

# SID SOLOMON

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Fellow Equity Members,

At the Actors' Equity Association Regional Membership Meetings held in October 2015, **the Equity members present passed 9 separate Membership Meeting Resolutions**. As is required by Equity's rules, the National Council then considered these Resolutions for passage, rejection, or amendment. **Furthermore, votes taken by Council in response to Membership Meeting Resolutions are recorded (meaning each Officer or Councilor votes individually), with the results published in a subsequent edition of Equity News.**

The consideration of the Membership Meeting Resolutions passed in October took place at Council meetings in December 2015 and January 2016, with the results published in the recently released March 2016 edition of Equity News. While the proceedings of the meetings themselves are confidential, **in the interest of both transparency and accountability, I have decided to publish my own reasoning for each of my recorded votes.** I plan to publish such a document regarding all Membership Meeting Resolutions as long as I serve as a Councilor.

**Whether you agree or disagree with the votes I cast, I look forward to hearing your thoughts.** I continue to strive to be *the most* accessible member of Equity's Council. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sid Solomon', written over a horizontal line.

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## **OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #1**

*WHEREAS, an Actor possessing sides well in advance of an audition has a greatly increased chance of booking the job and; WHEREAS, actors who are given audition appointments by the casting director receive their sides days and even weeks in advance of their auditions thus providing them a non-equitable advantage and; WHEREAS, actors who receive sides only 20 minutes in advance of their audition have a snowballs chance in hell of booking the same job; THEREFORE, be it **RESOLVED** that commencing no later than December 1, 2015, the Audition Department will make best efforts to make available audition materials for sides calls as soon as they receive them or a week in advance, whichever is sooner. The hard copies of sides will be available for view either upon request or display in the Audition Center; Be it further **RESOLVED** that Council will commit to making sides available via internet and will appoint a task force to accomplish this end. The methodologies and findings of this task force will be reported in Equity News no later than the March 2016 issue.*

- **The Resolution was divided, and Council voted on denial of both parts. The votes to deny PASSED.**
- **I voted IN FAVOR of denying both parts of the Resolution.**
- Vote Totals: Part I – **58 In Favor**, 3 Opposed | Part II – **59 In Favor**, 0 Opposed

This was a difficult decision for me, and I wavered on how I would vote right until my name was called. **I frequent EPAs more than most members of Council**, and I would personally welcome the availability of sides more than 20 minutes before my auditions.

**However, each of our contracts (Production, LORT, COST, CORST, SPT, etc.) contains specific provisions regarding requirements for principal auditions.** In some cases, it has only been through the bargaining of those contracts that producers have been required to offer sides to actors at all (rather than simply seeing monologues). In the end, **I believe the appropriate forum for requesting or requiring advance availability of sides for EPAs is through our negotiating teams at the bargaining table, rather than via an act of Council.**

I will be sure to advise our various contract committees of the importance of this issue to the membership in advance of future negotiations, and I encourage all members to do the same.

## **OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #2**

**RESOLVED** that Council shall instruct AEA Staff that all AEA Membership meetings as specified in Article I, Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3 of the AEA Bylaws, shall be recorded and made available for review by members as specified in Article I of the Bylaws in Section V: Membership Meeting Record, and that any and all meetings with membership called by Council such as informational meetings etc. be recorded.

- Council voted on approval of this Resolution, and it **FAILED**.
- I voted **IN FAVOR** of approving this Resolution.
- Vote Totals: **2 In Favor**, 50 Opposed, 1 Abstention

Equity's By-Laws already mandate that an "**audiotape or transcript shall be made of all membership meetings and shall be made available for audit upon request by members in good standing.**" The above Membership Meeting Resolution simply asked that such a recording be similarly made of *any* meeting called by Council with the membership.

Now, I understand and empathize with those concerned that the recording of meetings may cause some to hesitate about speaking openly. **However, as the Association is currently required by its By-Laws to record all Annual, Regional, and Special Membership Meetings, Equity staff already has provisions in place to ensure member privacy and security at those meetings. Furthermore, this Resolution did not require that the requested recordings be made available to the membership (as the recordings of Annual, Regional, and Special membership meetings are required to be.)** Rather, it simply required that a recording be made, allowing Equity staff the discretion as to whether or not that recording would then be made available to members upon request.

As a Councilor committed to transparency and improved communications with and access for the membership, **I am proud to have voted in favor of this Resolution.**

### OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #3

**RESOLVED** that WHEREAS, committee members have as great a stake in the work by these committees as the chair, be it **RESOLVED** that if 5 members of a specific committee want to meet they be allowed to call a meeting.

- In response to this Resolution, Council voted on the following motion, and it **PASSED**:

**RESOLVED** that WHEREAS, committee members have as great a stake in the work by these committees as the chair, Council reaffirms that if one member of a specific committee wants to meet, they be allowed to request a committee meeting through the Governance Department, appropriate Staff, and/or Chair(s).

- I was **OPPOSED** to this motion.

- Vote Totals: 22 In Favor, **17 Opposed**

The intent of the Membership Meeting Resolution was clear to me: **the members of a committee should have a means by which to compel a meeting of their committee without the approval of the Chair.** Such a provision would allow for the protection of the membership of our committees, especially those who might hold a minority viewpoint, or who may disagree with the Chair on matters of policy. **Given that the Chairs of our various committees have wide latitude and discretion as to how often (or not) they wish to convene a meeting, there is currently no policy to stop them from never calling a meeting of their own accord.**

**Now, I believe that the Membership Meeting Resolution as passed was flawed.** Some Equity committees have more than 140 members, while some have as few as 3. **I do not think it prudent to give 5 committee members - a very small and seemingly arbitrary number - the power to compel a meeting of a committee of more than 100 members.** However, I do believe the Association and its membership would benefit from the creation of a mechanism by which an appropriate number of committee members could, in fact, compel a committee meeting. For instance, Equity's rules dictate that a quorum for a committee meeting is set as either 17 committee members or 25% of the committee, whichever number is smaller. **If a Membership Meeting Resolution were to be passed calling for either 17 committee members or 25% of a committee (whichever is smaller) to be able to compel a meeting of that committee, I'd be inclined to vote strongly in favor.**

Keep in mind, too, that Equity's rules already include such a provision for Membership Meetings. Currently, Article I, Section 2 of the By-Laws states that a mere 250 members of the Association may compel a Special Membership Meeting. **That means that approximately .05% of our current membership can force the Association to call a meeting of *the entire union*. I see no reason, then, why a quorum should not be given the ability to compel a meeting of their own committee.**

**As for the motion voted on and passed by Council, I voted against it because I believe it did not properly address the intent of the Membership Meeting Resolution.** The motion states that any single member of a committee is allowed to "request" a meeting of that committee. **Members of committees do not require Council approval to make requests, nor does Council's approval require that such requests be honored.** The motion represented the continuation of a policy that provides the Chairs of committees too much discretion as to when and how often committee meetings should be called. Therefore, I voted against the motion.

**OCTOBER 2015 WESTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #1**

**RESOLVED** that the following "revised" statement be entered into the record and printed in the Equity Newsletter:

*"The majority of Los Angeles Equity Members are deeply concerned for the survival of our artistic homes and in many ways our artistic souls. No artist would simply let these things disappear particularly not for theoretical gains we see as more than offset by very real losses. But we stand proudly with this union's history of achieving vital gains for its Members. We stand with its passionate advocacy for civil rights of all kinds and above all we stand with our sisters and brothers across the country and our collective aspirations for fair compensation, workplace protections and increased opportunities for us all. There is no contradiction here. We are Pro-99 and we are Equity."*

**- Council voted to POSTPONE the consideration of this Resolution.**

The vote to postpone consideration of this Resolution took place in executive session. Consequently, **I am not permitted to discuss Council's action.**

## **OCTOBER 2015 WESTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTIONS #2 & #3**

**RESOLVED** that on behalf of the Los Angeles Membership of Equity present at this meeting that the Production Contract Negotiating Team be formally congratulated on the completion of their work and thanked for their time and extraordinary effort on our behalf.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that the AEA National Council meet immediately with the plaintiffs of the lawsuit and their lawyers in an attempt to resolve the issue and avoid protracted and costly litigation.

- **Council voted on approval of both of these Resolutions, and they both PASSED.**
- **I voted IN FAVOR of approving both Resolutions.**
- **Vote Totals: Resolution #2 – 31 In Favor, 0 Opposed | Resolution #3 – 31 In Favor, 0 Opposed**

The choice to vote in favor of both Resolutions was easy. Firstly, the gains made by our Production Contract Negotiating Team were tremendous and worthy of commendation. **I am proud to join the Western Membership in their congratulations.**

Secondly, since discussions have already commenced between representatives of both Equity and the plaintiffs in the Asner v. AEA lawsuit, **voting in favor of the Resolution was simply an affirmation of that decision.**

#### **OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #4**

**RESOLVED** that any developmental contracts, including but not limited to the workshop and lab, and any other readings or developmental stuff be made available online, that is practical to do so.

- In response to this Resolution, Council voted on the following motion, and it PASSED:

**RESOLVED** that any developmental contracts, including but not limited to the workshop and lab, and any other readings or developmental contracts, agreements, and codes be made available online, where it is practical to do so.

- I voted **IN FAVOR** of this motion.

- Vote Totals: **19 In Favor**, 15 Opposed

**Simply put, I believe our members should have easy access to all agreements and codes that they may choose to work under.** When we choose to audition for work, we are informed of what contract or code the work will be covered by. Our ability to read that contract or code in its entirety gives us the ability and agency to make smart and informed choices about what work we are willing to accept.



**OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #5**

**RESOLVED** for Council to refer to the media committee to research ways in which members could have access to B roll for the purpose of creating their own publicity.

- In response to this Resolution, Council voted on the following motion, and it **PASSED**:

**RESOLVED** for Council to refer to the media committee to continue researching ways in which members could have access to B roll for the purpose of creating their own publicity.

- I voted **IN FAVOR** of this motion.

- Vote Totals: **47 In Favor**, 0 Opposed

**As an actor, I would personally love to have access to any and all B-roll footage shot of my work onstage.** However, I am well aware that there are complex issues tied up in this question, including the protection and potential compensation of other artists whose work is reflected in that footage. **As an observer of the Media & New Technology Committee, I look forward to being a part of the ongoing conversation about this, and will work towards finding constructive and practical solutions to the issue.**

**OCTOBER 2015 EASTERN MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION #6**

**RESOLVED** that we expand the current Ask If It's Equity campaign to all other regions so that audiences are made aware that shows that might say 'direct from Broadway' may be non-union.

- In response to this Resolution, Council voted on the following motion, and it **PASSED**:

**RESOLVED** that we expand the current Ask If It's Equity campaign to all other regions in accordance with the strategic plan so that audiences are made aware that shows that might say 'direct from Broadway' may be non-union and to beef up the presence of Ask If It's Equity in advance of the SET Negotiations in June.

- I voted **IN FAVOR** of this motion.

- Vote Totals: **50 In Favor**, 1 Abstention

**I am a strong supporter of the Ask If It's Equity campaign as an educational tool for audiences.**

While still in its infancy, the campaign is proving to have a significant impact, and I strongly support all efforts to continue to educate audiences about the differences between Equity and non-Equity tours.