

PREPARING AND SUBMITTING ANNUAL CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

One of the features of our Annual Diocesan Convention is the consideration of resolutions submitted by members of the Convention. Our Rules of Order establish a Committee on Resolutions, whose responsibility it is to receive, review and take appropriate action on each resolution, as set forth in the Rules.

Members submitting resolutions are encouraged to read the rules for specific provisions on the preparation of resolutions. But first, here are a few things to consider if you are thinking about preparing and submitting a resolution.

Why write a resolution?

1. Resolutions are written to affect change – a call to action. A resolution is a document that contains all the issues that the sponsor wants to solve and the proposed solutions. Resolutions may be written to propose a new policy or to make significant revisions to an existing policy.
2. A resolution should identify:
 - a. What needs to be done
 - b. Who needs to do the work required to implement the resolution
 - c. When should the work be completed – a timeline that holds us accountable and provides a platform for measuring progress.
 - d. In the event the Resolution requires that a group be formed to study or develop an action plan that would delay the implementation to a later time or to the next diocesan convention, then the resolution should be worded like the following:

Resolved, that the [Name of the Committee] report plans and progress in this area to [The Appropriate Team of Diocesan Council] by the [Number of the Current Convention + 1].

Below is a short list of suggestions to keep in mind in preparing and submitting resolutions.

No “Whereas” clauses!

Many of us are accustomed to the traditional wording of resolutions that begins with the word “Whereas.” The purpose of the “whereas” clause is to state the rationale for the resolution. Our Convention resolutions do not begin with “whereas” statements. Instead, your resolution should immediately state what action you wish the Convention to take by beginning with the word “Resolved.” The appropriate place for what would have been placed in a “whereas” clause is in the “Supporting Information” section that follows the formal statement of your resolution.

What is “Resolved”?

Your first “RESOLVED” statement must include that it is our Convention that is resolved to take whatever action the rest of the resolution proposes. This is done by beginning all resolutions: “RESOLVED, That this 145rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark” etc. Your resolution should then set forth the action or actions a specific Diocesan body or group or person is to take to fulfill the intent of the resolution. For example:

RESOLVED, That this 145th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark encourage all congregations and other faith communities of the Diocese to commit to studying successful stewardship programs for local congregations.

Each resolve clause should express only one action or intent. If more actions are intended, then additional resolve clauses should be used, beginning each clause with the language, “and, be it further”. For example:

RESOLVED, That this 145th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark encourage all congregations and other faith communities of the Diocese to commit to studying successful stewardship programs for local congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, That congregations and faith communities consider reviewing and updating their stewardship practices so that greater emphasis may be placed on best practices in identifying members’ time, talent and treasure.

Although your resolution should be as concise as possible, you may use as many additional “Resolve” clauses as are needed to set forth the desired intent of your resolution.

Please note that a style adopted by the Committee on Resolutions is that “the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark” is a ‘collective noun’ that uses plural verbs forms. For example, a resolution encouraging a certain action should read, “RESOLVED, That this 145th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Newark encourage” etc., as opposed to “encourages.”

Who are the Sponsors

After setting forth the “Resolve” clauses, list the sponsor/sponsors of the resolution and the sponsor(s)’s congregation. Members from more than one congregation may sponsor the same resolution.

Why should we adopt your Resolution?

The final portion of your submission is a “Supporting Information” section. As stated above, this is the information that usually was set forth in the “whereas” clauses. Brevity and concise presentations help insure that your rationale will be read and understood.

Deadline for Submitting Resolutions

Our Rules of Order provide that all resolutions to come before the Convention must be received in the office of the Secretary of Convention (John King) not less than seventy-five days before the date of the Annual Convention (Rule VII B). In 2018, that date is November 16.

Committee on Resolutions Meetings and Hearings

The Committee on Resolutions will meet in early December to review all resolutions submitted by the November deadline. Resolution sponsors are contacted regarding substantive changes the Committee may make to resolutions and the sponsor’s consent is sought. The Committee then submits its report to the Secretary sixty days before the date of Convention. The report will include presentation of all resolutions timely received and any modifications that the Committee has made and whether the sponsors support the modifications.

The Committee also convenes a hearing during the Convention, prior to presenting the resolutions on the floor of Convention. The hearing is an open hearing for the presentation of the resolutions. The Committee then meets in closed session to deliberate any additional modifications to the resolutions. Every effort is made to modify resolutions in cooperation with the sponsors.

Committee on Resolutions Decisions and Consent Calendar

It is within the discretion of the Committee to modify resolutions as to form. The Committee may also determine not to offer a resolution on the floor of Convention. Where a resolution is not offered, members of Convention, by a majority vote of Convention members at the start of the first business session of Convention, may vote to have the resolution presented (Rule VII G).

The Committee may place a resolution on the “Consent Calendar” where the Committee believes that a resolution may not require full debate. Members of the Convention may remove a resolution from the Consent Calendar if at least two deputies from any three congregations petition the Secretary of Convention, in writing, prior to the start of the first business session of the Convention.

For a full presentation of the rules governing resolutions, see the current Convention Rules of Order, which can be found on the website:

www.dioceseofnewark.org/convention