

WHY PTAS HAVE NO CO-PRESIDENTS

A legitimate concern among PTA officers is *sharing the workload*. Nevertheless, each local unit must recognize that there are acceptable parliamentary options available to help alleviate this concern. Co-presidents (and any co-officer) are NOT one of those options.

There are **legal** as well as **parliamentary** problems that exist when a unit has co-presidents. For example:

"When there are co-presidents, who casts the deciding vote when there is a tie vote? *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* points out that it is the presiding officer's responsibility to cast the deciding vote when there is a tie. With co-presidents, how can they split one vote?"

In terms of legal contracts and papers, which co-president is responsible for signing such paperwork? Accountability for the actions of the PTA is important, both for the members and for the others with whom we work.

Sharing duties and responsibilities, communicating with each other and others, representing the PTA, delegating and supporting the PTA board can be very difficult for people who know each other well and are friends. The potential for problems and misunderstandings is very great. Rather than having "co" officers, local PTAs can delegate work to Vice-Presidents and other officers.

If one of the "co" officers does something wrong (for instance, if a co-treasurer misappropriates PTA funds), the other person can be held responsible.

Dividing the tasks for any position can be complex, and there will often be matters that have not been resolved from the outset that will cause conflict both between the two people and within the PTA.

While some PTAs consider co-presidents as a means to "share the work load", we should remember that as stated above there are other parliamentary alternatives available that do not produce the legal and parliamentary complexities.

Vice-Presidents: These individuals are elected officials of the unit who have the same fiduciary responsibilities as the other officers. Bylaws provide the "how" and "when" these officers should be utilized to assume the duties of the president. Your unit could assign additional duties to the Vice-Presidents that will help "share the work load" of the President. Traditionally, Vice-Presidents are seen as "Presidents in training" and assigning additional duties will only further prepare them to succeed in the President's office.

President-Elect: Some units have found this addition to their elected officers as a successful alternative. Modeling after the National PTA, they have amended their bylaws to reflect how the nominating committee, which duties will be assigned to the office, addresses this office and how a vacancy in office will be handled. If you are interested in initiating the office of President-Elect, please contact a member of the State Bylaws committee for assistance.