6.0. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

6.1. SCOPE:

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes guidelines for the process of nominating and electing officers to serve on the National Board of C.O.P.S.

6.2. OBJECTIVE:

To provide a process to nominate and elect National Board officers.

6.3. NOMINATIONS:

A. Eligibility for Nomination: Survivors must meet the following eligibility requirements for nomination:

1. Applicants must be a member as defined in National Bylaws, Article III Membership.
2. Applicants must have observed the first anniversary of their officer’s death and attended NPW.
3. Applicants must have served on a chapter board within the last five (5) years, or have been a past National Board member. If an applicant does not have prior chapter or National Board experience as required, the applicant may ask for a waiver. They shall provide the N/EC Chair with information stating the reasons why they do not meet the criteria, and also their reasoning for wanting a waiver. The sitting National Board can approve/disapprove the waiver with a majority vote. Requirement for applicants to have served on a chapter board within the last five (5) years shall be waived if that applicant has no chapter in their specific area.
4. Applicants for Region Trustee must reside in their respective region for the entirety of their term. If the applicant moves outside of their region, they shall agree to withdraw the application to become a Region Trustee.
5. All applicants must sign a C.O.P.S. Confidentiality & Nominee Pledge Information Policy form agreeing that they will be an advocate for and supporter of the Concerns of Police Survivors organization and dedicated to work in the best interest of the C.O.P.S. organization. By signing this pledge, the applicant also acknowledges the confidential nature of the mailing, donor and membership files and lists as well as the practices, procedures, and methodologies of C.O.P.S. and any C.O.P.S. Chapter and that said nominee will abide by C.O.P.S. Confidentiality & Nominee Pledge Information Policy form.
6. All applicants for office must meet all eligibility requirements and must register and participate in the following mandatory events: (a) C.O.P.S. National Police Survivors Conference in May; (b) The C.O.P.S. National Board/Chapter Training in July; (c) Regular National Board Meetings (currently in July at the pre-Board/Chapter Training and the post-Board/Chapter Training, and the December/January Board Meeting); (d) His/her respective survivorship Hands-On Program; (e) Any special Board Meeting called by the President. All applicants must plan on staying to attend the post-Board/Chapter Training Board Meeting should they be elected. In addition, although not mandatory, Board Members are expected to attend various law enforcement conferences throughout the year, if possible. Two or more absences during a fiscal year shall result in automatic dismissal, whether as an applicant, nominee, or elected board member.
7. The Nominations/Elections Committee may recommend disqualification of any applicant who has (1) previously been convicted of a felony level offense anytime in their adult life or a misdemeanor offense during the previous five years from the date of the election, (2) has been convicted of a misdemeanor more than five years from the date of the election if the conviction was for such that it could cause alarm or moral question of the C.O.P.S. organization.

8. The Nominations/Elections Committee may recommend disqualification of any applicant who has a sustained grievance against them in the C.O.P.S. organization. The Nominations/Elections Committee will use their best judgment to determine if the sustained grievance was such that it may interfere in the applicant’s role on the National Board.

9. The applicant must not have engaged in any activities which would preclude C.O.P.S. from being able to secure a bond for the applicant by a licensed bonding/insurance company.

10. The Nominations/Elections Committee may recommend disqualification of any applicant who has violated C.O.P.S. Code of Conduct or has been expelled from the organization or any C.O.P.S. Program. The Chair will check with the National office to verify that all applicants meet these criteria.

11. All applicants, upon being approved as nominees, will be required to sign a waiver agreeing to a criminal history check to be administered by the Executive Director of National C.O.P.S.

12. In the event the Nominations/Elections Committee recommends disqualification of any applicant, they shall prepare a written statement to be presented to the National Board who will then vote on the disqualification of the applicant. The applicant will have the opportunity to refute or explain any information that may disqualify them for the election process.

B. NOMINATION PROCESS:

1. All persons seeking nomination for office shall submit a completed application for nomination to the Chair of the N/EC no later than February 20th. This includes both sitting board members and new applicants. Letters of reference and confidentiality statements shall be dated no earlier than 60 days prior to the application cutoff date. The application form can be found on the National C.O.P.S. website or requested from the National Immediate Past President.

2. A complete list of applicants shall be submitted to the National Board and N/EC no later than February 25th.

3. No later than March 10th, N/EC Chair review of applications is finalized and any non-eligible applications have been reviewed and voted on by the entire N/EC. The approved list of applicants shall be shared with the entire N/EC and the National Board.

4. Any applicant denied consideration by majority vote of the Board will be excluded from this year’s election process and must wait until the next election cycle to reapply for the nomination to the National Board.

5. Eligible applications are then processed according to SOP 4.4, Duties, Sections A & B.

6. By March 15th, the National Chapter Liaison shall distribute to each National Board member and chapter board member, a copy of each approved applicant’s application and other required documents for their Region Trustee and the National President. This information is to be used for review by chapter members. Each chapter shall be
afforded the opportunity to submit questions that have been gathered from their membership, to be answered by the applicants during the interview process. Deadline for submitting chapter questions shall be April 1st. Questions shall be submitted to the National Chapter Liaison who will submit the chapter questions to the N/EC Chair no later than April 5th.

7. Letters of reference required are the same for both sitting and non-sitting board members. Three (3) letters are to be submitted, one from each category, i.e., personal, professional and survivor (either individual or chapter). Letters of reference shall not be solicited from family members. A letter shall not be used for more than one category. Applicants shall not submit more than the three (3) required letters. The letters should reference the applicant’s qualifications for the position, to include his/her experience as well as his/her character.

8. Application packets shall include the application form, an executed C.O.P.S. Confidentiality & Nominee Pledge Information Policy Form, the three (3) letters of reference, a resume and a picture. The packet must be submitted in one (1) PDF document. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

9. If the Nominations/Elections Committee finds something that they believe is significant enough to disqualify someone from seeking office, and no grievance has been submitted, the committee can forward the issue to the Grievance Committee for expedited fact finding.

10. The National Chapter Liaison and N/EC Chair will determine if the questions asked by the chapters are appropriate. The questions asked by the chapters should remain relevant to the position for which the applicants are applying.

11. There will be two sets of questions, one for the National President and one for the Region Trustee. The approved chapter questions shall be included in these sets of questions.

12. Applicants for National President and Region Trustee will have videotaped interviews conducted by the N/EC Chair, or committee members as assigned, during NPW using questions submitted by the chapters and N/EC. Nominees must be available either in person during NPW or via video conference for their interview. Each applicant will be given, in advance, the same set of questions they will be asked. Each applicant will be given the same length of time to answer their questions. C.O.P.S. staff shall help with the technical aspect of the taping and producing.

13. The N/EC reserves the right to make no nomination for any given position should a suitable nominee not be found. Any position not filled will be appointed by the incoming National President at a reasonable time upon taking office as outlined in SOP 8.0, Appointments to the National Board of C.O.P.S.

14. If approved through the nomination process, the applicant shall become a nominee.

15. The N/EC Chair will notify each applicant of the committee’s decision no later than May 31st. This may happen in a face-to-face meeting, by telephone, or email.

16. Once the N/EC Chair has notified each candidate, but no later than May 31st, the N/EC Chair will submit the final list of nominees to the National Board including the National Chapter Liaison.

17. On or before June 5th, the National Chapter Liaison will submit the nominees for Region Trustee and National President to the National Board and to each Chapter Board member whose name is on the current chapter’s C.O.P.S. CHAPTER OFFICER ROSTER FORM along with the instructions for the voting process, and the videotaped interviews of each nominee. Chapter Boards must share the video interviews with their membership. If more information is requested by the chapters, the National Board shall work with the chapters to resolve all questions and concerns prior to the election. If questions remain unanswered and unsolvable, the Board shall make a decision regarding the candidate’s qualifications before filling the position.
Chapter Liaison will follow up and forward the requested information to the chapters.

6.4. CAMPAIGNING:

A. Nominees may campaign to introduce themselves and allow chapters and the general membership to get to know them provided they follow these guidelines:

1. Nominees may not refer to their opponents in any way. Negativity and mud-slinging will not be tolerated.
2. All campaigning must be centered around educating the chapters and general membership on who the nominee is.
3. No physical items will be permitted, including but not limited to buttons, posters, giveaways, etc.
4. No candidate/nominee may raise funds to campaign.
5. Nominees shall not approach new families at chapter events, during NPW and/or on an individual level for the purpose of discussing their intent to run for the National Board.

B. Approved campaigning will include:

1. Nominees for National President shall provide a written article for the National newsletter.
2. Introducing oneself as a nominee.
3. Attending various events during NPW with the ability of introducing yourself as a nominee, at the nominee’s own expense. Nominees shall decline to make any speeches.

C. Failure to follow SOP 6.4, Campaigning, Sections A and B will result in the nominee being expelled from the election process.

6.5. ELECTIONS:

A. The National Board shall cast votes for Region Trustees and National President. The National Board votes either in-person or by email. If an in-person meeting is held, the National Board shall conduct the election of National President and Region Trustees as the last order of business at the pre-Chapter Training Board meeting, or at the discretion of the President, via email vote submitted to the NCL not later than ten days prior to the start of the National Board/Chapter Training. All applications will be entered into the record where they shall become official. No nominations shall be accepted from the floor. If in-person meeting, a sealed ballot shall be used. Should a National Board members’ absence from the in-person pre-Chapter Training Board meeting be approved by the Board, the Board member will submit his/her ballot via email to the NCL.

B. For chapters, in lieu of a specially prepared ballot, the candidates will be listed/document in Chapter Minutes prepared for the meeting at which the voting is being recorded/voted with the results of the voting by chapter members. There shall be no write-in nominees permitted. Each chapter will vote for the National President; however, the Trustee position nominee will be voted upon only by the chapters of the Region’s respective Trustee.
C. Each chapter will be afforded one vote for their Region Trustee and one vote for National President. Each National Board member will be afforded one vote for each Region Trustee and one vote for the National President.

D. The Meeting Minutes at which voting is being conducted and/or recorded, shall be submitted by the Chapter President or his/her designated individual to the NCL at the National Office not later than ten calendar days prior to the opening session of the National Board/Chapter Training. As a minimum, all Chapter Officers and Chapter Board members shall be an addressee on the email that is submitted to the National Office that is reporting the election results. At the discretion of the Chapter President, election results can also be forwarded to the chapter membership if desired.

E. Each Chapter Board shall designate, in writing, a Chapter Voting Representative and an Alternate Chapter Voting Representative to serve as necessary should an additional vote be necessary to cast a vote on behalf of the chapter. The designated Chapter Voting Representative and an Alternate Chapter Voting Representative shall be included in the Minutes that report the election results for the chapter. As a reminder, the Meeting Minutes at which election results are reported, shall be submitted by the Chapter President or his/her designated individual to the NCL at the National Office not later than ten calendar days prior to the opening session of the National Board/Chapter Training. Upon receipt of the Chapter Minutes containing voting data, the NCL will secure the Minutes for the record and retain for the Elections Audit Committee. A copy of the Minutes will be made that has all National Election candidate names redacted. The redacted copy will be uploaded to the database in the chapters’ records. Should "re-balloting"/new vote be necessary, the NCL will notify the Chapter Voting Representative and Alternate Chapter Voting Representative of the affected chapter(s) that another vote will be required at which time the Chapter Voting Representative will cast a new vote electronically/email. If the Chapter Voting Representative is unable/unavailable to cast the chapter’s vote, the Alternate Chapter Voting Representative will do so.

F. On the voting deadline date, in complete secrecy, only the NCL will collect the voting data (in-person ballots by the National Board and the chapters’ email Minutes) and immediately seal the results, and secure them to be open/reviewed by the Elections Audit Committee at a pre-determined meeting time, whether in-person, or telephone, or video, or teleconference session.

G. The Election Audit Committee shall present the voting data (in-person ballots by the National Board and the chapters’ email Minutes) for tallying as the first order of business on the first day of the Board/Chapter Training. If necessary and the situation dictates, an audio/video conferencing meeting, may be conducted via telephone, video, or teleconference session to tally the votes. All votes, including those from the National Board and chapters, shall be tallied and winners shall be determined by majority. In case of a tie vote, any contested race shall be re-balloted until a winner is determined:

1. National President – a majority of all eligible chapter votes and all voting National Board members
2. Region Trustee – majority of all eligible regional chapter votes and all voting National Board members
H. The Election Audit Committee shall share the election results immediately with the National President and the Nominations and Elections Committee Chair. The National President and the Nominations and Elections Committee Chair shall meet individually in-person or via an audio/video conferencing meeting via telephone, video, or teleconference session with any nominees in which the position was contested and had more than one eligible nominee. Once those individuals have been notified of the results, the Election Audit Committee Chairperson shall share the results with all nominees, the National Board, and chapters as soon as the results have been verified.

All SOPS revised and adopted on November 17, 2013; SOP 6.4 amended on May 11, 2014
SOP 4.5 and 6 amended on February 20, 2015
SOP 4.0 and 6.0 amended on January 25, 2016
SOP 4.0 and 6.0 amended on January 10, 2017
SOP 6.3.A.6, 6.3.B.1, 6.3.B.7 & 6.3.B.8, 6.3.B.13 – Amended by National Board vote on November 19, 2018
SOP 6.3.A.6, 6.3.A.11 & 6.3.B.12 – Amended by National Board vote on January 18, 2020
SOP 6.3.B.18 & 6.5 – Amended by National Board vote on January 31, 2021
SOP 6.5 – Amended by National Board vote on April 21, 2021