

*This is the third bylaw amendment proposed for consideration at the 2025 Annual Business Meeting. Previously proposed amendments were published in the March 2025 JCR.*

# 2025 PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT



The following serves as official notice that an additional amendment to NCRA's Constitution and Bylaws has been proposed and will be considered during and voted upon following the next Annual Business Meeting of the membership, July 24, 2025, at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minn. Voting on amendments will be held electronically with a voting period of 24 hours. All voting members are advised to ensure that NCRA has a current email address in the database by July 14.

The following amendment has been proposed by fifteen (15) NCRA eligible members for consideration by NCRA members at the upcoming Annual Business Meeting. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee reviewed and revised the proposed amendments. Following approval of revisions by the original signers, the Committee affirms that the proposed amendment meets the necessary criteria to be presented to the membership for a vote at the Annual Business Meeting.

## NOTES:

For your reading ease, the language to be added is *italicized*. Language to be stricken is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.

To review the full text and the changes, visit [NCRA.org/bylaws](https://ncra.org/bylaws).

## THIS AMENDMENT HAS BEEN PROPOSED BY:

*Cynthia Bragg, RPR, Abingdon, Va.*  
*Nicole A. Bulldis, RPR, Vancouver, Wash.*  
*Joshua Edwards, RDR, CRR, CRC, New York, N.Y.*  
*Carol Glazier, CCR, RDR, CRR, CRC, CLVS, Blairsville, Ga.*  
*Allison Hall, RDR, CRR, CRI, Tulsa, Okla.*  
*Elizabeth Harvey, FAPR, RPR, Seattle, Wash.*  
*Yvette Heinze, RPR, Helena, Mont.*  
*Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, FAPR, RDR, CRR, CRC, Cheyenne, Wyo.*  
*Donna L. Linton, RDR, CCR, CLR, Ashburn, Va.*  
*Phyllis Lykken, FAPR, RPR, Yakima, Wash.*  
*Jason Meadors, FAPR, RPR, CRR, CRC, Fort Collins, Colo.*  
*Jennifer Melius, RPR, Longmont, Colo.*  
*Traci Mertens, RDR, CRR, CRC, Alexandria, Va.*  
*Matthew Moss, RPR, Blaine, Minn.*  
*Kathryn Thomas, RDR, CRR, CRC, Caseyville, Ill.*

## RATIONALE

### 1) **State Associations have included Voice Writers**

- The incorporation of voice writers into state stenographic associations has increased over the past decade, reflecting a broader acceptance of voice writing as a methodology for taking down the spoken word verbatim.
- This trend signifies a growing recognition of voice writing within the court reporting field, as associations adapt to technological advancements and the evolving needs of the profession.

A sample of states currently accepting voice writers into their membership are as follows:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas (as associate members), Virginia, Washington.

### 2) **United States Court Reporters Association (USCRA) includes Voice Writers**

- With the growing number of federal district courts now employing voice writers, USCRA now includes them as part of its association, and voice writers are permitted to sit for the Federal Certified Realtime Reporter exam.

### 3) **Expanding Membership & Inclusivity**

- Stenographic reporting and voice writing share the same fundamental goal: accurate, realtime translation. By including voice writers, the Association broadens its reach, making it more inclusive of these professionals who use voice writing to achieve the same results.

### 4) **Strengthening the Profession**

- Court reporting and captioning face growing shortages due to retiring professionals and fewer new recruits. Including voice writers helps mitigate this issue by ensuring a steady flow of qualified professionals in the field.
- A united front between stenographers and voice writers enhances advocacy efforts, making the profession stronger when addressing industry changes, legislative matters, and technological advancements.

### 5) **Increasing Professional Development Opportunities**

- Shared education, certification programs, and training resources benefit both voice writers and stenographers by fostering skill development and knowledge exchange.
- Networking and mentorship opportunities grow when different reporting professionals collaborate under one organization.

### 6) **Meeting Market Demands**

- Some clients and courts already accept both stenographic and voice writing professionals, making it practical for the Association to represent both groups.

**Conclusion:** Bringing voice writers into the Association is a forward-thinking move that promotes unity, strengthens the profession, and ensures a more sustainable future for realtime translation services. By embracing different methods of capturing the spoken word, the same way the pen writers did for steno many years ago, the Association can better serve its members, their clients, and the courts that rely on them.

Upon successful passage of the amendment, all affected sections of the Constitution & Bylaws and/or Policies & Procedures may be amended to reflect the inclusion of voice writers as members, subject to approval by the NCRA Board of Directors upon presentation and recommendation by the NCRA Constitution & Bylaws Committee.

## Constitution & Bylaws: Article II–Purposes

**Definition:** In the context of this document, **stenographic-verbatim** “reporting” and/or **stenographic** “captioning” **refers to that reporting** shall mean the use of technology whereby an individual verbatim reporter or an individual captioner uses a stenographic machine, uses the human voice to speak into a mask, or reports manually using symbols. **the use of symbols, manually or by stenographic machine.** Individuals using these technologies are collectively referred to as “reporters” and/or “captioners.”

### The purposes of this Association shall be:

1. To assume responsibility for leadership and enlightenment of **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners and of the public regarding the special competency, importance, and value of **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners, and to promote **verbatim-stenographic** reporting technologies by the use of symbols, manually or by **stenographic** machine, over alternative reporting methods.
2. To promote a broader understanding and acceptance of the **verbatim-stenographic** reporter and/or **stenographic** captioner as an integral part of the judicial process.
3. To apply the knowledge and experience of **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners, working in cooperation with the bench and bar, toward the upgrading and improvement of the criminal and civil justice system in order that the public good may best be served, and to promote a broader understanding within the profession of the responsibility of a **verbatim-stenographic** reporter and/or **stenographic** captioner to participate actively in the achievement of this objective.
4. To encourage, establish, and maintain high standards of professional education, competence, and performance of **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners.
5. To conduct and promote lawful and proper technical and business research to enhance the services of **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners.
6. To promote lawful and proper professional ethics, as well as compliance with all applicable laws, including antitrust laws, for **verbatim-stenographic** reporters and/or **stenographic** captioners.

7. To stimulate and encourage the establishment and maintenance of appropriate training and educational facilities and programs for persons interested in the profession of **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning, and to promote **verbatim-stenographic** reporting *and/or captioning* as a successful career.
8. To cooperate with federal, state, and local governments, their agencies, and other organized groups for the benefit of the public and the **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning professions.
9. To conduct educational seminars and conferences relating to **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning.
10. To further the exchange of professional knowledge and to disseminate, by all appropriate means, to the extent permitted by law, accurate knowledge and information with respect to the **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning professions.
11. To advance the interests and general welfare of the **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning professions.
12. To promote and encourage development of realtime reporting skills and ethics to provide communication access pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
13. To do any and all things that are lawful and appropriate in the furtherance of these purposes.

## CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT

### Constitution & Bylaws: Article XVI—Affiliated Units

#### Section 1—Authorization

There shall be affiliated units of the Association when in the opinion of the Board of Directors such units are in the best interest of both the **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning professions and the units involved as a means of encouraging and promoting more effective cooperation and coordination of activity in the profession. Such affiliated units shall be and remain completely autonomous and independent of the Association.

## Section 4—Affiliation Policy

- a) A state association is eligible for affiliation if (1) it evidences through its constitution and bylaws or a statement of purposes that it espouses and embraces the purposes and precepts promulgated in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association and all applicable statutes, including antitrust laws and (2) a majority of its members are **either verbatim-stenographic** reporters, **voice writers** *or* **stenographic** captioners.
- d) The Association shall have no obligation to affiliated units other than to cooperate to the extent practicable in serving the **verbatim-stenographic** reporting and/or **stenographic** captioning professions. Members who are members of affiliated units shall not be entitled to any services not provided by the Association to other Members.

### STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) Board of Directors will maintain a neutral stance regarding the proposed voice writing bylaws amendment because the change is a membership-driven initiative. As stipulated in the NCRA's governance structure, bylaws amendments are subject to review and approval by the voting members during the Annual Business Meeting, and the Board's role is to ensure fair process and compliance with existing rules, not to advocate for or against specific proposals. Influencing the outcome of a member-led amendment would be inconsistent with the Board's fiduciary responsibility to represent the collective interests of the membership and uphold the integrity of the democratic process within the organization.

As an organization governed by its members, we trust in your judgment to shape our future. These decisions are yours to make.

## DATES TO KNOW

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| <b>JULY 15</b> | Deadline to verify your email address  |
| <b>JULY 24</b> | <b>Discussion of Bylaws:</b> NCRA Annual Business Meeting, July 24, 2025, Hyatt Regency Minneapolis                        |
| <b>JULY 24</b> | Voting starts within 2 hours of the close of the Annual Business Meeting<br><b><i>Voting remains open for 24 hours</i></b> |