

Current Mensa Chaos
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American Mensa is in chaos. That's clear. On January 14, the National Hearing Committee removed the majority of the American Mensa Committee (Mensa's board of directors), claiming that these ten directors violated the bylaws in some undefined fashion at an AMC meeting where nothing happened which caused harm to Mensa in some indeterminate fashion. The Hearing Committee and the AMC leadership ignore that removal conflicts with our Bylaws and the Mensa Constitution and is violation of New York State law. Not only were these ten people removed from the AMC, they were removed from any other position within local Mensa groups for many years to come.

At a stroke, the Hearing Committee disenfranchised 80% of the members and removed ten of our most active volunteers. The Hearing Committee report suggests that something truly horrible must have happened. We've been accused of trying to destroy Mensa, called lawless, and accused of criminal conduct. Nothing could be further from the truth. Chair Lori Norris and the Hearings Committee hide behind an extreme confidentiality policy which prevents us from defending against these baseless and defamatory accusations.

This was nothing short of a coup. This was an effort, led by the minority on the AMC, to remove the majority and install minority rule. It seems to me that Chair Norris and First Vice Chair Jon Gruebele were not happy with the election last year so they want a do-over, excluding the people who were elected.

When I was elected, I got a view of the AMC from the inside, which turned out not too different from my view from the outside. The AMC leadership was resistant to any suggested change, particularly not from new AMC members. I took my role as director seriously, looking for ways to improve the organization and enhance member involvement. What the AMC leadership wanted apparently was to have RVCs and appointed officers who were compliant and understood that their role in the organization, as they viewed it, was as observers, not leaders.

We were gaslighted, fed false or misleading information, and ignored. Like with past AMCs, members who didn't fall into line with the leadership's ineffective policies were bullied or blocked, and if that didn't work, simply ignored. Rather than create a collaborative working environment on the AMC, Chair Norris allowed a toxic and hostile environment to develop, where she was not trusted to be either honest, open, or supportive of any but her coterie.

The previous AMC, led by Chair Norris, was notable for having nothing that they could claim as an achievement. They were responsible for the largest decline in membership, the largest increase in dues, and the largest American Mensa budget. What was different with this AMC was that the new members were willing to look at American Mensa's real problems and try to address them. This was not welcomed by the entrenched AMC leadership. Another difference from the past was that the new members were able to collaborate and compromise to produce proposals which the majority of the AMC supported. The AMC leadership, in the minority, was unwilling (perhaps incapable) of collaboration or compromise, and consistently opposed any majority proposals.

The removal of the ten directors, facilitated by Chair Norris, is in violation of New York State law. The rump AMC, led by Chair Norris, intends to hold meetings, despite not having a quorum as defined by New York State law. Norris and Gruebele, along with Election Committee Chair Thomas Thomas,

intend to hold special elections to replace the removed RVCs, despite there being no provision in the Bylaws for special elections.

Like others, I'm outraged by this. I encourage you to go to <https://www.reformmensa.org/> and sign the petitions there. Go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-restore-fairness-in-american-mensa> and contribute to support our legal action to oppose this coup.