CONSTITUTION OF THE
OHIO LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

The Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association, being an association of professional journalists dedicated to faithful reporting of the activities of the Ohio General Assembly and government of the State of Ohio, does hereby establish this Constitution in order to secure for its members their full rights as representatives of a free press in a free society; to uphold, encourage and enforce the highest standards of professional journalism; to encourage all public officials in the proper exercise of their public duties; to foster cooperation among its members for the common good; and to preserve and protect free and open access to information and the people's right to know.

ARTICLE I
Membership

Section One: There shall be three classes of membership in the Association: active, associate and affiliate. An individual's membership shall terminate when the member either leaves the employ of the member's news or information organization or fails to qualify for membership because of a change in assignment.

Membership shall be made available to qualified journalists employed by an established commercial or nonprofit news outlet providing nonpartisan coverage, including, but not limited to, newspapers, radio and televisions stations, wire services, news services and digital media.

Applicants from a media outlet organized to serve a specific audience or population shall not be excluded from membership solely on that basis.

Section Two: Active membership shall be made available to qualified journalists employed by an established news outlet that meets requirements specified in the Constitution and Bylaws.

These members shall be regularly, but not necessarily exclusively, assigned to coverage of the Ohio General Assembly, any aspect of state government or Ohio politics. Active members shall be entitled to vote for officers of the Association and in any other matter affecting the Association, and to represent the Association in reporting pools.

Section Three: Associate membership shall be made available to qualified journalists employed by an established news outlet that meets requirements specified in the Constitution and Bylaws.

These members shall exhibit a professional interest in the Ohio General Assembly, any aspect of state government or Ohio politics. Associate members shall have all privileges of active members, except voting and OLCA reporting pools, including floor privileges.

Section Four: Affiliate membership shall be made available to non-reporting technicians employed by an established news outlet that meets requirements specified in the Constitution and Bylaws, including, but not limited to, photographers, videographers and sound personnel.

These members shall include floor privileges and such additional privileges as granted by the executive board, excluding voting rights.

Section Five: Temporary affiliate membership shall be made available to any transient reporter, representing any qualified news outlet that meets requirements specified in the Constitution and Bylaws, who requests temporary floor privileges to cover the legislature. Any officer of the Association may authorize this status.

Section Six: There shall be excluded from membership: (i) any person professionally engaged in lobbying, public relations or political consulting; ii) any person controlled by or professionally connected with an association, firm, corporation or individual representing a trade, profession, political party, ideological or special interest group and (iii) any person standing as a candidate for federal or state elective office, or any person employed by, volunteering for, endorsing or otherwise formally engaged with such a candidate and/or any political party or political action committee.

Any person who engages in any of the above activities subsequent to admission to the Association shall be expelled in the manner provided herein.

ARTICLE II
Membership Responsibilities

Section One: All membership shall subscribe to the highest standards of professional journalism and avoid personal conflicts of interest, which interfere with the exercise of their professional responsibilities.

Section Two: Members guilty of misconduct in the view of the Association's executive board may, by a majority vote of the board, be censured or suspended or expelled from the Association, pursuant to the limitations of Article IV, Section Three.

ARTICLE III
Officers

Section One: There shall be a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary of the Association, nominated from the active membership and elected by secret ballot by a

majority of active members voting at the organizational meeting to be held on the opening day of each new biennial legislative session.
Section Two: Officers shall serve two-year terms. In the event of a vacancy, the office shall be filled by the next lower ranking officer according to the line of succession in Section One above. A vacancy in the office of secretary shall be filled at a special election called by the executive board.

ARTICLE IV
Executive Board

Section One: The executive board of the Association shall be composed of the four elected officers, plus one member to be named by the president from the active membership. The immediate past president of the Association, if still an active member, shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the executive board.

Section Two: The executive board shall have the power to set dues, determine membership, discipline, ratify or reverse actions and decisions of the president and generally decide on any matter affecting the Association, including matters not specifically set forth in this Constitution.

Section Three: All action of the executive board shall be subject to review at any organizational meeting or at any special meeting called by the president or called upon petition of ten active members of the Association. Actions of the executive board may be ratified or reversed by a majority of those voting.

ARTICLE V
Space Priorities

Desk space in facilities designated as the Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association Press Rooms, shall be allotted on the basis of priorities established by the executive board, with full-time legislative reporters being given first priority.

ARTICLE VI
Adoption and Amendments

Section One: This Constitution becomes effective upon adoption.

Section Two: After adoption and implementation of the Constitution, amendments may be made at any regular or special meeting of the Association. Amendments may be offered by any active members and adopted by a vote of two-thirds of active members.

(Adopted January 1, 1973; Article I, Section Three amended June 5, 1995; Article I, all sections, amended November 16, 1998; Article I, Section Two amended December 2, 2002; Article I, Section Two amended January 3, 2011; Article I, Sections One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six; and Article II, Section Two amended Jan. 8, 2025)

OHIO LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION

BYLAWS OF THE OHIO LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this Association is to guarantee to the General Assembly of Ohio a group of responsible reporters who will mutually police themselves and avoid lobbying activities for personal gain which would involve either advocacy or opposition to any pending legislation.

The officers of the Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association shall be president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. They shall be selected at a meeting to be called for 11:00 a.m. on the opening day of each regular legislative session. They shall serve two-year terms.

They, together with the immediate past president and an appointee of the president, shall form the Association's executive board, which is authorized to transact the Association's business between biennial meetings.

Each member of the Ohio Legislative Correspondents Association shall be a qualified journalist employed by an established commercial or nonprofit news outlet providing nonpartisan coverage, including, but not limited to, newspapers, radio and television stations, wire services, news services and digital media. Members must meet criteria established in the Association's Constitution.

Any individual applying for membership in the Association for the first time must submit an application 30 days before the membership is to take effect. The president shall notify all members of such an application.

It shall be the duty of the executive board to remonstrate with members guilty of a breach of decorum and, in cases of a serious and/or chronic nature, to conduct open hearings on the fitness of such members. The board shall have the authority to suspend or revoke membership.

Dues shall be set by the Association's executive board. Dues may be waived or prorated for those joining midsession to an amount not less than half the total. No member shall receive a membership card until such dues have been paid.

Each member shall, before receiving a membership card, sign a statement that the journalist is not engaged in the promotion of legislation or in the production of claims pending before the General Assembly and will not become so engaged while allowed the privileges of the floor and that the journalist is not in any sense the agent or representative of an individual or organization having legislation before the General Assembly and will not become either while retaining those privileges. Each member shall, before receiving a membership card, sign a statement promising when membership terminates to return any press room key, 24-hour Statehouse access card or other benefit of membership not belonging to the individual.

Vacancies in elective offices shall occur when the member resigns that office or their membership terminates as provided for in the Constitution.

In a vacancy in the president's office, the vice-president shall assume the presidency immediately. In all other vacancies, the office shall be filled by the next lower ranking officer according to the line of succession. A vacancy in the office of secretary shall be filled at a special election called by the executive board.

In the event vacancies in the presidency and vice presidency occur at the same time, one special election for both offices shall be called by the senior member of the Association within 15 days of the vacancies. Officers filling vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of that office.

(Adopted: September 11, 1987; Dues raised: January 2, 1992; Amended: November 16, 1998; Amended: January 3, 2011; Amended: January 8, 2025)