

four dissenting Justices did something unusual. They published their dissent and called the execution of juveniles in this country a "travesty." Since four states have recently ended the juvenile penalty (leaving 18 on the books – 14 of which haven't executed a juvenile murderer in the last decade) and at least four more are considering a change (Florida, New Hampshire, Missouri and Arizona), the Supreme Court may be swayed. We are counting on Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the "swing vote" who has voiced clear misgivings about the death penalty system in the past. As I sit here in my office writing this, it's a lovely April spring day in Phoenix, the doors and windows are open, the temperature is 75 degrees, and there's a nice breeze blowing the pages around on my desk. I'm between patients. I always thought this would take ten or twenty years. I never thought it would happen as fast as it has. I hope that if we win, ASAP will handle it with grace and help skeptical opponents do the same. I just know that we can't keep killing hurt, abused, mentally ill, often brain-damaged kids and still have a humane and decent society in which to live. So, whatever our motivation we will continue on. Dick Ratner, Bob Weinstock and I will edit the Amicus Brief and ask the American Psychiatric Association to sign on. Wish us good luck in the fall. Mark Wellek

P.S. Look for an article on the Juvenile Death Penalty in the American Spectator Magazine, June issue. Several of us have contributed to it.

After completing this article, I received a stunning piece of news from Dick Ratner. Our Amicus Brief Attorney told us that the American Medical Association intends to sign on! M.W.

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ASAP BYLAWS CHANGE

Compiled by Perry Bach

To change or not to change... that is the [first] question; how to change is the next.

How did we get here and why change?

In 1967, four regional societies organized in a confederation to establish ASAP. Major goals were to recognize and focus on the unique nature of adolescents, adolescent development and psychology, and evaluation and treatment of adoles-

cents. The regional societies and national organization provided forums for discussions and leadership that established the field of adolescent psychiatry. At its peak, ASAP had more than 25 regional societies and over 1400 members. However, as the nature of psychiatric practice and continuing medical education changed, the need for regional societies waned. A few regional societies are still active, but most ASAP members now belong and participate as individuals. ASAP leaders have worked within the current organizational structure, but recognize that it is time to modify the structure so ASAP can better respond to our members' needs and provide leadership in the field of adolescent psychiatry. Regional societies will continue to be an important part of ASAP and will participate in its governance. As an organization, we will function more efficiently, effectively, and economically to accomplish our goals. The Executive Committee and House of Delegates (HOD) considered many options and recommend approval of the proposed Bylaws amendments.

What would change?

Identity: ASAP will change from a confederacy of regional societies to an association of individual members. The number of regional societies has decreased, and membership within remaining societies also decreased. Attendance at HOD meetings is primarily by officers rather than regional society delegates. HOD discussions reiterate those of the Executive Committee, with essentially the same people present. The current organization is complex, results in duplication, and no longer serves the intended purposes. ASAP needs a structure for clarification of issues, a good decision-making process, and timely action.

Involvement: Until now, we relied on regional societies to be "farm teams" that would energize and promote their members to be active in ASAP. With fewer members and less activity in the Societies, this has not been happening. The new structure should encourage interested individuals to be more involved in ASAP policies, processes, and activities.

Discussion and action: The HOD and its predecessor, the Council of Regional Societies' Delegates, were known for the intense discussions and scrutiny brought to each issue. With fewer delegates, there

is less discussion. By default, members of the Executive Committee (elected by the HOD) often had to act on behalf of the membership with little direction. The new organizational format will provide a discussion forum that is open to all members. Electing Officers: We considered alternatives ranging from the [current] representative method to direct election by vote of all individual members. The representative process no longer provides fair representation for the majority of members. Direct voting by individual members would have a significant number of members, if they chose to vote, casting their ballots for people they did not really know. The compromise was to have direct election of officers by ASAP members attending the annual meeting. Those attending would then have the opportunity to get to know the candidates, their interests, and their views on various issues. Further, those in attendance will usually include those ASAP members who are especially active and interested in ASAP.

I'm obsessive...where can I see the current and proposed Bylaws?

The current Bylaws, the proposed Bylaws, and a comparison chart, are available from Ms. Frances Roton, the ASAP Executive Director. If you would like them e-mailed to you as attachments, please contact Ms. Roton at: adpsych@aol.com. If you would like copies sent by regular mail, call Ms. Roton at 972-686-6166, or write her at POB 570218, Dallas, TX 75357.

I'm not that obsessive...what are the major changes?

Membership: Individual Members, rather than Regional Constituent Societies, will now be ASAP's main organizational unit. Regional societies will still be encouraged and will be involved in recruitment and approval of new members wherever they exist.

Constituent Societies: Regional societies will exist, but membership won't be mandatory. Each constituent society with ten or more members will have a vote on the new Governing Board.

Governance: The Governing Board will replace the HOD. Currently, the only individuals who can vote for officers are delegates from each constituent society. (Currently, the officers themselves don't even have votes on issues in the HOD!)