

Date: 28 February 2025

To: Bob Borka, COO - Marine Corps League  
Bruce Rakfeldt, National Judge Advocate  
National Bylaws Committee



From: Lisa Delk, Department of Georgia Sr. Vice Commandant

Subject: Proposed Amendment to National Administrative Procedures

**AMENDMENT TO NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES  
CHAPTER TEN – MISCELLANEOUS  
SECTION 10005, RESPECT,  
NEW PARAGRAPH C.**

**Current:**

**Section 10005. Respect**

a. The Bible shall be opened, placed on an Altar which is covered with a clean and attractive Altar Cloth, during all the meetings of the Marine Corps League. No disrespect to the Bible, by act or word, shall be tolerated. No one shall use the Altar for physical support, and shall not, under any circumstances, use the Altar or Bible as a resting place for any item or material. All space between the Altar and the Chair shall be considered as hallowed ground and shall not be traveled upon while the Bible is open.

b. The Ritual of the Marine Corps League shall be observed and employed at all meetings and appropriate functions to the maximum extent possible.

**Proposed: New Paragraph**

c. Though widely accepted and practiced as a show of respect, no member, regardless of gender or religious preference, shall be required to "Uncover" (remove the cover) during prayer, religious, or other ceremonies, even when called upon to do so in the Marine Corps League Ritual. It shall remain the right of the individual to choose whether or not to remove their cover.

**Rationale:**

From 2020- 2022, during my tenure as the Judge Advocate for the Department of Georgia, the most frequent question I received from detachments was whether or not their female members were allowed to remain covered during ritual prayer. Many of them requested a direct reference from the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures which provides a definitive answer to that question. There isn't one.

In February of 2015, the Marine Corps League Ritual was revised to include the phrase "*As to your religious preference, Uncover*". While the addition of that phrase provides for remaining covered because of one's religious beliefs, it does not provide any reference to gender precedent as a basis for doing so. The National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures do not address any individual's right to remain covered at all, irrespective of religious belief, gender, or precedent. For this reason, the issue remains unclear to many.

In 2023, the National Bylaws Committee recommended rejection of this amendment, yet the question is still being asked. There is still the long-established precedent which allows females to remain covered, yet the question is still being asked. And should the question once again reach the National Judge Advocate at any time in the future, he or she will undoubtedly uphold the right of female members to remain covered.

The issue of females', or anyone else's, right to remain covered, for any reason, is still unclear. Whether or not an individual agrees or disagrees with the reasons for remaining covered doesn't negate the individual rights of any who choose to remain covered for any reason. And while the issue itself may be unclear, the non-discrimination policy of the Marine Corps League (National Bylaws, Article II, Section 210) is not. In keeping with that policy, if our female members, or members with certain religious beliefs, are not required to remove their covers, it then follows, that our male members, or those with differing religious beliefs, *cannot* be required to remove their covers. Hence, "It shall remain the right of the individual to choose..."

I've heard the direct question or general discussion of this issue in Georgia many times. I have to believe that it is being asked or discussed elsewhere in the Marine Corps League. The addition of this paragraph will provide clear guidance on a female's, or any member's, right to choose whether or not they will uncover during prayer, religious, or other ceremonies. It will also serve as a written reference for those members who might request it.