

AVER – American Veteran’s for Equal Rights
FLORIDA GOLD COAST CHAPTER
BY-LAWS

Adopted: April 5, 2005. Amended November 2007.

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Throughout the history of the United States, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and two-spirit Americans have served in our armed forces and defended principles of freedom embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The unalienable rights secured to all Americans by these documents and the sentiments they express, as defended selflessly by countless citizens for over 200 years, include the right to privacy in our lives, and the right to live free and open lives within American society, irrespective of race, creed, ethnic or cultural heritage, place of national origin, age, economic or marital status, gender or gender identification, sexual orientation and the actual or perceived differences in physical or other capacity.

We aver that it remains the inherent right of all Americans, and of all people everywhere, to express personal aspects of their lives, and, in particular, aspects of their sexual orientation and/or gender identification, as they may choose, in responsible, non-destructive ways, free from harm and discrimination based on prejudice, fear, ignorance or intolerance. The essential meaning of the hallowed documents upon which this Nation is founded is that all people everywhere should be free to pursue fulfillment of their human potential free from discriminatory and unwarranted social and legal constraints. Our clear and proud record of dedicated military service in freedom’s behalf, as individuals and as people who band together in common cause, demonstrates our resolve and unending commitment to these ideals.

For the purpose of continuing and expanding our record of United States military service, and in further pursuit of our common goals, we who are active, reserve and veteran members of the United States Army (and Army Air Corps), Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Merchant Marine, National Guard, and Navy, or any reserve component thereof, or the various State Militia, proudly join together with one voice as the ***American Veterans for Equal Rights, Florida Gold Coast Chapter..***

Article I. Name. The name of the Association under this constitution shall be “American Veterans for Equal Rights, Florida Gold Coast Chapter (AVER-FGC).”

Article II. Articles and Regulations Taking Precedence. Since AVER-FGC is a subsidiary to AVER INC, authority to formulate rules incident to the management of AVER-FGC, shall be consistent with AVER INC. Where the constitution of Bylaws of AVER-FGC is in conflict with AVER INC, the Constitution and Bylaws of AVER INC shall hold precedence.

Article III. Statement of Non-Discrimination. AVER-FGC, its officers, agents, chapters and members, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ethnic or cultural heritage, place of national origin, ancestry, religion, age, economic or marital status, gender or gender identification, sexual orientation, actual or perceived differences in physical or other ability. Within our capacity to do so, we will not encourage nor permit such discrimination outside the bounds of this organization.

Article IV. Purposes. We are dedicated to serving all veterans while fostering a spirit of sister/brotherhood among those active, reserve and veteran service members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or otherwise sexually identified, as well as, family, friends of the same. We will continue to work toward achieving full and equal citizenry of the United States of America towards eliminating all exclusionary laws and policies which prescribe or allow discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identification.

Article IV. Membership. Membership in AVER-FGC will not be construed as defining or suggesting an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identification.

Among members, there is no distinction concerning rights, obligations, benefits, and privileges of membership. All members and committees within the organization are charged with on-going responsibility to strive for equitable representation and leadership participation in regard to gender, gender identification, ethnic and cultural heritage, present or former military rank, actual or perceived physical or other ability, and geographic diversification.

Any member who willfully discredits or disrupts this organization, for any cause specified in the Bylaws, may have their membership denied or revoked. Membership and Associate membership will become immediately effective upon payment of dues.

Section A. Eligibility for Membership. Any veteran of military service who are active, reserve and veteran members of the United States Army, Air Force (and Army Air Corps), Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Merchant Marine, National Guard, and Navy, or any reserve components thereof, or the various State Militia shall be eligible for membership.

Section B. Eligibility for Associate Membership. Any individual who is not included in section A, may become an Associate Member. Associate Members may participate in the activities of the organization, may be appointed to committees, and may attend and speak at meetings, but shall not make motions, vote, nor hold office.

Section C. Dues. The organization, by vote of the Board, shall determine the annual dues of each category of membership. Dues are payable upon joining and, thereafter, in advance or before October 1 of each year. The Membership Committee will notify members two months in arrears; those renewing members whose dues are not paid within 30 days thereafter shall be automatically placed in inactive status and shall not be considered members.

Section D. Expiration of Memberships. All memberships expire on September 30. New memberships effective after March 1st will expire on September 30th of the following year.

Article V. Board of Directors

Section A. Definition and Authority. As membership-based organization arising from representation of individual members, the Board of Directors represents and answers to the will and interest of the entire membership, as expressed through periodic, regular elections of the Board of Directors, and actions taken in regular meetings. The Board of Directors, or a duly appointed representative(s), is responsible for such actions, and is the sole authority empowered to assume and discharge debt or other financial obligation, enter into or terminate contracts, or otherwise speaks and acts in behalf of the organization.

Section B. Composition and Organization. The Board of Directors is comprised of the elected Officers, as specified herein. The President is the presiding officer.

Section C: Terms of Office and Eligibility. Members of the Board of Directors hold their seats during their term of office as specified herein. A person must be a voting member in good standing for one year to be eligible for election as an officer to the Board of Directors.

Section D: Rules and Procedures. Subject to this Constitution and Bylaws, the Board of Directors may establish such rules and procedures as are necessary, proper, and expeditious for the discharge of its duties. Where rules and procedures have not been established, in order of precedence, applicable laws, the Constitution, Bylaws, and Robert's Rules of order will govern.

Section E: Financial Management. The board of Directors will adopt an annual budget as the first order of business each fiscal year beginning on October 1st. The budget sets general policies leaving the Officers with discretion on specific disbursements.

Section F: Duties and Responsibilities

1. President. The President shall be the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer of the Organization, empowered to delegate authority within the spirit and confines of the Constitution and Bylaws. He/she shall preside over deliberations and activities of this organization. The President is responsible for the administration and efficient operations of the organization, its Board of Directors, and such administrative departments as created by this organization. The President is the lead chapter delegate to the National and Regional conventions.

2. Vice President. The Vice President shall serve as deputy to the President in every capacity, and shall preside over the deliberations and activities of this organization in the absence of the President, and other duties as assigned by the President or Board of Directors.

3. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all meetings of the Organization and Board of Directors. He/she shall maintain a current list of members with addresses, phone numbers or any pertinent information as deemed by the Board of Directors.

4. Treasurer. The treasurer shall receive all monies of the organization. He/she will chair the Budget Committee and be responsible for the passage of a budget by the October membership meeting. The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures and will present a statement of all income and expenditures at each meeting of the Board of Directors or other times when requested by the Board of Directors. An appointed Finance Committee may audit books of the treasurer. The Treasurer and the President will sign checks jointly.

5. Board of Directors. The Florida Gold Coast Chapter shall have a minimum of (4) four board members and more may be added at the discretion of the board. At the discretion of the President, individual board members will fulfill duties in the area of Public Relations, Membership, Recruitment and Veterans Affairs. A board member can be assigned to recruit speakers for membership meetings and be in charge of special projects.

6. Immediate Past President. The Immediate Past President, not removed from office under the provisions of Section I, is a member of the Board of Directors, without voting rights. Other duties may be set out in the Bylaws.

Section G: Elections and Terms of Office. In the even numbered years, by a majority vote, the chapter will elect the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Board Members. They are elected during the month of September and will assume office on November 1st. No elected officer may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Section H: Succession and Interim Appointments. In the event of a vacancy, the order of succession for officers is: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and

Immediate Former Past President. The Board of Directors will vote to fill vacancies. The newly elected officers will serve until the next even year election.

Section I: Removal from Office

1. Members of the Board of Directors may be removed from office for gross failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of office, for misuse of finances, for misuse of name, reputation, or facilities of the organization, for violation of this Constitution or Bylaws, for behavior inconsistent with purposes of the organization, neglect of duty or for behavior inappropriate for an officer.

2. Any absence from four Board meetings shall constitute neglect of duty. Unexcused absences from two consecutive regular Board meetings shall constitute abandonment of office.

Article VII. Appointed Officers and Committees. The President, with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, may appoint such officers and committees as may be deemed necessary. Such officers and committees serve at the discretion of the President.

Article VIII. Amendments. Amendments to these By-Laws shall be adopted by a majority of the voting membership of the Board of Directors.

Article IX. Dissolution. Upon dissolution of AVER Florida Gold Coast, assets will be transferred to AVER Inc. In no event will any director, officer, or individual member retain any assets or benefits.

Article X. Ratification. By vote of the Board of Directors, at its meeting on December 4, 2007, the by-laws were revised in their entirety, substituting for by-laws ratified on April 5, 2005.

Approved, unanimously, by General Membership, at its meeting in January, 2008.