

CONSTITUTION

League ID Number: **4054011**

THIS BOX FOR REGIONAL USE ONLY

Date submitted: _____

Approved: _____

Not approved: _____

LITTLE LEAGUE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be known as the **Encino Little League**, hereinafter referred to as “Local League.”

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVE

SECTION 1

The objective of the Local League shall be to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and respect for authority, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger and happier children and will grow to be good, decent, healthy and trustworthy citizens.

SECTION 2

To achieve this objective, the Local League will provide a supervised program under the Rules and Regulations of Little League Baseball, Incorporated. All Directors, Officers and Members shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or the winning of games is secondary, and the molding of future citizens is of prime importance. In accordance with Section 501-(c)-(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code, the Local League shall operate exclusively as a non-profit educational organization providing a supervised program of competitive baseball and softball games. No part of the net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual; no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and which does not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1

Eligibility. Any person sincerely interested in active participation to further the objective of this Local League may apply to become a Member.

SECTION 2

Classes. There shall be the following classes of Members:

(a) **Player Members.** Any player candidate meeting the requirements of Little League Regulation IV shall be eligible to compete for participation. Player Members shall have no rights, duties or obligations in the management or in the property of the Local League.

(b) **Regular Members.** Any adult person actively interested in furthering the objectives of the Local League who is the parent or legal guardian of a child registered to play baseball at Encino Little League in the Spring of a given year and who has paid the applicable registration fee(s) for that season is a Regular Member in that year. Regular Members may be issued a card numbered in sequential order annually. The secretary shall maintain the roll of membership to qualify voting members.

Only Regular Members in good standing are eligible to vote at General Membership Meetings and for Executive Board Nominees. All Officers, Board Members, Committee Members, Managers, Coaches, adult Volunteer Umpires and other elected or appointed officials must be active Regular Members in good standing.

Note: Notwithstanding the above, Regular Members of the league automatically include all current Managers, Coaches, Volunteer Umpires, Board Members, Officers of the Board and any other person who is recognized by the Board as a volunteer in the Local League, including those volunteers with the following titles listed below (Optional examples: Team Parent, Field Maintenance, District Administrator, Assistant Administrators, etc.):

(c) **Honorary Members (Optional).** Any person may be elected as Honorary Member by the unanimous vote of all Directors present at any duly held meeting of the Board but shall have no rights, duties or obligations in the management or in the property of the Local League.

(d) **Sustaining Members (Optional).** Any person not a Regular Member who makes financial or other contribution to the Local League may by a majority vote of the Executive Board become a Sustaining Member, but such person shall have no rights, duties or obligations in the management or in the property of the Local League.

(e) As used hereinafter, the word "Member" shall mean a Regular Member unless otherwise stated.

SECTION 3

Other Affiliations.

(a) Members, whether Regular or Player, shall not be required to be affiliated with another organization or group to qualify as members of the Local League.

(b) Regular Members should not be actively engaged in the promotion and/or operation of any other baseball/softball program.

SECTION 4

Suspension or Termination. Membership may be terminated by resignation or action of the Board as follows.

(a) The Board, by a two-thirds vote of those present at any duly constituted Board meeting, shall have the authority to discipline or suspend or terminate the membership of any Member of any class, including managers and coaches, when the conduct of such person is considered detrimental to the best interests of the Local League and/or Little League Baseball, Incorporated. The Member involved shall be notified of such meeting, informed of the general nature of the charges and given an opportunity to appear at the meeting to answer such charges.

(b) The Board shall, in case of a Player Member, give notice to the manager of the team for which the player is a Player Member. Said manager shall appear, in the capacity of an adviser, with the player before the Board or a duly appointed committee of the Board. The player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may also be present. The Board shall have full power to suspend or revoke such player's right to future participation by two-thirds vote of those present at any duly constituted meeting (quorum is required).

ARTICLE IV - GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SECTION 1

Definition. A General Membership Meeting is any meeting of the membership of the league (including Special General Membership Meetings, Section 7). A minimum of one per year (Annual Meeting, see Section 6) is required.

SECTION 2

Notice of Meeting. Notice of each General Membership Meeting shall be delivered personally, electronically or by mail to each Member at the last recorded address at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting, setting forth the place, time and purpose of the meeting. In lieu of the above methods, notice may be given in such form as may be authorized by the Members, from time to time, at a regularly convened General Membership Meeting.

SECTION 3

Quorum. At any General Membership Meeting, the presence in person or representation by absentee ballot of one-fifth (20 percent) of the members (as defined in Article III - Membership) shall be necessary to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present, no business shall be conducted.

SECTION 4

Voting. Only Regular Members shall be entitled to make motions and vote at General Membership Meetings. However, the Board may invite, admit and recognize guests for presentations or comments during General Membership Meetings. (Those eligible to take part at meetings of the Board are described in Article VI, Section 4.). Any such motions voted on and approved by Regular Members are subject to final approval by the Executive Board.

SECTION 5

Absentee Ballot. For the expressed purpose of accommodating a Regular Member in good standing who cannot be in attendance at the Annual Meeting, or any General Membership Meeting at which a motion is made by a Regular Member, an absentee ballot may be requested and obtained from the Secretary of the League. The absentee ballot shall be properly completed, signed and returned in a sealed envelope to the Secretary prior to the date of the meeting.

SECTION 6

Annual Meeting of the Members. The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Local League shall be held on December 15, or such other date as may be announced by the Board, for the purpose of the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting. The Membership shall receive at the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Local League a report, verified by the President and Treasurer, or by a majority of the Directors, showing:

1. The condition of the Local League, to be presented by the President or his/her designate;
2. A general summary of the financial condition of the Local League.

SECTION 7

Special General Membership Meetings. Special General Membership Meetings of the Members may be called by the Board or by the Secretary or President at their discretion. Upon the written request of ten (10) Members, the President or Secretary shall call a Special General Membership Meeting to consider the subject specified in the request. No business other than that specified in the notice of the meeting shall be transacted at any Special General Membership Meeting. Such Special General Membership Meeting shall be scheduled to take place not less than fourteen (14) days after the request is received by the President or Secretary.

SECTION 8

Rules of Order for General Membership Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of all General Membership Meetings, except where same conflicts with this Constitution of the Local League.

ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1

Authority. The management of the property and affairs of the Local League shall be vested in the Executive Board of Directors (the "Executive Board" or "Board"). The Board shall appoint individuals to serve as General Board Volunteers during the season.

SECTION 2

Number and Election of Board Members. The Board shall consist of nine (9) members to be elected annually by the Regular Membership. The immediate Past President is deemed to be automatically elected to the Board. If less than seven (7) candidates seek election to the remaining positions, the number of such Directors may be reduced accordingly.

A secret ballot election of the Executive Board shall be conducted in May or June. Only Regular Members who are parents or legal guardians of a child registered to play baseball at Encino Little League in the Spring of a given year and who has paid the applicable registration fee(s) for that season are eligible to be elected. All Regular Members in good standing may vote in such election; each family is limited to one vote per child enrolled to play baseball during the 2017 Spring season. The election shall be by majority vote.

After the Board is elected, the Board shall meet to elect the officers. After the election, the Board shall assume the performance of its duties at the first Board meeting in August following the election. The Board's term of office shall continue until its successors are elected and qualified under this section.

The Officers of the Board shall include the President, one or more Vice Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary. Officers of the Board may include one or more Player Agents, a Safety Officer, a Director of Baseball Operations, and/or a Coaching Coordinator.

SECTION 3

Vacancies. If any vacancy occurs in the Board, by death, resignation or otherwise, it may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Directors at any regular Board meeting or at any Special Board Meeting called for that purpose.

SECTION 4

Board Meetings, Notice and Quorum. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held immediately following the Annual Meeting and on such days thereafter as shall be determined by the Board.

The President or the Secretary may whenever they deem it advisable, or shall at the request in writing of a majority of the Directors, call for a Special Board Meeting. In the case of Special Board Meetings, such notice shall include the purpose of the meeting and no matters not so stated may be acted upon at the meeting. Notice of each Board meeting shall be given by the Secretary personally, electronically or by mail to each Director at least ten (10) days before the time appointed for the meeting to the last recorded address of each Director.

- (a) Five (5) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If a quorum is not present, no business shall be conducted.
- (b) Only members of the Board may make motions and vote at meetings of the Executive Board. However, the Board may invite, admit and recognize guests for presentations or comments during Board meetings.

SECTION 5

Duties and Powers. The Board shall have the power to appoint such standing committees as it shall determine appropriate and to delegate such powers to them as the Board shall deem advisable and which it may properly delegate.

The Board may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its meetings and the management of the Local League as it may deem proper, provided such rules and regulations do not conflict with this Constitution.

The Board shall have the power by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular meeting of the Board or Special Board Meeting to discipline, suspend or remove any Director or Officer or Committee Member of the Local League in accordance with the procedure set forth in Article III, Section 4 (a, b).

SECTION 6

Rules of Order for Board Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of all Board meetings, except where same conflicts with this Constitution of the Local League.

ARTICLE VII - DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE BOARD AND OTHER OFFICERS

SECTION 1

Appointments. The Board may appoint such other officers or agents as it may deem necessary or desirable, and may prescribe the powers and duties of each. Appointed officers or agents shall have no vote on actions taken by the Board unless such individuals have been elected to the Board by the membership or have been elected to fill a vacancy on the Board.

SECTION 2

President. The President shall:

- (a) Conduct the affairs of the Local League and execute the policies established by the Board.
- (b) Present a report of the condition of the Local League at the Annual Meeting.
- (c) Communicate to the Board such matters as deemed appropriate, and make such suggestions as may tend to promote the welfare of the Local League.
- (d) Be responsible for the conduct of the Local League in strict conformity to the policies, principles, Rules and Regulations of Little League Baseball, Incorporated, as agreed to under the conditions of charter issued to the Local League by that organization.
- (e) Designate in writing other officers, if necessary, to have power to make and execute for/and in the name of the Local League such contracts and leases they may receive and which have had prior approval of the Board.
- (f) Investigate complaints, irregularities and conditions detrimental to the Local League and report thereon to the Board or Executive Committee as circumstances warrant.
- (g) Oversee the preparation and submission of an annual budget to the Board and be responsible for the proper execution thereof.
- (h) With the assistance of the Player Agent, examine the application and support proof-of-age documents of every player candidate and certify to residence and age eligibility before the player may be accepted for tryouts and selection.

SECTION 3

Vice President. The Vice President shall:

- (a) Perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President, provided he or she is authorized by the President or Board so to act. When so acting, the Vice President shall have all the powers of that office.

- (b) Perform such duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board or by the President.

SECTION 4

Secretary. The Secretary shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Be responsible for recording the activities of the Local League and maintain appropriate files, mailing lists and necessary records.
- (b) Perform such duties as are herein specifically set forth, in addition to such other duties as are customarily incident to the office of Secretary or as may be assigned by the Board.
- (c) Maintain a list of all Regular, Sustaining and Honorary Members, Directors and committee members and give notice of all meetings of the Local League, the Board and Committees.
- (d) Issue membership cards to Regular Members, if approved by the Board.
- (e) Keep the minutes of the meetings of the Members, the Board and the Executive Committee, and cause them to be recorded in a book kept for that purpose.

SECTION 5

Treasurer. The Treasurer shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Perform such duties as are herein set forth and such other duties as are customarily incident to the Office of Treasurer or may be assigned by the Board.
- (b) Receive all moneys and securities, and deposit same in a depository approved by the Board.
- (c) Keep records for the receipt and disbursement of all moneys and securities of the Local League, including the Auxiliary, approve all payments from allotted funds and draw checks therefore in agreement with policies established in advance of such actions by the Board. All disbursements by check must have dual signatures.
- (d) Prepare an annual budget, under the direction of the President, for submission to the Board at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 6

Player Agent. The Player Agent shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Record all player transactions and maintain an accurate and up-to-date record thereof.
- (b) Receive and review applications for player candidates and assist the President in verifying residence and age eligibility.
- (c) Conduct the tryouts, the player draft and all other player transaction or selection meetings.
- (d) Prepare the Player Agent's list.
- (e) Prepare for the President's signature and submission to Little League International, team rosters, including players claimed, and the tournament team eligibility affidavit.
- (f) Notify Little League International of any subsequent player replacements or trades.
- (g) Administer the divisional player pool.

SECTION 7

Safety Officer. The Safety Officer shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Create awareness, through education and information, of the opportunities to provide a safer environment for children and all participants of Little League.
- (b) Develop and implement a plan for increasing safety of activities, equipment and facilities through education, compliance and reporting.

NOTE: In order to implement a safety plan using education, compliance and reporting, the following suggestions may be utilized by the Safety Officer:

- (1) Education - Should facilitate meetings and distribute information among participants including players, managers, coaches, umpires, league officials, parents, guardians and other volunteers.
- (2) Compliance - Should promote safety compliance leadership by increasing awareness of the safety opportunities that arise from these responsibilities.
- (3) Reporting - Define a process to assure that incidents are recorded, information is sent to league/district and national offices, and follow-up information on medical and other data is forwarded as available.

SECTION 8

Coaching Coordinator. The coaching coordinator (if any is appointed) shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Represent coaches/managers in league;
- (b) gain the support and funds necessary to implement a league-wide training program;
- (c) order and distribute training materials to players, coaches and managers;
- (d) coordinate mini-clinics as necessary;
- (e) serve as the contact person for Little League International.

SECTION 9

League Information Officer. The League Information Officer shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Set up and manage the league's official website (site authorized by Little League International);
- (b) Set up online registration and ensure the league rosters are uploaded to Little League;
- (c) Assign online administrative rights to other local volunteers;
- (d) Encourage creation of team web sites to managers, coaches, and parents;
- (e) Ensure that league news and scores are updated online on a regular basis;
- (f) Collect, post, and distribute important information on league activities including direct dissemination of fund-raising and sponsor activities to Little League Baseball, Incorporated, the district, the public, league members, and the media;
- (g) Serves as primary contact person for Little League and Active Team Sports regarding optimizing use of the Internet for league administration and for distributing information to league members and to Little League Baseball, Incorporated.

SECTION 10

Sponsorship/Fundraising Manager. The Sponsorship/Fundraising Manager shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

Solicit and secure local sponsorships to support league operations
Collect and review sponsorship and fundraising opportunities
Organize and implement approved league fundraising activities
Coordinate participation in fundraising activities
Maintain records of monies secured through sponsorship and fundraising initiatives.

SECTION 11

Concession Manager. The Concession Manager shall perform all duties set forth in the Local League's By-Laws, which may include the following:

- (a) Maintain the operation of concession facilities
- (b) Organize the purchase of concession products
- (c) Schedule volunteers to work the concession booth during league events
- (d) Collects and reviews concession related offers including coupons, discounts and bulk-purchasing opportunities
- (e) Organizes, tallies and keeps records of concession sales and purchases.

ARTICLE VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SECTION 1

The Board may appoint an Executive Committee which shall consist of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) Directors, one of whom shall be the President of the Local League.

SECTION 2

The Executive Committee shall advise with and assist the Officers of the Local League in all matters concerning its interests and the management of its affairs, and shall have such other powers as may be delegated to it by the Board, but in no event will the Executive Committee have authority over the Board.

SECTION 3

At any meeting of the Executive Committee, a majority of the total number of members then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Committee.

ARTICLE IX - OTHER COMMITTEES

SECTION 1

Nominating Committee. The Board may appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of one or more Directors and other appointed Regular Members. The Committee may investigate and consider eligible candidates and submit at the Annual Meeting a slate of candidates for the Executive Board. The Committee may also submit for consideration by the Board a slate of Officers and Committee Members.

SECTION 2

Membership Committee. The Board may appoint a Membership Committee consisting of one or more Directors and other appointed Regular Members. The Committee may receive the names of prospective Honorary, Sustaining and Regular Members, investigate for eligibility and recommend those qualified for election at the annual, regular or any special meeting of the Members or the Board as the case may be.

SECTION 3

Finance Committee. The Board may appoint a Finance Committee consisting of one or more Directors. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee. The Committee shall investigate ways and means of financing the Local League including team sponsorships and submit recommendations.

It shall be responsible for taking up collections at games, if such collections are authorized by the Local League, and shall turn over said collections to the Treasurer immediately after each game.

SECTION 4

Building and Property Committee. (May be combined with Grounds Committee) The Board may appoint a Building and Property Committee consisting of one or more Directors and other appointed Regular Members. The Committee shall investigate and recommend available, suitable sites and plans for development, including ways and means, the latter in cooperation with the Finance Committee. It shall be responsible for repair and improvement recommendations, other than normal maintenance, and supervise the performance of approved projects.

SECTION 5

Grounds Committee. (May be combined with Building and Property Committee) The Board may appoint a Grounds Committee which shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the playing field(s), buildings and grounds. It shall operate within the amount appropriated in the approved budget for that purpose.

SECTION 6

Playing Equipment Committee. The Board may appoint a Playing Equipment Committee which shall secure bids on needed supplies and equipment and make recommendations for their purchase to the Board. The Committee shall be responsible for the proper issuance of such supplies and equipment and for the repair, cleaning and storage thereof at the close of the season.

SECTION 7

Managers Committee. The Board may appoint a Managers Committee consisting of one or more Directors. The Committee shall interview and investigate prospective managers and coaches, including those for the Minor League teams and recommend acceptable candidates to the President, for appointment and subsequent approval by the Board. It shall, during the playing season, observe the conduct of the managers and coaches and report its findings to the President of the Local League. It shall, at the request of the President or Board, investigate complaints concerning managers and coaches and make a report thereof to the President or Board as the case may be.

SECTION 8

Umpire Committee. The Board may appoint an Umpire Committee consisting of three (3) Directors and other appointed Regular Members. The Local League President shall be chairman of any such Committee. The Committee shall recruit, interview and recommend to the President for appointment a staff of umpires, including a chief umpire and replacements. When appointed, the staff of umpires shall be under the personal direction of the Local League President, assisted by the Chief Umpire who shall train, observe and schedule the staff.

SECTION 9

District Committee. The Board may appoint a District Committee consisting of the Local League President as chairman and two (2) other Directors. The Committee shall assist the District Administrator in interleague district functions including the selection of members of the District Administrator's Advisory Committee and the selection of tournament sites and area tournament directors.

SECTION 10

Auxiliary Committee. The Board may appoint an Auxiliary Committee consisting of the Local League Treasurer and two (2) other Directors and other appointed Regular Members. The Committee shall coordinate the activities of the Auxiliary. It shall review and evaluate auxiliary projects for raising money and disposition of profits, and make recommendations to the Board. The Board shall approve in advance all projects and actions of the Auxiliary.

SECTION 11

Auditing Committee. The Board may appoint an Auditing Committee consisting of three (3) Directors. The President, Treasurer or signatories of checks are not eligible. The Committee will review the Local League's books and records annually prior to the Annual Meeting and attach a statement of its findings to the annual financial statement of the President and Treasurer; or may, if directed by the Board or Membership, secure the services of a Certified Public Accountant to accomplish such review.

SECTION 12

Minor League Committee. The Board may appoint a Minor League Committee consisting of three (3) Directors. The Chairman of the Committee shall be the Minor League Vice President and be responsible to the Local League President for the proper conduct of the Minor League operation.

ARTICLE X - AFFILIATION

SECTION 1

Charter. The Local League shall annually apply for a charter from Little League Baseball, Incorporated, and shall do all things necessary to obtain and maintain such charter. The Local League shall devote its entire energies to the activities authorized by such charter and it shall not be affiliated with any other program or organization or operate any other program.

SECTION 2

Rules and Regulations. The Official Playing Rules and Regulations as published by Little League Baseball, Incorporated, Williamsport, Pennsylvania, shall be binding on this Local League.

SECTION 3

Local Rules, Ground Rules and/or Bylaws. The local rules, ground rules and/or bylaws of this Local League shall be adopted by the Board at a meeting to be held not less than one month previous to the first scheduled game of the season, but shall in no way conflict with the Rules, Regulations and Policies of Little League Baseball, Incorporated, nor shall they conflict with this Constitution. The local rules, ground rules and/or bylaws of this Local League shall expire at the end of each fiscal year, and are not considered part of this Constitution. (See Article XI, Section 7 for fiscal year of this league.)

ARTICLE XI - FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING

SECTION 1

Authority. The Board shall decide all matters pertaining to the finances of the Local League and it shall place all income including Auxiliary funds, in a common league treasury, directing the expenditure of funds in such manner as will give no individual or team an advantage over those in competition with such individual or team.

SECTION 2

Contributions. The Board shall not permit the contribution of funds or property to individual teams but shall solicit funds for the common treasury of the Local League, thereby to discourage favoritism among teams and to endeavor to equalize the benefits of the Local League.

SECTION 3

Solicitations. The Board shall not permit the solicitation of funds in the name of Little League Baseball, Incorporated unless all of the funds so raised be placed in the Local League treasury.

SECTION 4

Disbursement of Funds. The Board shall not permit the disbursement of Local League funds for other than the conduct of Little League activities in accordance with the rules, regulations and policies of Little League Baseball, Incorporated. All disbursements shall be made by check. All checks shall be signed by the Local League Treasurer and such other officer or officers or person or persons as the Board shall determine.

SECTION 5

Compensation. No Director, Officer or Member of the Local League shall receive, directly or indirectly any salary, compensation or emolument from the Local League for services rendered as Director, Officer or Member.

SECTION 6

Deposits. All moneys received, including Auxiliary Funds, shall be deposited to the credit of the Local League in/at City National Bank.

SECTION 7

Fiscal year. The fiscal year of the Local League shall begin on August 1 and shall end on July 31.

SECTION 8

Distribution of Property upon Dissolution. Upon dissolution of the Local League and after all outstanding debts and claims have been satisfied, the Members shall direct the remaining property of the Local League to another Federally Incorporated entity which maintains the same objectives as set forth in Article II of this Constitution, which are or may be entitled to exemption under Section 501-(c)-(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or any future corresponding provision.


ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended, repealed or altered in whole or in part by a majority vote at any duly organized meeting of the Members provided notice of the proposed change is included in the notice of such meeting.

Draft of all proposed amendments shall be submitted to Little League Baseball, Incorporated, for approval before implementation.

This Constitution was approved by the Encino Little League Board Membership on January 11, 2017 (date).

President's Name (Print) Kenny Marsten

President's Signature 

Little League ID No. 4054011

Federal ID No. (if available) 95-2159715

State ID No. (if available) 0319569

Make one copy for the District Administrator and copies for the Local League. Send original to Regional Headquarters. This Local League's Constitution on file at Regional Headquarters (most recently-approved copy) is the official Constitution of this Local League.

Little League Baseball, Incorporated does not limit participation in its activities on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual preference or religious preference.