

# United Synagogue Youth Seaboard Region Constitution

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the representatives of Seaboard Region United Synagogue Youth, affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), recognize that youth must perpetuate Judaism and be cognizant of the historical and cultural background of our people. In order to further these principles, we do hereby establish this Constitution of United Synagogue Youth.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE**

### **SECTION A: NAME**

1. The name of this organization shall be the Seaboard Region (herein referred to as Region) of United Synagogue Youth (USY).
2. The Hebrew name shall be “Hof Hayam”

### **SECTION B: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Region shall be to serve the chapters within its jurisdiction.

## **ARTICLE II: CHAPTER AFFILIATION**

**SECTION A:** Jewish youth groups (herein referred to as chapters) within the jurisdiction of Seaboard Region and affiliated with the USCJ, are eligible for membership in Seaboard Region USY providing that the following are met:

1. The chapter is in agreement with the aims and objectives of this Constitution.
2. Persons affiliated with this chapter must be of grades nine through twelve (restrictions within these limits may be made by individual chapters).
3. Each chapter and/or synagogue must provide its members with facilities for religious and/or cultural studies.
4. Membership within the chapter is numerically unlimited
5. Membership is open to Jewish youth only (as defined by the Rabbinical Assembly)
6. Each chapter must observe dietary laws, Shabbat, and other Jewish Law within the framework of the USCJ and their Mara D’atra.

### **SECTION B: SUSPENSION**

1. An affiliated chapter of Seaboard USY may be censured or suspended by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board (excluding blank ballots) for a violation of the Constitution, by-laws, rules, resolutions, regulations or orders of the organization (any such violation constitutes a chapter’s loss of being held in good standing).
2. No suspension shall be for a period of greater than three months without being submitted to the Regional Executive Board for review.

3. A suspended chapter shall be denied, for the period of suspension, all privileges accorded to the member groups and shall not be permitted to function under the name of Seaboard Region USY.
4. Suspension may be renewed by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board (excluding blank ballots).

#### SECTION C: REINSTATEMENT

1. Any chapter which has been suspended may be reinstated before the expiration of their suspension by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board (excluding blank ballots).
2. A chapter shall automatically be reinstated to full membership privileges at the conclusion of its suspension period.

### ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A: A person may obtain membership within Seaboard Region USY through membership in an affiliated chapter of the region.

#### SECTION B: GOOD STANDING

1. A member shall be held in good standing in his/her chapter by fulfilling the standards set by his/her respective chapter.

### ARTICLE IV: DUES

Failure to comply with the following will result in the banning of participants from negligent chapters at all Divisional, Regional, and International USY activities, and the chapter shall be regarded as not in good standing and therefore subject to suspension as decided by the Regional Executive Board.

SECTION A: All chapters shall pay the region in accordance to the specified rate per capita per annum set forth by the Regional General Board, and all chapters shall pay in accordance to the specified rate per capita per annum set forth by the International Organization.

1. The Regional dues rate may be altered by a 2/3 majority vote of the Regional General Board.
2. No dues shall be required from a chapter for a period in which the said chapter is inactive as decided by the International Organization.

SECTION B: The fiscal year shall be from Election Convention through the following Election Convention.

SECTION C: All chapters must submit dues on or before December 1<sup>st</sup>.

SECTION D: All chapters are obligated to submit dues for all members affiliated with their youth groups in accordance with this Constitution.

SECTION E: Chapters must submit dues for all persons whose dues are submitted past the prescribed

deadline. Chapters are obligated to submit dues for all additional affiliates immediately after they are paid by the individuals.

## **ARTICLE V: ADMINISTRATION**

SECTION A: The executive-administrative apparatus of Seaboard USY shall consist of:

1. Regional Executive Board
2. Regional General Board
3. Regional Youth Director
4. Regional Youth Commission

SECTION B: The Regional Youth Director of Seaboard USY shall be in the advisory capacity to the Regional Executive Board, the Regional General Board, and all members.

SECTION C: Regional policy shall be set by the Youth Commission whose chairperson shall be appointed by the Seaboard Region President (adult).

## **ARTICLE VI: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

SECTION A: The Regional Executive Board shall consist of the President, Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President, Membership/Kadima Vice-President, and Tikshoret (Communications Vice-President).

SECTION B: The Regional Executive Board shall have the power to:

1. Act as an advisory body to the Regional General Board.
2. Act as a liaison to all affiliated chapters.
3. Transact business of the Regional General Board.
4. Carry out the duties that are specifically enumerated in this Constitution.

### **SECTION C: OFFICER DUTIES**

1. The President
  - a. Is vested with executive powers of the regional organization.
  - b. Shall call and preside over all General Assembly, Regional General Board, and Regional Executive Board meetings.
  - c. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - d. Shall be an accredited representative of Seaboard Region and shall act as a liaison with the Regional Youth Commission, the International Organization, and the USCJ.
  - e. Shall report to Spring Convention as to the state of the Region and shall make recommendations for its improvement.
  - f. Shall oversee, along with the regional executive board, the planning of regional conventions and events, along with the convention chair(s). (revised April 26, 2002)

2. The Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President (revised April 26, 2002)
  - a. Shall assist the President in carrying out his duties and will assume the duties of President in his absence.
  - b. Shall supervise all Seaboard Region auxiliary projects and programs that are not otherwise assigned at the request of the President.
  - c. Shall be responsible for the implementation of all aspects of Israel Affairs Programming and International Programming in the region. (revised April 26, 2002)
  - d. Shall be responsible for the HeChalutzim Club. (revised April 26, 2002)
  - e. Shall oversee Senior Programming.
  
3. The Religious/Education Vice-President
  - a. Shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the President and the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President.
  - b. For all Regional functions, shall be responsible for all aspects of religious and educational programming in conjunction with the appropriate staff.
  - c. Shall, at the request of the host chapter, assist in the religious programming at Interchapter weekend programs.
  - d. Shall be responsible for the Abraham Joshua Heschel Society.
  
4. The Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President
  - a. Shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President and Religious/Education Vice-President.
  - b. Shall be responsible for the implementation of all aspects of Social Actions and Tikun Olam programming in the Region.
  - c. Shall keep a record of all funds raised for Tikun Olam and oversee their allocation.
  - d. Shall be responsible for the 613 Mitzvot Corps.
  
5. The Membership/Kadima Vice-President
  - a. Shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, and Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President.
  - b. Shall be responsible for the implementation of all aspects of Membership and Kadima Programming in the Region.
  - c. Shall oversee all Kadima Kallot and all similar programs, and shall serve as a liaison between Kadima and USY.
  - d. Shall coordinate outreach programs to chapters in the Region.
  
7. The Tikshoret (Communications Vice-President)
  - a. Shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President, Religious/Education Vice-President, Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President, and Membership/Kadima Vice-President.
  - b. Shall have responsibilities regarding On-Line Communication (ie. Listserv and

Web-Page), Newspaper, Yearbook, Slide Show, Banner, Regalia, Athletics, and other related programming.

c. Shall keep accurate records of all meetings of the Regional Executive Board and Regional General Board, and will issue minutes to the Regional Youth Director, the Regional Executive Board, and other appropriate persons.

#### SECTION D: OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each Vice-President (herein referred to as Regional Officer) shall have the responsibilities of:
  - a. Serving as a liaison to various chapters as assigned by the President. This responsibility includes guiding those chapters, providing assistance as needed, and serving as a link between those chapters and the rest of the Regional Executive Board, in addition to filling out a monthly report which is to be submitted to the President.
  - b. Overseeing Regional General Board Committees which are annually assigned at a Regional Executive Board meeting according to their individual job profile.
2. Each Regional Officer shall be required to report to the President on a regular basis concerning their respective duties.
3. The Regional Executive Board as a whole shall serve as the Awards Committee.
4. The Regional Executive Board must abide by all Regional Officer Standards (see Appendix A).

#### SECTION E: MEETINGS

1. All meetings shall be called and scheduled by the President.
2. A petition of at least ½ of the Regional Officers may call forth a meeting of the Regional Executive Board.
3. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those voting. Each Regional Officer is entitled to one vote and the President only votes in the case of a tie.
4. Absentee votes may be written or phoned into a meeting providing the Regional Officer who is absent calls or writes in the vote himself.
5. A decision made by the Executive Board, that is of public knowledge, may be vetoed by a 2/3 majority of those voting at the Regional General Board.
6. Decisions of the Regional Executive Board are binding on the President and the Region.
7. The Regional Executive Board will meet, at minimum, every other month during the year.

#### SECTION F: VACANCIES

1. In the event of a vacancy to the office of President, the Executive Vice-President shall become President unless he/she declines the office within 10 weekdays. If the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President declines the office, the Religious/Education Vice-President assumes the duties of the President unless he/she declines the office within a 10 weekdays. If the Religious/Education Vice-President declines the office, the Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President assumes the duties of the President unless he/she declines the office within a 10 weekdays. If the Social Actions Tikun Olam Vice-President declines the office, the Membership/Kadima Vice-President assumes the duties of the

President unless he/she declines the office within a 10 weekdays. If the Membership/Kadima Vice-President declines the office, the Tikshoret (Communications Vice-President) assumes the duties of the President unless he/she declines the office within a 10 weekdays.

2. If none of the Vice Presidents accept the office of President, wishing to Maintain their own offices, a date for elections shall be set immediately by the Regional Executive Board and the same elections procedures are followed as in normal elections. Any person who wishes to run for election to the vacant position of President, must meet the appropriate qualifications. A new President must be elected within six weeks and the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President must assume the duties of President until the election.

3. In the event of a vacancy in the position of any of the other Regional Officers, the President may appoint a person to fill the vacancy with the consent of a majority vote of the Regional Officers.

## SECTION G: IMPEACHMENT

1. Impeachment proceedings against any Regional Executive Board member may be initiated upon written charges of 2/3 of the members of the Regional General Board (excluding blank ballots and the vote of the individual under consideration for impeachment) or a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board (the President may vote in place of the individual under consideration for impeachment).

2. Impeachment charges shall be submitted to the President. If the President is the individual under consideration for impeachment, charges are submitted to the Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President.

3. Copies of the charges shall be submitted to all chapters in the Region within one week. A copy should also be forwarded to the individual under consideration for impeachment.

4. The individual under consideration for impeachment may answer the charges in writing within three weeks after receipt thereof.

5. A Regional General Board meeting must be called within 4 weeks of the receipt of the submitted charges. The charges will be read aloud at the board meeting and the individual under consideration for impeachment will be allowed time to answer all accusations.

6. A vote of 3/4 of the Regional General Board is necessary to remove an individual from office (excluding blank ballots and the vote of the individual under consideration for impeachment).

## SECTION H: QUALIFICATIONS

1. Any person who desires to run for election to an office on the Regional Executive Board must have been a member, for two years, of a chapter affiliated with USY and either a member of the Regional General Board or a Chapter Vice-President for the period of at least one term prior to elections.

2. Any person who desires to run for election to the office of President, in addition to being a member, for two years, of a chapter affiliated with USY, must have served on the Regional General Board, Regional Executive Board, or have been a chapter President for the period of at least one term prior to elections.

3. A person who has served as a chairperson of Encampment, Fall Convention, or Spring Convention, in addition to having been a member, for two years, of a chapter affiliated with

USY, is eligible to run for election to the office of Executive Vice-President.

## **ARTICLE VII: REGIONAL GENERAL BOARD**

SECTION A: The Regional General Board shall consist of the Regional Executive Board, each of the individual Chapter Presidents, and Regional Committee Chairpeople.

SECTION B: The Regional General Board shall have the power to transact business discussed at Regional General Board Meetings.

### **SECTION C: COMMITTEES**

1. There shall be at least one chairperson for the following committees: Senior Programming, Religious/Education, Ruach, Social Actions, Tikun Olam, Membership/Outreach, New Member Programming, Kadima, Israel Affairs, International Programming, Online, Athletics, Communications, and Yearbook.
2. Regional Committee Chairmanships will be awarded by the Regional Executive Board according to ability and experience in performing specific functions of each committee. Decisions are made by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board. Job specifics, amount of chairpeople per committee, and adding committees are all decisions made by the Regional Executive Board.
3. Regional Committee Chairpeople must be held in good standing in Seaboard Region USY (a member of a chapter held in good standing and fulfilling the standards set by their respective chapter) for a period of at least one year prior to their appointment (unless the Committee is that of Freshman Representative, in which case the time constraint of a year becomes obsolete).
4. A person seeking Regional Committee Chairmanship may do so by obtaining and submitting an application to the Regional Executive Board.
5. There will be 2 Freshman Representatives who are considered to be Regional Committee Chairpeople and they must therefore abide by set standards. A person seeking this chairmanship may apply by application which is sent out by the Regional Membership/Kadima VP. The decision is made by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board.

### **SECTION D: STANDARDS**

All Regional General Board Members and Chapter Presidents must: *(Revised 1/17/2006)*

1. Take standardized tests on non-Saturday dates.
2. Be a member of one of the clubs affiliated with USY (A.J. Heschel Honors Society, HeChalutzim, or the 613 Mitzvot Corps).
3. Perform the duties required by their overseeing Regional Officer.
4. Refrain from the illegal use of drugs and illegal use and consumption of alcohol  
*(Revised 1/17/2006)*

## SECTION E: PROBATION AND IMPEACHMENT

1. A Regional Committee Chairperson can be put on probation by the Regional President and/or overseeing Regional Officer in any instance where standards are not being followed. This probation is essentially a given warning.
2. A Regional Committee Chairperson who has received a probation warning can be impeached by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board for further disregarded of standards.
3. A vacancy due to impeachment can be filled by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board.

## SECTION F: MEETINGS

1. All meetings shall be called and scheduled by the President.
2. A petition of at least 2/3 of the Region's chapters (via Chapter President) may call forth a meeting of the Regional General Board.
3. Decisions shall be made by a 2/3 majority of those voting.
4. Voting:
  - a. Each Regional Officer is entitled to one vote and no one may have this vote in the case of an absence.
  - b. Each chapter is entitled to one vote which is held by the Chapter President. In the case of co-Presidents, the vote is shared. In the case of an absence, a single representative of the chapter may assume the vote of the Chapter President (this representative is chosen by the chapter).
  - c. The President does not vote except in the case of a tie.
5. Absentee votes and blank ballots are considered invalid and are therefore disregarded.
6. A decision made by the Regional General Board may be vetoed by a majority vote of the Regional Executive Board.
7. The Regional General Board shall convene a meeting, at minimum, at each regional convention to discuss formal business. (revised April 26, 2002)
8. A quorum shall consist of the representatives of 2/3 of the chapters of the Seaboard Region. (revised April 26, 2002)

## ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS

All Regional Executive Board members shall be elected annually at the Regional Spring Convention and the new officers shall be inducted into office at the close of that same convention and shall hold office until their successors are duly installed.

### SECTION A: ELECTION ORDER

1. President
2. Executive/Israeli Affairs Vice-President
3. Religious/Education Vice-President
4. Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President
5. Membership/Kadima Vice-President
6. Tikshoret (Communications Vice-President) (Communications Vice-President)

## SECTION B: RUNNING FOR OFFICE

1. Anyone meeting the qualifications set for office holder is eligible to run provided that they have submitted a Declaration Form to the President by the prescribed deadline (approximately 3 weeks before Spring Convention) and are nominated at the time of elections.
2. If a person wishes not to run for election after submitting a declaration form, he/she may cancel his/her intention to run for election by stating so at the time of election.
3. The President shall compile and Elections Packet and send it to all potential candidates. The Elections Packet must contain but is not limited to:
  - a. Articles VI and VIII of this Constitution.
  - b. A letter from the President.
  - c. A letter from the Regional Youth Director.
  - d. A Declaration Form.
  - e. A parental permission slip (to be returned with the Declaration form).
  - f. Information regarding speeches, forum, vote counting, and nominations.
4. All persons planning to run for elections must be nominated off the floor at the time of the election and must receive a second from at least 1/4 of the voters from a minimum of three chapters. Though you nominate a candidate or second a nomination, you are not bound to vote for that candidate.
5. In the case that an office is left vacant, candidates may run off the floor, without a Declaration Form, according to proper election procedure. Candidates must, however, have a parental permission slip in hand.

## SECTION C: BALLOTING (revised April 26, 2002)

1. To be elected, a candidate must poll a majority of the votes cast excluding blank ballots. If no candidate is elected after the first ballot, the name of all candidates excluding those with the two highest votes shall be eliminated and another vote shall be taken. If a candidate does not receive the two highest amounts of votes, and is within 55 of the votes cast behind the candidate with the highest amount of votes, he/she shall be included in the next vote (assuming the candidate did not receive the fewest number of votes). This process will continue until one of the candidates polls a majority of the votes cast. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be allowed.
2. In the event that there is only one candidate for office, the voting delegates shall choose, by written ballot, between the nominated candidate or abstaining from the vote (the equivalent of a "nay" vote for the candidate). A candidate must then poll a majority of the votes casts, excluding abstentions. No other names, however, shall be considered for said office during this election. If the candidate fails to achieve a simple majority, the election is then tabled and #4 shall then take effect.
3. A candidate may "drop down" to another position only one time, assuming that candidate meets the qualifications for that office.
4. If, at the close of elections, no person has been elected to an office, the president shall ask for off-the-floor nominations for that vacant office. Candidates who have lost and lost on their drop-down may run again for this office. The procedure shall then follow the standard procedures for off-the-floor nominations.

5. If no candidate has been elected following the provisions in #4, the newly elected executive board shall meet, within 2 weeks of their election, to select a person to fill the vacant office, who must meet the standard qualifications for office, and shall then be vested with all powers and responsibilities of an executive officer. A majority vote of the executive board is required.

## **ARTICLE IX: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

SECTION A: This Constitution may be amended and/or ratified by a 2/3 vote of the Regional General Board at any Regional Session where 3/4 of the Region's chapters are present.

SECTION B: Amendments shall become effective immediately upon approval unless otherwise designated by the body which has passed the amendment in question.

SECTION C: Any Regional Officer or Regional Board member may propose an amendment to the Constitution. The proposed change must be submitted to the President who will distribute it for voting purposes at the next Regional Session.

SECTION D: No amendments may be made that will bring this Constitution into conflict with the Constitution of International USY.

## **ARTICLE X: SEABOARD REGION'S CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTION**

All articles and By-Laws of the International Constitution shall be followed by the Region and shall be deemed to be part of the Regional Constitution.

### **APPENDIX A: REGIONAL OFFICER STANDARDS**

The officers of United Synagogue Youth shall observe the Sabbath and Holidays with regard to the Responsum of the Rabbinical Assembly pertaining to travel and by refraining from all school examinations and public functions thereon.

The officers shall observe the dietary laws where possible in private and at all times in public.

The officers shall participate in some mode of Judaic study for not less than 3 hours weekly. They shall attend not less than 4 religious services monthly, 3 of which must be on Shabbat.

As leaders of USY, the Officers serve as accessible Jewish role-models (dugmaot) to the USY constituency. In that capacity, there are expect to aspire to become ideal Conservative Jews, reflecting a strong commitment to Jewish survival and the performance of Mitzvot. Therefore it is expected that leaders of the organization will refrain from relationships which can be construed as interdating.

Officers shall participate actively in the affairs of their respective chapters and in all activities of the region.

The provisions contained here shall also apply to the remainder of the members of the International

General Board of USY, as well as all members of Regional Executive Boards.

The International Youth Commission, USY President, all Regional Youth Commissioners, Presidents, and Directors shall make every effort to assure that these basic standards are adhered to by our USY leaders.

Updated 1/17/2006 by Shira Kaplan, Director of Youth Activities