

Madam Chair, my name is Hanna Jones, Regent of the Bonny Kate Chapter in Tennessee.

I rise in support of this resolution.

When the Daughters of the American Revolution was founded on October 11, 1890, our founders did not leave us to guess what they meant by the words in our governing documents. Robert's Rules of Order makes it clear that when the meaning of words in a governing document is in question, those words are to be interpreted according to their meaning at the time they were written.

In my hand is a Webster's 1890 pocket dictionary—the very year in which our Society was founded.

The definition of woman in this dictionary reads: “an adult female of the human race.” Further, a daughter is defined as “a female child.” Finally, the word female in 1890 was defined as “one of the sex that produces young.”

Those definitions are clear and objective - exactly what our founders intended and envisioned when they established this Society.

This debate is not about whether we treat every person with dignity and respect. We should. We must. And we do.

This debate is about whether we will faithfully preserve the standards of the organization entrusted to our care.

If we abandon the historical meaning of these words, we create an impossible contradiction. Under our recent practices, an individual could hold membership in both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the SONS of the American Revolution AT THE SAME TIME. That is simply unacceptable.

Fellow Daughters, we inherited this Society from the women who built it, protected it, and passed it forward for 136 years.

And it is not ours alone.

We hold our Society in stewardship for our daughters, our granddaughters, and the generations of women yet to come.

On this historic day, let us find ourselves on the right side of history. May we honor our founders, uphold the intent of our governing documents, and protect the future of this Society.

I respectfully urge the adoption of this resolution.