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Revision of the Recall Initiation Model
draft-moonesamy-recall-rev-03

Abstract

The procedures for initiating a recall specified in [RFC 7437](#) restrict signatories of a recall petition to those who are "nomcom qualified". This document suggests those limitations had unanticipated and undesirable side-effects and proposes to remove them. It also specifies that remote participants should be allowed to seek redress through the procedures and decreases the number of signatories required for a recall petition.

This document updates [RFC 7437](#).

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[1.](#) Introduction

[RFC7437] defines the procedures for a Member Recall. The first step of those procedures is to request a Member Recall by signed petition. This document suggests that making IAB and IESG members ineligible to initiate recalls was an undesirable side-effect and proposes to remove it. It also proposes to allow remote participants to be signatories of a recall petition under some circumstances thus addressing a possible perception of unfairness towards those who cannot or do not travel to attend physical meetings. [Section 2](#) discusses some of the issues affecting that step and provides the rationale. The updated text is in [Section 3.1](#).

2. Rationale

2.1. Eligibility of IAB and IESG Members and other Nomcom Appointees

The procedures for initiating a recall specified in [\[RFC7437\]](#) restrict signatories to those who are "nomcom qualified". Perhaps inadvertently, this prohibits members of the IESG and IAB from initiating these procedures. This is probably not in the best interests of the community: if there is a problem within the IESG or IAB, other members of those bodies are likely to be aware of it before the IETF community.

Conversely, members of a sitting nomcom, since they are, by definition, nomcom-eligible, are now permitted to initiate recalls. For them to do so appears to be a singularly poor idea, especially in principle. The nomcom should not be in a position to lead in determining which positions are open, nor should its members be in a position to initiate removal of someone whom they hope to replace. In addition, any recall action initiated by sitting nomcom members, especially if they presume to act on behalf of the community, would inevitably raise suspicions that confidentiality had been compromised.

Some of the IETF Trustees [\[RFC4371\]](#) and IETF LLC Directors are appointed by NomCom. The procedures in [\[RFC7437\]](#) for a "recall petition" specifies "any sitting" member instead of the members who were appointed by Nomcom. There is a requirement to include a justification for a "recall petition". There is also a requirement for the member being recalled to be given an opportunity to present a written statement and consult with third parties. There is an assumption that those requirements are adequate for due process. As such, [Section 3.1](#) does not distinguish between NomCom appointees and other appointing bodies.

2.2. Eligibility of Remote Participants

In 2017, the IESG set a requirement for the registration of remote participants at IETF meetings. However, the procedures exclude those IETF participants from making a request for a Member Recall by signed petition.

According to [\[RFC3777\]](#), "Volunteers are expected to be familiar with the IETF processes and procedures, which are readily learned by active participation in a working group and especially by serving as a document editor or working group chair." There is also a "no more than two signatories may have the same primary affiliation" restriction. Restricting signatories to those who are "nomcom qualified" may appear to disenfranchise active remote participants

who lack the travel resources to attend physical meetings (such as those who reside in emerging countries) because they are unable to use a recall petition to seek redress.

The "nomcom qualified" requirement for a recall petition is contrary to the spirit and one of the goals of the Internet Standards Process [RFC2026] about procedures which are intended to be fair.

2.3. Number of Signatures Required

[RFC7437] requires at least 20 signatories for a recall petition with no more than two of the signatories having the same primary affiliation. That sets a very high barrier for a recall petition even though the recall petition requires a, justification, an investigation by a Recall Committee and a 3/4 majority of the members of the Recall Committee who vote on the recall decision. This document also proposes to decrease the number of signatures required to avoid making it impractical to invoke the first step of the recall procedures.

3. Recall Petition

3.1. Recall Petition Initiated by the Community

The first four paragraphs of [Section 7.1 of \[RFC7437\]](#) are replaced by the following:

At any time, at least 10 members of the IETF community, may request by signed petition (email is acceptable) to the Internet Society President the recall of any sitting IAB or IESG member, IETF Trustee or IETF LLC Director. All signatories must have registered to attend and have participated physically or remotely at least three out of the previous five IETF meetings.

Each signature must include a full name, email address, and primary company or organization affiliation. No more than two signatories may have the same primary affiliation.

The IETF Secretariat is responsible for confirming that each signatory is qualified. A valid petition must be signed by qualified signatories as specified in this section.

3.2. Recall Petition Initiated by the Ombudsteam

[RFC7776] updates [RFC7437] by allowing the Ombudsteam submit a recall petition on its own and without requiring signatories from the community for it to qualify as a valid petition. This document does not make any change to [RFC7776] or the Ombudsteam procedures and any

petition originating from the Ombudsteam shall be treated as a valid petition.

4. Tradeoffs

Setting up a Recall Committee is a costly effort. The risk of frivolous recall petitions is mitigated by setting a threshold for qualified signatories.

5. Security Considerations

This document discusses IETF procedures. It raises no security issues for the Internet.

The risks of permitting IESG or IAB members, or remote participants from abusing process by initiating a recall seem minimal: they remain ineligible to be members of the recall committee itself and the community would presumably swiftly oppose such abuse.

6. IANA Considerations

This document does not require any IANA actions,

7. Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Adrian Farrel for some of the text in [Section 2.2](#), [Section 3.1](#), and [Section 3.2](#), and Brian Carpenter and Spencer Dawkins for several discussions and comments that helped stimulate this draft.

8. References

8.1. Normative References

- [RFC7437] Kucherawy, M., Ed., "IAB, IESG, and IAOC Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [BCP 10](#), [RFC 7437](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC7437, January 2015, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7437>>.
- [RFC7776] Resnick, P. and A. Farrel, "IETF Anti-Harassment Procedures", [BCP 25](#), [RFC 7776](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC7776, March 2016, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7776>>.

8.2. Informative References

- [RFC2026] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", [BCP 9](#), [RFC 2026](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2026, October 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2026>>.
- [RFC3777] Galvin, J., Ed., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [RFC 3777](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3777, June 2004, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3777>>.
- [RFC4371] Carpenter, B., Ed. and L. Lynch, Ed., "[BCP 101](#) Update for IPR Trust", [BCP 101](#), [RFC 4371](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4371, January 2006, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4371>>.

Appendix A. Historical Note

RFC Editor: Please remove this appendix before publication.

The original recall procedure, as specified in [RFC 2027](#), allowed a single person, without any restrictions, to petition the Internet Society President and initiate a recall any sitting IAB or IESG member. That model was continued with successor documents through [RFC 2727](#). Because of concerns about the possibilities of frivolous recall attempts and about what would effectively be denial of service attacks on the IETF's ability to get work done, [RFC 3777](#) increased that to 20 signatories and introduced qualifications for the signatories that were expressed as "nomcom eligibility".

Appendix B. Change Log

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B.1. Changes from [draft-klensin-recall-rev-00](#) (2005-11-11) to [draft-moonesamy-recall-rev-00](#)

- o Some discussion on the IETF list in 2005, and some followup discussion offline, led to the conclusion that, just as IAB and IESG members (and probably other Nomcom appointees) should be allowed to initiate recalls, sitting Nomcom members should not be permitted to do so. New words and rationale have been added to that effect.
- o Changed update target from [RFC 3777](#) to 7437.

B.2. Changes from version -00 (2019-03-23) to -01

- o Added a new Tradeoffs Section with text about the risk of frivolous recall petitions
- o Added text in [Section 3.2](#) to clarify that this document does not change the procedures in [RFC 7776](#) for any petition originating from the Ombudsteam
- o Added more text in [Section 3.1](#) to replace the "qualified to be voting members of a nominating committee" requirement in [RFC 3777](#)

B.3. Changes from version -01 (2019-03-31) to -02

- o Editorial change to [Section 2.2](#)

B.4. Changes from version -02 (2019-05-15) to -03

- o New version submitted due to expiration of draft.

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