

E-LETTER on Systems, Control, and Signal Processing
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This is a special issue of E-Letter containing the following message from Frank Doyle, IEEE Control Systems Society President:

Message from Frank Doyle, IEEE Control Systems Society President

Colleagues,

I am writing to you today about an urgent matter with far-reaching ramifications for the future of both CSS and IEEE. There is a proposal being advanced at the highest levels of the IEEE to modify the IEEE Board of Directors (the so-called IEEE2030 initiative). This fall, there will be a ballot on a constitutional amendment to modify/optimize the IEEE Board Structure.

At the heart of the amendment is a modified/optimized Board structure, intended to create nimble, flexible, forward-looking organization. However, significant concerns have been raised by a number of CSS members who are familiar with the initiative as well as by several other IEEE societies that are concerned about whether this reorganization still offers the societies a strong enough voice in IEEE Board decisions. Specifically:

- IEEE is a bottom-up member-run organization, run by volunteers. The proposed structure appears to turn IEEE into a top-down organization, run by a small Board of Directors with reduced input from members.
- Members are represented by their Societies and in the existing structure Societies have a strong voice in the decision making process within IEEE. The Societies and sections generate 75%-80% of IEEE's income. Societies elect directors who represent their members on the Board of Directors (BoD). It appears that the new structure will dilute this voice and move Societies away from the decision process, especially because Societies will no longer elect these Directors directly. They will elect Delegates who will not serve on the Board of Directors but as members of a new body called the Assembly.

- Directors will now be elected by the entire IEEE membership and only candidates that satisfy certain “diversity” conditions set by the BoD can qualify to run.
- The possible benefits of the amendment do not outweigh its risks. It is uncertain how IEEE would be restructured if the amendment is approved. It is premature to vote for something for which the underlying details are still uncertain. The new bylaws are to be written and decided later by the BoD, and will not require member vote.

A second concern that has been voiced by several other societies is that some of the processes followed thus far in IEEE’s handling of the IEEE2030 initiative have strayed from the spirit of IEEE Policy 13.3.A.2 that states “It is the policy of IEEE to facilitate open discussion, including opposing views, of issues and initiatives to appear on the ballot (Constitutional amendment and referendum); this applies to those proposals originated by the IEEE Board of Directors as well as those of other members of IEEE.” For example, there have been accusations of censorship being applied to the statements of those who oppose this initiative.

At the July 5, 2016 meeting of the CSS Board of Governors meeting in Boston, after careful review of these and other considerations, the Board voted unanimously on the following motion:

- **Motion:** *The IEEE Control Systems Society BoG opposes the proposed constitutional amendment and modified board structure on IEEE2030. To reflect this opposition, a statement of opposition will be posted on the Society website and in editions of the E-Letter.*

Many geographic units and the governing bodies of over 22 IEEE societies, including the largest societies such as Computer, Communications, Power and Energy, Signal Processing, Circuits and Systems, Electron Devices, Robotics and Automation, and Solid-State Circuits have also voted against endorsing the amendment. At least four past IEEE Presidents and other past IEEE leaders have also spoken against the amendment.

It is very easy to ignore ballot initiatives, especially when there are not familiar names on the ballot. In this case, there is a very important element on the ballot, which you are urged to evaluate and vote upon. A number of resources are available for you to review and make an informed decision:

Additional reasons for opposing the constitutional amendment and proposed restructuring may be found here:

<https://iee2016blog.wordpress.com>

For background, the IEEE governing documents, including the Constitution and Bylaws, can be found here:

<http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/index.html>

The proposed changes to the Constitution can be found here:

https://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/election/2016_constitutional_amendment.html

In addition, the IEEEin2030 Ad Hoc Committee's advocacy of proposed changes to the IEEE's organizational structure is posted on an official IEEE website here:

https://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/ieeein2030_archive_m.html

Respectfully yours,

Frank Doyle

2016 IEEE Control Systems Society President