blacks In Government (BIG) shall be the members of the Board of Directors and the elected (National) officers. All officers who are authorized to sign checks and/or receive funds shall be bonded and the cost of the bonds shall be paid for by the organization.
- A. Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall determine the policy of the organization and has authority to undertake all appropriate actions requiring national attention and may exercise all powers specifically conferred or implied herein.

The Board of Directors shall consist of no less than twelve (12) nor more than twenty-five (25) elected and voting members. Each region or single Chapter representing a Region shall elect two (2) Regional Directors. Additionally, three (3) directors shall be the following elected National officers: the President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary.

B. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall implement the policies established by the Board of Directors through programs developed expressly for such purposes. The Executive Committee shall transact routine business between meetings of the Board of Directors and act in emergency situations. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Executive Vice President, three Vice Presidents, Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President

The Immediate Past President who leaves office without prejudice shall serve as a nonvoting member of the Executive Committee for a period not to exceed two (2) years. The Immediate Past President shall be entitled to all rights of Executive Committee members with the exception of voting.

### Section 3. Regional Councils.

A. Jurisdiction. Regional Councils shall represent the Chapters located within their geographical areas as defined below:

#### Region I

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.

#### Region II

New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands.

#### Region III

Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia.

#### Region IV

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.

#### Region V

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin.

#### Region VI

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas.

#### Region VII

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska.

#### Region VIII

Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming.

#### Region IX

Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, Trust Territory of the Pacific Island, American Samoa.

#### Region X

Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington.

#### Region XI

District of Columbia, Charles County, Maryland; Montgomery County, Maryland; Prince George's County, Maryland; Alexandria City, Virginia; Fairfax City, Virginia; Falls Church, Virginia; Arlington City, Virginia; Loudon County, Virginia; Prince Williams County, Virginia.

### B. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The Regional Councils shall act as the local advisors to the Board of Directors and the National Organization.
2. The Regional Councils shall perform the following functions which may be added to or deleted at the discretion of the Board of Directors:
  - (a) Identify and develop common strategies to resolve Regional problems;
  - (b) Develop a mechanism to share ideas, concerns, problems, information and innovations among Chapters in the Region, and with the National Organization;
  - (c) Present written concerns, resolutions, recommendations, and proposals to the Board of Directors and/or the President; and
  - (d) Convene periodic meetings of the Council as decided by the representatives of the Council.

### C. Composition

1. Regional Council Officers shall include, but not be limited to the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. Each Regional Council shall consist of three (3) members elected by each Chapter.
3. Members of the National Board of Directors, elected by that Region, shall serve as nonvoting members.

Section 4.      Chapters.

- A. Chapters shall conduct programs and activities that are in accord with the objectives of Blacks In Government (BIG).
- B. Chapters may be established in a city or community or other geographical entity and may include one or more Federal, state, county or local agencies.
- C. Chapter officers shall include, but not be limited to President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- D. All Chapters shall belong to Regional Councils within its jurisdiction as defined in this constitution.

**ARTICLE IV**

**MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1.      Individual Membership. Any person who is in accord with the philosophy, principles, policies, and objectives of this organization, and agrees to adhere to the same, may become a member of this organization with the consent of the Board of Directors by paying the annual membership fee, provided he or she is qualified as stated herein.

Section 2.      Membership Categories. There shall be three categories of individual membership: Regular, Associate, and Life. In addition, the Board of Directors is empowered to create additional categories, and issue appropriate certificates. Individual membership in the organization at the National level is a requirement for Chapter membership.

A. Regular Memberships.

(1) Any employee or retiree of the Federal, state or a local government who is in accord with the principles, policies and objectives of the organization and who agrees to adhere to the same, may become a Regular Member of this organization with the consent of the Board of Directors and by paying the annual membership fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).

(2) Regular members shall be accorded all privileges of membership, except being National Delegates unless they are also Chapter members.

(3) Any person who, at the time of being separated--without prejudice--from employment by the Federal or a state or local government, was a Regular Member in good standing is eligible for Regular membership in this organization.

(4) Any person who, at the time of being separated--with prejudice--from employment by the Federal, state, or local government and such separation is grieved, and that person is a member in good standing, is eligible for continued regular membership in this organization until such grievance is resolved.

B. Associate Membership.

(1) Any person who is in accord with the principles, policies, and objectives of the organization and who agrees to adhere to the same, may become an Associate Member of this organization with the consent of the Board of Directors and by paying the Associate membership fee of fifteen dollars (\$15.00).

(2) Such members shall be accorded all rights and privileges of membership except those of voting and holding elective offices.

C. Life Memberships.

(1) Any person who is in accord with the principles, policies, and objectives of the organization and who agrees to adhere to the same, may become a Life Member of this organization with the consent of the Board of Directors and by paying the Life membership fee of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00).

(2) Such members shall be accorded all rights and privileges of membership except that only those who also are qualified as Regular members shall be eligible to vote or hold elective office.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **CHAPTER FORMATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall be required to assist in the formation of the first (2) chapters in any Region and may delegate responsibility for further chapter formation to the Regional Council.

Section 2. A. Any group of persons meeting the requirements of regular membership may file a letter of Chapter intent with the national Board of Directors of Blacks In Government (BIG).

B. The letter of intent should outline the approximate city, county and state of the proposed chapter's estimated membership, signature of the petitioning persons, and any other information documenting potential discharge of the aspirations of Blacks In Government (BIG) as may be requested by the Board of Directors.

C. Petitioning groups must secure ten (10) members before chapter status may be granted. In the event a petitioning group cannot secure ten (10) members within six (6) months, they may be considered for exemption by the National Board of Directors.

Section 3. Both the Board of Directors and the Regional Councils shall set a reasonable time for chapter formation based on local circumstances of the petitioning

group. A petitioning group shall not be held in abeyance for longer than six (6) months.

Section 4. Chapters, not exempted by the National Board of Directors, must maintain at least ten (10) regular active, dues-paying members in order to remain in active status. The National Treasurer will notify the Regional President and the Regional Directors of any Chapter, not exempted in their jurisdiction, not having ten (10) regular active dues-paying members. If the Regional President cannot augment a Chapter's membership to the required number in sixty (60) days from date of such notification, the Chapter may be determined inactive by the Board of Directors and action taken to assist in its reactivation. The National Treasurer is responsible for determining, (60 days prior to the National Delegates Assembly) whether chapters are in an active or inactive status. Any nonexempt Chapter not having ten (10) regular active dues-paying members at this time will be ineligible to have delegates.

Section 5. Chapter Reporting Requirements.

Chapters shall file periodic written reports as prescribed by the National Board of Directors. All reports shall be submitted to the National office.

- Section 6.
- A. The National President shall be responsible for issuance of a Chapter Charter of Authority as prescribed by the National Board of Directors.
  - B. Only the Board of Directors may suspend or terminate a Chapter or affiliation. The Board termination or suspension must be confirmed by vote of the Delegates at the next Annual National Delegates Assembly.
  - C. A Chapter may be suspended when found to be in violation of the National Constitution.

## ARTICLE VI

### DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS AND NATIONAL STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall determine the policy of the organization and has authority to undertake all appropriate actions requiring national attention and may exercise all powers specifically conferred or implied within this Constitution. The Board of Directors supervises the election process including resolving disputes; reports to the membership; elects its Chair and Vice Chair; sets date, time and place of the Annual National Training Conference and Delegates Assembly, and approves the duties and salaries of paid staff.

- A. A Regional Director shall serve as a member of the Board of Directors; shall be a nonvoting member of the Regional Council; shall present written reports on the activities of the Regional Council to the Board of Directors; and shall perform other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors.



B. Directors-at-Large shall perform duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

**PROVISO:** Effective 1 January 2000, Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph B shall be deleted in entirety.

Section 2.      National Officers.

A. Chair of the Board of Directors. Serves as Chair of the Board of Directors; officially transmits the policies which have been approved by the Board of Directors; recommends to the Board of Directors changes in policies and procedures; presents the organization's annual report at the Annual Delegates Assembly; appoints committee chairs of the Board with the consent of the Board and is an ex-officio member of all Board committees; requires reports on the activities of the Regional Councils and the Chapters (through Board Directors from the Regions), and Board committees; performs such functions and exercise such other authorities as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors. The Chair of the Board cannot be a member of the Executive Committee.

B. Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors. The Vice-Chair of the Board shall assume and perform all the duties and functions of the Chair in the latter's absence or disability. The Vice-Chair of the Board cannot be a member of the Executive Committee.

C. President. The President shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the National Nominating and Election Committees. In addition, the President shall guide the implementation of policies which have been approved by the Board of Directors; shall recommend to the Board of Directors changes in policies and procedures; shall present the organization's annual report at the Annual Training Conference; shall countersign, with the Secretary, requisitions for the disbursement of funds; shall countersign with the Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer (in the absence of the Treasurer) checks drawn on the organization's treasury; shall receive reports on activities of the Regional Councils and the Chapters; shall assure notification of Chapters and Regional Councils of National meetings; shall appoint a Parliamentarian and a Historian/Librarian; and shall perform such functions and exercise such other authorities as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors; shall directly supervise the work of any National salaried staff and shall be accountable to the Board of Directors regarding the staff.

D. Executive Vice President. In the absence of the President or in the event of disability of the President, the Executive Vice President shall perform all the duties and functions of the President. During such a period, the Executive Vice President shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions placed upon the President. The Executive Vice-President shall also serve as Regional Liaison. The Executive Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President.

E. 1st, 2nd, 3rd Vice Presidents. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice-Presidents, in order of rank shall perform all the duties and function of the President in the event the President and the Executive Vice President are absent or incapacitated. During such a period, the Vice-President shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions of that office. In addition, each

Vice-President shall be responsible for serving as a focal point for coordinating programs and activities relating to one of the following sectors:

- (1) Federal
- (2) State
- (3) Local

They shall perform such other duties as may be assigned them by the President.

F. Secretary. The Secretary shall maintain a record of the proceedings of the organization; shall produce such records upon request of any member in good standing; shall read the minutes of the previous meeting at each National Board of Directors and Executive Committee meeting; shall maintain in safe custody the Seal of the Organization and be empowered to affix such Seal to all contracts and instruments to be executed by the Organization; and countersign with the President requisitions for distribution of funds.

G. Corresponding Secretary. The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible for the correspondence of the Executive Committee; notification of National meetings; and perform the duties and functions of the Secretary during the absence or incapacitation of the latter.

H. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the organization; shall countersign with the President or Executive Vice-President all checks for the disbursement of organization funds; shall provide financial statements as often as required, but at least quarterly, to the Board of Directors; and shall provide complete financial reports at the Annual Delegates Assembly. The Treasurer's books shall be subjected to external audit annually. The Treasurer shall carry out other responsibilities as assigned in Article V of this constitution.

I. Assistant Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall maintain a record of all dues-paying members and submit notification of renewals when due; shall provide for collection of dues; and shall report on the status of paid-up memberships. In case of absence or disability of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall perform all the duties and functions of the Treasurer. During such a period, the Assistant Treasurer shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions of that office.

J. Parliamentarian. Delegates Assembly. The Parliamentarian shall serve as principal advisor to the Chair regarding conduct of the Assembly and shall give parliamentary opinions upon request.

K. Historian/Librarian.

- (1) The Historian/Librarian shall prepare a narrative account of the organization's activities which, when approved by the Board of Directors, will become a permanent part of the organization's official history.

(2) The Historian/Librarian shall be responsible for the collection of books or other written or printed matter relating to the organization. All material will be stored in the National Office Archives.

L. Salaried Staff.

(1) Duties and responsibilities of the salaried staff shall be defined by the Board of Directors.

(2) National salaried staff shall be accountable to the President.

Section 3. Standing Committees. There shall be nine (9) standing committees.

A. The National Standing Committees of Blacks In Government (BIG) shall be the following:

- (1) Finance
- (2) Program and Planning
- (3) Communication and Public Relations
- (4) Legislative Review
- (5) Membership
- (6) Evaluation
- (7) Legal Review
- (8) Conference Planning
- (9) Affirmative Employment/Equal Employment Opportunity

The Standing Committees' roles are advisory and all reports and recommendations generated shall be submitted to the Board of Directors through the Executive Committee.

B. The Chair of each of these committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

C. Each committee shall be composed of a Chair and at least three (3) other members; committees shall have an adequate number of members for effective functioning as determined by the Chair.

D. The members of each committee may be selected by the Chair of the respective committee. Members may also volunteer to serve on committees.

E. The President may recall or be directed to recall any Chair, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board of Directors.

F. Duties of the Standing Committees are as follows:

1. Finance. The Finance Committee shall assist the Treasurer in maintaining the financial records of the organization, develop the organization's yearly budget and recommend ways and means to raise funds.
2. Program and Planning. The Program and Planning Committee shall develop and coordinate a comprehensive on-going general program for the organization to include all member service programs, and other educational and training programs.
3. Communication and Public Relations. The Communication and Public Relations committee shall develop, implement and maintain a publicity and public relations program which includes the generation of media coverage for all major organizational events; review and issue news releases; project a positive interest in the employment status of Black government employees and significant and supporting activities; and publicize and project the positive images of the organization's top officers.
4. Legislative Review. The Legislative Review Committee shall review and analyze all proposed and existing legislation and major employment program policy changes to determine possible uni-directional impacts on Black government employees.
5. Membership. The Membership Committee shall develop and implement comprehensive membership activities which will be directed to employees at all levels of government and project the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the organization.
6. Evaluation. The Evaluation Committee shall develop evaluation criteria and conduct evaluations of the management of the organization and effectiveness of all operating programs to determine the impact of BIG in the government work environment, on the national sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of Black government employees and on national programs impacting on Black government employees.
7. Legal Review. The Legal Review Committee shall review all legal decisions involving policy interpretations affecting Black government employees and develop strategies to define the organization's legal disposition and direction.
8. Conference Planning. The Conference Planning Committee shall develop and implement plans for the Annual Training Conference to include action subcommittees for: finance and budgeting; training and education; speakers; banquet; the annual business meeting; communications and public relations; and exhibitions.
9. Affirmative Employment/Equal Employment Opportunity. The Affirmative Employment/EEO committee shall monitor and develop programs to address areas of concern of Black government employees including rates of hiring and firing; promotions; training; details; distribution of authority and responsibility; adverse actions; awards; merit pay; disciplinary actions; will also monitor all issues/matters referring to affirmative action and work assist in developing BIG's position on any legislation or regulations impacting on advancement and employment opportunities of Blacks in government.

G. Special Committees. Special committees are established at the discretion of the National President with the approval of the Executive Committee to meet National BIG objectives lending themselves to a special or Ad Hoc committee structure. These committees shall serve at the discretion of the President as to length of service and composition.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **MEETINGS**

Section 1. Annual Training Conference. There shall be an Annual Training Conference.

Section 2. Delegates Assembly.

A. An assembly of delegates representing each chapter shall be held annually. Notice of such Assembly shall be sent at least ninety (90) days prior to its convening by the Corresponding Secretary to all Chapters and Regional Councils.

B. Chairperson of the National Delegates Assembly.

(1) The National President shall appoint the Chairperson to serve as the presiding officer of the National Delegates Assembly.

(2) The Chairperson of the National Delegates Assembly shall submit to the National President for approval the names of the persons to serve as chairpersons of the national Credentials Committee, Resolutions Committee, Standing Rules Committee, and any other necessary committees related to the National Delegates Assembly not defined or established by the National Constitution.

(a) Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee is responsible for the certification of primary (or alternate) delegates and making an official report of delegate activity including coordination with the National Assistant Treasurer for the duration of the annual Delegates Assembly. Each region shall appoint two (2) members and one (1) alternate to the Credentials Committee.

(b) Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee screens and recommends appropriate action on resolutions to come before the annual Delegates Assembly.

(c) Standing Rules Committee. The Standing Rules Committee is responsible for drafting rules of operating procedures specifically required for the annual Delegates Assembly.

C. Chapter Delegates.

(1) Each Chapter shall elect annually chapter members to be delegates to the Delegates Assembly in accordance with the scale provided below:

Chapter Membership

Number of Delegates

1-25	2
26-50	4
51-75	6
76-100	8
101-300	16
301-500	32
over 500	40

(2) Each chapter shall determine its number of alternates.

(3) Delegates shall vote on all business matters to be decided at the Assembly including the election of National Officers and the National Nominating and Election Committees.

(4) In determining delegate eligibility, only Regular members of chapters in good financial standing with the Regional Council and the National Organization at least sixty (60) days prior to the Assembly shall be counted unless the Chapter being represented is less than sixty (60) days old.

(5) Each delegate shall be entitled to one (1) vote. Only Delegates and Alternates meeting the criteria set forth below shall be eligible to vote.

(a) The Delegates' and Alternates' names must have been entered on the National Membership Register for a period of at least sixty (60) days prior to the Delegates Assembly unless the Chapter being represented is less than sixty (60) days old.

(b) Each Delegate and Alternate must be present to vote at such a meeting. No vote shall be by proxy.

(c) Quorum. A quorum shall be necessary to conduct business. A simple majority of the Delegates or their Alternates certified to vote at such a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

### Section 3. Board of Directors.

A. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least twice a year at such time and place as the Board may direct except that the Board shall meet at least one (1) day before, but no more than four (4) weeks prior to the Delegates Assembly. Special meetings may be called by the Board Chair or upon request to the Chair by at least three (3) Board Members with at least a seven (7) day notice. The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying Board Members of such meetings.

B. The Quorum for the Board of Directors meeting shall be a simple majority of its members.

### Section 4. Executive Committee.

A. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at least monthly and at such other times as the Committee or the President may choose. Special meetings may be called by the President or upon request to the President by at

least two (2) Executive Committee members with at least seventy-two (72) hours notice.

B. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum for the Executive Committee.

Section 5.     Standing Committees. Meetings of the Standing Committees shall be held at least monthly at such times and places as they determine. Committee Chairs shall inform the President, Executive Vice-President and the Secretary of the time and place of their meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by two (2) members of any committee on three (3) days notice.

Section 6.     Other Meetings. Meetings of the Regional Councils and Chapters shall be determined by their respective membership.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1.     Nominations. Nominations for National Offices shall be made by a Nominating Committee elected by the Delegates at the previous Delegates Assembly. Nominations may also be submitted by Regional Councils and by Chapters provided that such names are transmitted to the Nominating Committee at least sixty (60) days prior to the date set for the Delegates Assembly. Nominations may also be made by Delegates during the Delegates Assembly.

A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee of one (1) member and one (1) alternate shall be elected annually from each region in the regional caucus and ratified by the Delegates assembly to prepare a slate of nominees for the appropriate positions. The Committee shall follow the procedures as stated herein.

B. Election Committee. The Election Committee of three (3) persons per Region shall be elected annually to conduct the National elections. This shall include the establishment of appropriate machinery, provisions, and procedures for conducting any National election. An Election Committee member shall not monitor the election process of his/her Region.

C. Terms of Office.

(1) Elected National Officers shall serve no more than two (2) two-year terms or four (4) consecutive years in the same office. However, they shall be eligible for election to all other offices.

(2) Regional Directors shall be elected for two (2) year terms. There shall be no limit on the number of years or terms they may serve. However, they shall be eligible for election to all other offices.

Section 2.     Elections. National elections shall be held annually during the Delegates Assembly in such a manner as the Board of Director may decide, except that

the election process shall be administered by the election committee and all newly elected National Directors and Officers shall take office January 1 of the following year. Election of National Officers shall alternate for the purpose of maintaining continuity as follows:

A. National Officers. The President, the 1st and 3rd Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, and the Assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the same Delegates Assembly to serve two-year terms; the Executive Vice-President, the 2nd Vice-President, the Treasurer, and the Corresponding Secretary shall be elected at the Delegates Assembly the following year for two-year terms.

B. Board of Directors.

(1) Each Region, or single Chapter representing a Region, shall have two (2) Director positions.

(2) Directors elected to represent the ten (10) Standard Federal Regions and the Washington, D. C. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area shall be elected in such a manner that the initial Director shall be elected for a two-year term and each alternate Director shall be elected the following year for a two-year term.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **DUES AND ASSESSMENTS**

Section 1. National. At the Annual National Delegates Assembly, the Board of Directors may present changes to the national membership dues and recommend other assessments for the ensuing year.

A. All national membership dues received by the Chapters shall be sent to the national office monthly.

B. Annual payment for membership renewals is due and payable to the national office by each member's anniversary date (date of joining organization).

C. Nonchapter members shall pay their dues directly to the national office.

D. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 to December 31, inclusive.

Section 2. Regional Councils and Chapters.

A. Regional Councils may levy dues and assessments of Chapters in accordance with their Bylaws.

B. Chapters may levy dues and assessments of their memberships in accordance with their Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE X**



## **EXPULSION, TERMINATION, OR REMOVAL**

Section 1.     Chapters Failing to Report. If a Chapter fails to report to the Board of Directors for a period of six consecutive months, the Board of Directors may declare any or all of the chapter offices vacant and order a new election.

Section 2.     Suspension and Revocation of Chapter. A Chapter Charter of Authority may be suspended or terminated by the Board of Directors whenever the Board of Directors determines that a Chapter's conduct is detrimental to the organization. Such Charter suspension or termination may invalidate the individual memberships in the organization. Upon notification of the action of the Board of Directors of Charter suspension or termination, the Chapter shall cease immediately to function and its officers shall transmit all records and monies to the Board of Directors within twenty-four (24) hours.

Section 3.     Expulsion, Suspension, Removal, Resignation, or Vacancies.

A. Any officer or member may be temporarily expelled/suspended/removed after due process in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution by an affirmative vote of no less than two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board of Directors at a special meeting held for the purpose.

B. Notice of such intended action, as provided for in this Constitution, shall be given to the Board and the officer/or member concerned in writing by registered mail, at least twenty (20) days prior to the conduct of such a meeting. The officer/member shall be permitted to make presentation verbally or in writing on their own behalf and/or select an advocate and witnesses, but may not vote on the matter being considered. The complainant shall be permitted to make a presentation, but may not vote on the matter being considered.

C. All complaints filed at the inappropriate organizational level shall be forwarded to the appropriate body for consideration and resolution. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision rendered, they may appeal within ten (10) calendar days to the next higher level.

D. Officers may resign at any time they consider it in their interest to do so. It shall be the policy of this organization to request written confirmation of all resignations.

E. The President, with the concurrence of a simple majority of the Board, may appoint someone to fill any vacant Executive Committee position, until the next general election. The Chair of the Board, with the concurrence of a simple majority of the Board, may appoint someone to fill any vacant Director position until the next general election.

F. Regions and Chapters may determine how to fill vacant positions at those levels.

Section 4.     Grounds for Disciplinary Action. Disciplinary actions may be brought against a National Officer or member who is guilty of conduct not in accord with the principles, aims and purposes of this Organization as set forth in this Constitution or is guilty of conduct that is not in the best interest of the organization.

A. Complaints.

(1) National.

(a) A complaint against a National Officer may be initiated by any three (3) National Officers. Upon receipt thereof, the Chair of the Board of Directors shall forward a copy of the complaint by registered mail to the Officer involved at the last address on file. Said Officer shall have fifteen (15) calendar days from date of receipt of charges to answer in writing.

(b) The Board of Directors reserves the right to hear and act upon the charges and the Officer is entitled to a hearing before the Board of Directors if desired. The Officer may elect to have the decision made ex-parte on the basis of the complaint and the answer. The Board of Directors may appoint a special committee to hear the matter.

(c) The Board of Directors shall be the final level of appeal by either party of all complaints and grievances for which there has been final action.

(d) A copy of all disciplinary actions shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors.

(2) Regional Councils.

(a) A complaint against a Regional Council officer may be initiated by any three (3) members of a Regional Council and must be in writing and signed by such members and transmitted to the Regional Council President. Upon receipt thereof, the President of the Regional Council shall forward a copy of the complaint by registered mail to the Regional Council Officer involved at the last address on file. Such Regional Council Officer shall have fifteen (15) calendar days from date of receipt of charges to answer in writing.

(b) The Regional Councils reserve the right to hear and act upon the charges and the Regional Council Officer is entitled to a hearing before the Regional Council if desired. The Regional Council Officer may elect to have the decision made ex-parte on the basis of the complaint and the answer. A Regional Council may appoint a special committee to hear the matter.

(c) Regional Council shall be the first level of appeal by either party for all complaints for which there has been final action at the Chapter level.

(3) Chapters.

(a) A complaint against a chapter member or officer may be initiated by any three (3) members of a Chapter and must be in

writing and signed by such members and transmitted to the Chapter President. Upon receipt thereof, the President of the Chapter shall forward a copy of the complaint by registered mail to the chapter member or officer involved at the last address on file. The chapter member or officer shall have fifteen (15) calendar days from date of receipt of charges to answer in writing.

(b) The Chapter Executive Committee reserves the right to hear and act upon the charges and the chapter member or officer is entitled to a hearing before a Chapter Executive Committee if desired. The Chapter member or officer may elect to have the decision made ex-parte on the basis of the complaint and the answer. The Chapter Executive Committee may appoint a special committee to hear the matter.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **RULES OF PROCEDURES**

Rules of procedure as stated in Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the Organization except as otherwise provided herein.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **INCORPORATION**

Section 1. The National Organization, Blacks In Government (BIG), is incorporated as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under the appropriate laws of the District of Columbia.

Section 2. Principal Offices. The national headquarters shall be in the District of Columbia. There also shall be eleven regional offices, ten of which will be locations corresponding with the standard Federal regions and the eleventh comprised of the Washington, D. C. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. Other offices may be established by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY**

Section 1. National Fiscal Responsibility. No regional council or chapter of this organization shall have the authority or power to impose or incur financial liability on the part of the organization without the express authorization of the Board of Directors, in writing and obtained in advance.

Section 2. National Legal Corporate Responsibility. No regional council, chapter, officer or member of this organization shall have the authority or power to legally obligate the organization without the express authorization of the Board of Directors or as delegated in this Constitution. The organization shall indemnify any officer or member of this organization for actions taken during the performance of duties

on behalf of the organization so long as said actions are consonant with the honesty, integrity, goals, and objectives of this organization as determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 3.     Distribution of Assets and Properties.

A. There shall be no general distribution of monetary or property assets to members or officers of the organization, and all gains realized shall be devoted solely to the implementation of the objectives of the organization. No member or officer shall be personally liable to the creditors of the organization for an indebtedness of liability incurred pursuant to Section 1 of this Article and any and all creditors shall look only to the assets of the organization for payment.

B. In the event of dissolution of this organization, its property shall be distributed to such tax-exempt, nonprofit organizations as may be selected by its members. The assets of the organization shall in no event be distributed to any of its members or officers.

Section 4.     Indebtedness. The National Organization shall not be responsible for indebtedness or obligation of any regional council, chapter, or by any of their officers or agents. All expenditures should be controlled as approved budget items and/or expenditures authorized by the Executive Committee, in session, for ratification by the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE XIV**

**ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION**

All members of this Organization in good financial standing as of 60 days prior to the Delegates Assembly must be provided an opportunity through their Chapter to review the Constitution and, through their chapter delegates, subsequently vote the adoption of Constitution at a National Delegates Assembly called by the President for the express purpose of adopting the Constitution. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Delegates assembled shall be required for adoption provided the quorum requirements as set forth elsewhere in the Constitution are adhered to.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution of this Organization may be amended or deleted, if necessary, to carry out the purposes of the Organization by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those delegates present and eligible to vote provided the quorum requirements as set forth in this Constitution are adhered to.

The simple majority of the general membership in good financial standing through their Delegates has the right of referendum on any issue which the Board of Directors has failed to act upon or has not acted upon favorably as interpreted by the membership. Amendments made to this Constitution shall become effective January 1, of the year after the Annual Delegates Assembly unless rules are suspended by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of those Delegates present and eligible to vote. All amendments to the Constitution will be mailed to each chapter thirty (30) days before the amendments effective date.

All amendments to the Constitution proposed by chapters and/or regions must be submitted in writing to the National Office. The National Office will distribute the proposed amendments to each chapter and region no later than sixty (60) days prior to the National Delegates Assembly.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **RATIFICATION**

This Constitution became effective upon ratification by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Delegates present and eligible to vote at the National Delegates Assembly of Blacks In Government (BIG) called expressly for that purpose by the National President and held in the City of Washington, D. C. on September 2, 1984.

(This ratification supercedes the previous Constitution and Bylaws which were ratified by a simple majority of the voting members present at the Blacks In Government meeting held in the City of Washington, D. C. on April 30, 1980).

/s/  
SHERRI SHEPPARD  
National Secretary

/s/  
JAMES E. ROGERS, JR.  
National President

Amended: August 15, 1985, Washington, D.C.

/s/  
ROGER L. MICKEY  
National Secretary

/s/  
RUBY S. FIELDS  
National President

Amended: August 16, 1989, Washington, D.C.

/s/  
JUANITA POINTER  
National Secretary

/s/  
MARION A. BOWDEN  
National President

Amended: August 18, 1991, Washington, D.C.

/s/  
CARMELITA POPE-FREEMAN  
National Secretary

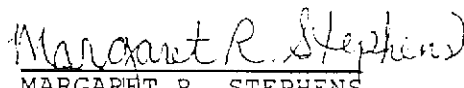
/s/  
MARION A. BOWDEN  
National President

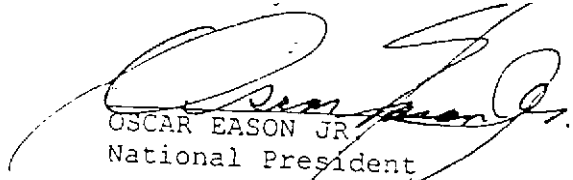
Amended: August 18, 1993, Washington, D.C.

/s/  
CARMELITA POPE-FREEMAN  
National Secretary

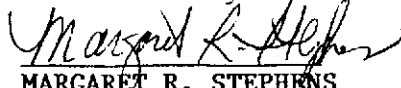
/s/  
OSCAR EASON JR.  
National President

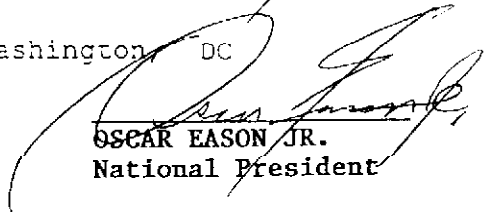
Amended: August 29, 1996, Atlanta, GA.

  
MARGARET R. STEPHENS  
National Secretary

  
OSCAR EASON JR.  
National President

Amended: August 20, 1997, Washington, DC

  
MARGARET R. STEPHENS  
National Secretary

  
OSCAR EASON JR.  
National President

Amended: August 23, 1998, Washington, D.C.