



Retirees on a Spouse Club Board...

Here are some thoughts on Retirees serving on your Spouse Club Board:

Pros:

- Retirees can provide continuity on your board since Active-Duty spouses are continually PCSing
- They often have extra time to put into the Club, so they can be a great asset.
- Most of the time they are part of the club because they love interacting with Military Spouses – that means they can be very welcoming and accepting!
- They tend to be more connected to the community in that specific location so may be able to provide an “in” for the Club to participate in events that are normally not available.
- Usually (Not always) they are a bit more “seasoned” so they may have different experiences to share with the board from all the places and clubs they have been a part of.
- They do aide in membership revenue and often refer others join the club

Cons:

- Sometimes retirees can make a club stagnate because they continue to do things the way they have always been done.
- Sometimes they can be resistant to change; diversification, technology, events, virtual connections, etc. (although some embrace the lifelong learning aspect!)
- Too many retirees may “scare away” younger spouses because they think the Club might not be able to relate to their situations/lives.
- One aspect of Spouse Clubs is to bring together people in the same situations you are facing. Retirees are no longer on active duty and might not be able to relate to those still serving. (But can be great mentors due to their experiences!)

With this all being said, the sweet spot in these situations is to find the right balance at your installation. Some Clubs are spread out over 3 different states and may find it hard to recruit enough AD volunteers to travel in for meetings and events, so they may find it easier to use Retiree Spouses for a few key positions. Some clubs are at high deployment installations and may find they need a few more AD spouses in the leadership positions, so they are more connected to Op-Tempo of that location.

When discussing this with Clubs, the general response tends to be that the President and 2VP’s should be AD spouses, but retiree spouses can fill in any other position. That’s a fine line item for

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your by-laws, but what happens when there is no AD spouse to fill the President's position? Do you just leave it open when there is a willing Retiree Spouse to fulfill the job?

Our recommendation is to write your governing documents to allow for these situations. Use wording like: "Every Effort should be made to have no more that 50% of your executive board be filled by Retiree Spouses." Your Nominating Committee will be in charge of analyzing this situation and putting forth a slate that ensures the right balance.

In an effort to avoid stagnating or burnt-out leadership, you may think about including instructions on term limits in your bylaws. Include a statement that does not allow anyone to serve in a position for longer than 2 years. You may even include the guidelines that say: "After serving on the Executive Board for 4 years (in two different positions), the individual needs to take a year off from the Executive Board before they can reapply to serve." Additionally, if an individual continues to serve on only one committee you can write in a requirement for committee terms limits as well, encouraging them to join other committees or take on leadership roles if they haven't in the past.