

TEXAS PROPER BILLING PROCEDURES

PURPOSE AND NECESSITY

As of July 1, 2019 there are 823 councils in 212 districts in the State of Texas comprising over 109,000 brother knights. In a perfect world, all 109,000 brothers would be dues paying, program active, charity minded members who are unified in professing our fraternal strength.

The reality is that many councils have members who no longer are active, or regularly pay their dues or adhere to the ideals of our principles of charity, unity and fraternity. The council is the ground floor for knowing its members and which brothers have fallen by the wayside in their responsibilities to the order.

For those brothers who are no longer with us – the Financial Secretary only needs to fill out that portion of Member Management that has the death information. Members who die are NOT counted against a council's membership quota.

Those brothers who have lost or given up on their catholicity commitments, with the assistance of a priest or chaplain, can be removed by submitting a *Membership Document* stating suspension for no longer being catholic (attach clergy letter for proof).

In like fashion, should a brother go afoul of the law and be convicted of a felony, he too can be removed via the *Membership Document* with proof of his conviction – The State Advocate also must be made aware of this. These last two instances do not count against a council's membership quota.

All other instances regarding suspension or withdrawal of a member will affect the membership and insurance quotas of the council. These also will affect the quotas placed on State by Supreme. To that end, State needs to know that all avenues are being pursued to retain a brother knight rather than suspending him. The *Texas Proper Billing Procedure* was instituted to ensure the councils are performing their due diligence in this retention process. The process is not meant to 'punish' councils who wish to suspend a brother, but rather to give guidance and assistance to work with keeping the brother on the active rolls.

In years past, non dues paying members were often looked upon with less than charitable fraternal eyes. State had the option of selecting certain brothers off the previous suspension lists because of certain criteria (see below). However, with the advent of the computer programs for tracking members, Supreme has taken that aspect of retention from the hands of State. For council's submitting their *Notice of Intent to Retain* letters to Supreme, it is an all or none for State to either accept or deny the suspensions to Supreme.

For this reason, State needs to know that all has been done to retain the member BEFORE the information is sent to Supreme. That is why State is requiring the ***Texas Membership Conservation Report*** be submitted to State before the ***Notice of Intent to Retain*** is submitted to Supreme. It is also the reason that councils are urged NOT to submit the ***Membership Document*** with the ***Notice of Intent to Retain***.

As is often stated, the goal is to RETAIN not suspend. The attitude towards this objective needs to focus on who we are as knights – with an eye towards **charity** and especially **fraternity**. The following are some of the issues that State reviews and wants councils to recognize as instances where retention needs to be both charitable and fraternal:

- Insurance members (suspended insurance members stay on the roster as Inactive)
- Honorary & Honorary Life members
- Fourth Degree Sir Knights
- Brothers over 60 years of age (or those on fixed incomes)
- Brothers with 20 or more years of continuous service.
- Brothers who may be eligible for a transfer to another council
- Brothers who may be eligible for a disability waiver (especially military)
- Brothers with less than 5 years service & still 1st Degree

Other instances that a council can exercise fraternal charity to a brother:

- Financial difficulties (loss of income or heavy expenses)
- Medical issues (again look towards disability waiver, even if temporary)
- Mobility issues (brother needs to be visited – not suspended)
- Amnesty of past dues (especially if a brother commits to becoming active)
- If past dues are mandated – assess only the Supreme & State per capita (\$12.50)

Councils are encouraged to expand the box. To look outside of their own programs and not only see what else is going on, but to share what they do with others. ***It takes members to provide active programs – and it takes programs to attract members.***

Use the ***Texas Knight***, the ***Columbian Magazine***, and the ***State Council Service Programs Awards*** to showcase what YOUR council is doing. Evangelizing your programs may keep other councils from re-inventing the wheel, or to give others new ideas...

Viva Jesus !

Vivat Christo Rey!