By-Laws

SVFT is a democratic organization. We rely on and encourage the participation of members in all leadership positions. The rules and procedures for SVFT’s democratic process are delineated in our By-Laws and [Constitution](http://svft.net/constitution/).

The By-Laws have just two articles: Article One discusses Finances (dues and the defense fund)’ Article Two discusses elections of Union officers. The [Constitution](http://svft.net/constitution/) contains 13 articles, covering Name; Objectives; Membership; Elections and Duties of Officers, Building Reps and the Labor Council Delegate; the Executive Committee and Executive Board; Affiliations; Meetings and Rules of Order; and Amendments.

**By-Laws**

**AFT Local #1020, an AFL/CIO affiliate**

**ARTICLE 1. FINANCES**

* **1.1 DUES**
  + **1.1.1** Each member will pay a dues as set annually by the Executive Board in the local budget on a ten (10) month basis.  Part-time teachers will pay one-fourth (¼) or one half (½) or full dues depending on the proportion of the time they work. Substitute member dues will be collected at a locally established daily rate for each day or pro-rata of each day, plus aft, CFT, ad AFL-CIO affiliation pass throughs, as required, calculated as a one-eighth (⅛) per capita.
  + **1.1.2** During organizational drives, the Executive Board will have the authority to set reduced membership rates for new members only for a period not to exceed three (3) months.
  + **1.1.3** Dues will be increased automatically to correspond with any dues increase voted on by either the CFT or the AFT or to correspond with any increase in the cost of the insurances provided to each member as a benefit or membership.
* **1.2 DEFENSE FUND**
  + 1.2.1 A separate defense fund will be maintained by the Local.
  + 1.2.2 Disbursements from this fund will be made by a majority of the members present at any General Membership meeting.

**ARTICLE 2. ELECTIONS**

**2.1** Elections shall be held for President, Officers, Delegates, Site Representatives, and/or contract ratification as prescribed under Article 4 of the SVFT Constitution.

**2.1.1.** Election dates shall be set by the SVFT Executive Committee and approved by the SVFT Executive Board by a vote of simple majority (50% + 1)

**2.1.2.** The process of how the election shall be conducted, by either an in-person election (described in 2.4) or by online voting (described in 2.5) will be determined by a vote of the simple majority (50% + 1) of the SVFT Executive Board.

**2.2** The nomination process outlined in 4.2 of the constitution shall be followed. More than one (1) candidate will be encouraged to run for each office/elected position.

**2.3** Candidate Statements

**2.3.1.** Each candidate shall have the option to write a statement not to exceed two hundred and fifty (250) words.

**2.3.2.** All candidates’ statements must be received by the Election Coordinator no later than 5 PM five (5) days prior to the election.

**2.3.3.** Any and all candidates’ statements shall be distributed to all SVFT members at least two (2) days prior to the election.

**2.4.** In-person elections

**2.4.1.** A neutral person selected by the Executive Board shall be the election clerk at each site. No nominated person shall be involved in the election at any site if the position he/she is running for is contested. If the vote involves contract ratification, no member of the SVFT negotiating team can be involved in the election.

**2.4.2.** The Election Clerk at each site shall establish the polling place that shall be easily accessible to all and well-advertised. Ballots shall be distributed only at the polling place. Two (2) people shall be present to conduct the election to ensure proper distribution of ballots and proper checking of voters.

**2.4.3**. Uniform polling times shall be established at each of the major sites.  Polls shall be open five (5) minutes after the start of lunch to five (5) minutes before the end of lunch and ten (10) minutes before and after school.  The voting time and place shall be conspicuously posted and announced to staff at least three (3) times.

**2.4.4**. Voters shall have their names checked off upon receiving a ballot.  After marking their ballots, the voters shall place the ballots in a locked container.

**2.4.5.** At the end of their school days, the various election clerks shall transport the locked containers to the local office for counting by the Elections Committee.

**2.4.6.** Absentee ballots can be picked up within one (1) day prior to the day of the election and shall be returned to the person from whom they were picked up that same day.  Any absentee ballot must be in an envelope with the person’s name on the outside.

**2.4.7.** SVFT members voting at a site other than the site where they would normally vote shall have their ballots put in an envelope marked with their name.  Once their name is checked against the regular site list to determine that they did not vote there, the ballots shall be removed from the envelope and mixed with the others.

**2.4.8.** Ballots shall not be counted by schools. They shall be mixed together before counting. No nominated person will be present while ballots are counted. If the vote involves contract ratification, no member of the SVFT negotiating team shall be present during the counting of the ballots.

**2.5** Online elections

In lieu of in-person voting, the Executive Board, by a simple majority vote (50% + 1), may opt for an online vote using an online voting system approved by the Executive Committee. All online voting must take place outside of contracted working hours. The process shall ensure that all SVFT members are able to vote, including members who are absent during part or all of the election period.

**2.6** Ballots and tally sheets, or any results generated by an online election, shall be sealed and retained for one (1) year in the Local office.

**2.7** Nominated persons shall be notified of the election results by noon (12 pm) on the next business day following the election.

**2.8** The use of mail-in ballots shall be limited to the Substitute Unit unless eighty percent (80%) of the Executive Board deem it necessary to hold a mail-in only election.  Only SVFT members may vote.  In ratification votes, members shall only vote for their own unit contracts.

**2.9** In the event of a public emergency as defined by a declaration of public emergency by a city, county, state, or federal government entity, the SVFT Executive Board shall have the power to authorize a vote in-person, by mail, through electronic voting, or any equitable means that is outside of the designated parameters of the Constitution and Bylaws with a simple majority vote (50% + 1).

**ARTICLE 3. POLITCAL POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS**

**3.1 NATIONAL & STATEWIDE MEASURES AND CANDIDATES:**

3.1.a**: ENDORSEMENTS-**

**3.1.a.1** SVFT defers to both the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the California Labor Federation (CLF) for action in statewide and federal elections.

**3.1.a.2** SVFT may only make recommendations on federal & statewide candidates and measures to CFT and/or CLF.

**3.1.a.3** SVFT may make motions to provisionally endorse federal, statewide candidates and measures should CFT’s and CLF’s actions on endorsements align with SVFT’s provisional recommendation endorsements.

**3.1.a.4** The California Labor Federation or the AFL-CIO takes action on endorsing, not endorsing or staying neutral on federal or state legislative races and statewide measures.

**3.1.b: CAMPAIGN-**Once a statewide measure or federal or statewide candidate is endorsed by the CFT and/or the CLF, a campaign, in accordance with SVFT Executive Board and SVFT’s COPE committee by-laws, may follow that may include any or all of the following:

1. – direct mail to voters in support of the candidate or ballot measure
2. – door-to-door voter education
3. – voter education via phone
4. – financial contributions
5. electronic media including social media platforms
6. other measures as determined by the SVFT Executive Board

**3.2 LOCAL CANDIDATES OR LOCAL BALLOT MEASURES:**

**3.2.a QUESTIONNAIRE-** A questionnaire is sent to all candidates for a local office. For local measures, skip to the next step (step 2).

**3.2.b COPE ENDORSEMENT INTERVIEW**- SVFT’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) conducts an interview of local candidates or representatives of local ballot measures (for and against).

**3.2.c COPE COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT-**Those present at the endorsement interview, make recommendation(s) to SVFT’s executive board. COPE Committee may endorse, oppose, or remain neutral for candidate(s) or measure(s) that are interviewed. It is possible to endorse, oppose, or remain neutral for more than one candidate for the same office that is being sought.

**3.2.d SVFT EXECUTIVE BOARD PROVISIONAL ENDORSEMENT-** SVFT Executive Board reviews the recommendation(s) from the COPE Committee interview(s) and takes action on the endorsement(s). SVFT Executive Board makes recommended endorsements to the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council (MBCLC). The Executive Board may endorse, oppose or remain neutral for candidate(s) or measure(s) that are interviewed. It is possible to endorse, oppose, or remain neutral for more than one candidate for the same office that is being sought provided that two-thirds of those Executive Board members present support said motions. Furthermore, the Executive Board may also make a motion or add to a motion that should its recommended endorsements align with MBCLC’s actions, endorsements may become automatic by the Federation’s Executive Board.

**3.2.e SVFT EXECUTIVE BOARD FINAL ENDORSEMENT-** Once an endorsement is made by either the actions of the MBCLC or a subsequent endorsement made by the Federation’s Executive Board, the Federation is able to support candidate or ballot initiative campaigns or campaigns against candidates or ballot initiatives. Should the actions of MBCLC not align with the SVFT’s Executive Board, the Federation’s Executive Board may make endorsements for, against, or remain neutral for candidates or ballot initiatives.

**3.2.f CAMPAIGN SUPPORT-** Once an endorsement is made for or against a candidate or ballot initiative, a campaign, in accordance with SVFT Executive Board’s and SVFT’s COPE committee by-laws, may follow that may include any or all of the following:

1. direct mail to voters in support of the candidate or ballot measure
2. door-to-door voter education
3. voter education via phone
4. financial contributions
5. electronic media including social media platforms
6. other measures as determined by the SVFT Executive Board

**3.3 EXEMPTIONS TO ENDORSEMENT PROCESS:**

**3.3.a** Should SVFT recruit candidate(s) for the Salinas Union High School District, Alisal Union School District, or the Salinas City Elementary School District Boards of Trustees, such candidates are exempt from SVFT’s endorsement process.

**3.3.b** Should a member of SVFT declare a candidacy for public office, such members may be exempt from the endorsement process at the discretion of the Federation’s Executive Board.