

Delegate Status for LREDA Members Frequently Asked Questions

What is LREDA proposing at General Assembly 2018?

The Board of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) is proposing that we amend [Article 4.8 of the UUA Bylaws](#) to grant delegate status to all "[Active Members](#) of LREDA who are currently serving a congregation." This amendment would give Delegate Status and thus voting rights at General Assembly to approximately 300 LREDA members.

Why do religious educators need to be delegates?

Professional religious educators will bring experience, wisdom, and faith to the issues that come before General Assembly. If religious education is central to our faith, as we say it is, then that experience, wisdom, and faith should have a voice. We teach our children that "everyone should have a voice in matters that concern them." Delegate status grants the opportunity to vote on GA business and in UUA elections.

It is critical that religious educators be given delegate status in order to advocate for our children and families, and to be able to bring issues forward at General Assembly that affect children and youth. Currently, Religious Educators are unable to vote, even on issues that directly impact them, such the UUA budget, which funds programs such as Tapestry of Faith. Additionally, our religious educators' wisdom around faith development and lifespan religious education would be beneficial in our conversations at General Assembly. Passage of this amendment models inclusivity and equity for our children and youth.

Why now?

LREDA is deeply aware that we have much work to do in dismantling white supremacy and hierarchical structures within our professional organization and in our faith. Religious educator delegate status brings us one step closer to addressing our imperfect systems of power, privilege, and oppression that have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories in our denomination. Religious educators' voices need to be heard now in our faith's larger conversations and decision-making processes.

If we give Religious Educators Delegate status, will our governance shift from a lay-led majority to a staff majority?

Lay people would retain 70% of the votes. Looking at the numbers, there are roughly 3000 lay delegates and 1000 ministers eligible to be delegates, plus approximately 300 active members of LREDA who would become eligible to be delegates. We don't expect the number of religious educators to change significantly in the coming years. With the passage of the amendment, lay people would retain 70% of the approximately 4300 votes.

Why not give delegate status only to credentialed religious educators?

As a matter of equity, LREDA advocates for giving a voice to all religious educators who have been employed by a congregation for three years or have taken five or more Renaissance Modules (UUA courses). The credentialing process requires time, resources, and congregational support that are not always available.

Why not limit the vote to Master Level Credentialed Religious Educators?

Currently, the Bylaws privilege the voices of only those religious educators who have had the time, resources, and congregational support needed to complete the most rigorous level of credentialing: Master Level - Credentialed Religious Educator. When we only give a voice to those at the highest level of credentialing, we are supporting [white supremacy culture](#).

Additionally, the small number of Master Level religious educators significantly limits the voices involved in conversations about the future of Unitarian Universalism. Going beyond master level credentialed religious educators would bring a more diverse and younger group of voices to the discussion. Using credentialing as a barrier limits democracy.

Wouldn't it be easier for religious educators to join the congregations they serve and be selected as delegates?

Section 11 of LREDA's [Best Practices for Employment of Religious Education Professionals](#) recommends that religious educators do not become members of the congregations they serve. We do recognize that members have served as religious professionals in their congregations, but it is challenging to both the congregants and the staff member in regard to confidentiality, level of knowledge of congregational affairs, and relationships. The congregation is a workplace for religious educators, which is similar for music directors, administrators, membership professionals, childcare staff, custodians, etc. It is difficult for a workplace to also be a faith home. Also, the minister is generally the chief of staff and power dynamics can make for an unhealthy staff/congregant relationship.

Why doesn't LREDA have more requirements for delegates?

There are specific requirements for religious educators to become a delegate. As a professional organization, LREDA upholds requirements for membership. Not anyone can join and get automatic delegate status. Delegates will be religious educators who are currently working in a congregation AND who have completed a **minimum of three years** in a paid position within a Unitarian Universalist congregation or who have completed a minimum of five Renaissance Modules, and/or are certified by the Unitarian Universalist Association as a Credentialed Religious Educator, any level. Additionally, when you become a LREDA Member, you agree to adhere to a [Code of Professional Practices](#), which is similar to the ministers' code of conduct.

Section 4.8 of the UUA bylaws states that congregations are allowed to select delegates “in accordance with its bylaws or procedures.” Why would religious professionals, who have been employed by these same congregations for three or more years (or have had significant training from the UUA through five Renaissance Modules) be held to a higher standard?

Why don't we take away the ministers' votes rather than add more staff votes?

In this imperfect process, a wholesale restructuring of our delegate selection process would need to occur in order to give votes only to congregants. Until and unless that happens, religious educators remain disenfranchised. For now, let's bring religious educators' experience, wisdom, and faith to the issues that come before our General Assembly.