REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION AND CANONS FOR THE 130th ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Committee on the Constitution and Canons has two items to report to the Convention for the year 2024. Only one of these items will require a vote.

First, the Committee will report amendments to the Convention based on a proposal referred to the Committee to amend the Rules of Order of the Convention to improve the process of preparing, introducing, debating, amending, and voting on resolutions submitted at meetings of the Convention.

Second, the Committee will report on its consideration and advice concerning the Maryland statutes enacted in 2024 affecting the corporate status of parishes located in the State of Maryland.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF ORDER

After the Annual Meeting of the Convention in 2024, the Diocesan staff asked for comments and suggestions for improving meetings in a general survey of the Diocese. Many of the comments related to changing the process for considering, debating, and voting on resolutions before the Convention. A proposal to amend the Rules of Order of the Convention to implement improvements to the resolutions process was referred to the Committee on the Constitution and Canons. The proposal was reviewed by the Committee on Resolutions for their input and recommendations.

The purposes of the proposed amendment to the Rules of Order are to provide for more order and organization, streamline the resolution process, and provide for better preparation and communication among the participants of the Convention relating to resolutions. The Committee was aware of the challenges involved with a Convention of hundreds of voting members which meets one day each year and engages in a legislative process that is intrinsically time consuming and inefficient. The proposed amendment does not stifle the expression of members of the Convention or obstruct the majority will of the members of the Convention. With respect to the proposed changes in the Rules of Order, the Convention may procedurally waive requirements by a majority or supermajority vote, based upon existing rules and relevant precedents in existing rules (e.g. amending the agenda by a majority vote or waiving the late filing deadline for resolutions by a supermajority vote).

The proposed amendment to the Rules of Order provides general organizational authority for debates, requires a minimum amount of support for a resolution to be considered, streamlines the process, and is intended to make the debates more informative and meaningful without being slowed down by noncontroversial amendments, like technical corrections.

The proposed amendment gives the President of the Convention general authority to recognize speakers and structure the debate in an orderly manner. It also provides that the Convention may adopt a time limit on the debate of any resolution as part of the agenda for the meeting adopted by the Convention. The Convention would have the option to later extend the time limit by amending the agenda. The motion to amend the agenda is by a majority vote.

The proposed amendment to the Rules of Order provides that any participant who is making a floor nomination for any elected office may submit biographical information of the

nominee to the Secretary a week before the annual meeting. The Secretary has flexibility in setting the deadline and will distribute the biographical information to the Convention.

The proposed amendment updates the process for submitting and distributing the text of resolutions to the Convention. As a practical matter, hundreds of paper copies are no longer made and distributed to the Convention members. The present Rules of Order do not reflect our practice of submitting and distributing the text of resolutions electronically.

The proposed amendment provides that each resolution shall have a primary sponsor and a minimum of 4 additional clerical sponsors and 4 additional lay sponsors from at least 4 different parishes. Additionally, the proposed amendment includes as a requirement in the Rules of Order a practice that has been adopted by the Diocese, i.e. every resolution has an open hearing (which in practice has been electronic) before the meeting of the Convention. A minimum of 20 members of the Convention need to attend the hearing before the resolution may be considered at the meeting. Together these amendments require a sponsor to demonstrate a minimum level of support within the Diocese in order for the Convention to consider the resolution. The Convention could still waive any of those minimum requirements by a supermajority vote.

The proposed amendment to the Rules of Order provides for a filing deadline for first-degree amendments and the form of a first degree amendment to show the changes being proposed. The Convention may waive the deadline by a supermajority vote.

Lastly, the proposed amendment provides that when the sponsor of a first degree amendment files the amendment that sponsor will provide the text of the proposed amendment to the sponsor of the relevant resolution and inquire whether any part of the proposed amendment is acceptable. This change will eliminate surprise first degree amendments and provide an opportunity for participants to work out agreements to text before the debate on the floor. This would apply to policy agreements and compromises and to noncontroversial technical changes like spelling and grammar. Any work on text that has the support of the majority of the Convention before the relevant amendment is considered on the floor will lessen debate time and necessitate fewer floor votes by the Convention.

Therefore, the Committee on the Constitution and the Canons moves the following amendments to the Rules of Order of the Convention taking effect on the day after the last day of the annual meeting of the Diocesan Convention in calendar year 2024:

The Rules of Order of the Convention are amended—

(1) in section 203—

(A) in subsection (b), by adding after the first sentence "The President may recognize speakers and take other actions to structure the debate on any matter before the Convention in an orderly manner."; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(e) LIMITATION ON DEBATE ON A PARTICULAR QUESTION.— The Convention may adopt in the agenda for a session a time limit for the debate on a particular matter. At the expiration of the time limit, any speaker currently recognized may complete their time in accordance with subsection (d). Immediately following such speaker's time, the President shall call for a vote on the matter without further debate, beginning with any amendments introduced to the Convention on the matter and concluding with the matter itself as it may have been amended.";

(2) in section 208 (a), by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

"(1) ELECTIONS OTHER THAN A BISHOP.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Nominations for elections (other than an election of a bishop) shall be made in accordance with section 402 of the Canons.

"(B) FLOOR NOMINATIONS.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Nominations may be made from the floor, or by other prescribed method, but shall be confined to announcement only of the name of the candidate and shall not be seconded. Additional nominations may be made until all nominations are closed.

"(ii) BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.— Any participant of the Convention may submit biographical information on any candidate whom such participant intends to nominate from the floor, or by other prescribed method. That information shall be submitted to the Secretary not later than 7 days before the applicable meeting of the Convention, or such other deadline as may be established by the Secretary, and in a format that may be established by the Secretary."; and

(3) in section 211—

(A) by striking subsection (f) and inserting the following:

"(f) POSTING OF RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS.— Not later than 30 days before the day of the meeting of the Convention at which the resolution is to be considered by the Convention, the Secretary shall post on the Diocesan website—

"(1) any resolution submitted before the 60-day period described under subsection (c);

"(2) any report of the Committee on Resolutions relating to that resolution; and

"(3) any other explanatory materials relating to that resolution the Secretary determines useful."; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(j) SPONSOR AND HEARING REQUIREMENTS.—

"(1) COMPLIANCE.— A resolution that is not in compliance with this subsection may not be considered at a meeting of the Convention, unless—

"(A) the sponsor or individual submitting the resolution shows cause as to the reasons that the resolution could not be submitted in compliance with this subsection; and

"(B) the Convention agrees to the consideration of the resolution by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body.

"(2) SPONSORS.— At the time of the submission of a resolution, the resolution shall have a single primary sponsor and not fewer than 4 additional sponsors who are clerical members of the Convention and not fewer than 4 additional sponsors who are lay members of the Convention. The sponsors shall include lay members or clerical members from at least 4 different parishes. Additional sponsors may be added to the resolution at any time.

"(3) HEARINGS.— There shall be a hearing organized by the President on the resolution at which not fewer than 20 members of the Convention are in attendance that occurs before the applicable meeting of the Convention. Hearings may be conducted as remote electronic meetings.

"(k) AMENDMENTS.—

"(1) FILING REQUIREMENT.— All first degree amendments to any resolution shall be filed with the Secretary not later than 12:00 noon on the third day before the day of the meeting of the Convention at which the resolution is to be considered by the Convention. A first degree amendment shall be in the form of a complete substitute for the resolution, accompanied by text showing proposed changes and an explanation of the amendment.

"(2) CONSIDERATION OF LATE AMENDMENTS.— A first degree amendment that is not filed with the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1) may be considered by the Convention if a motion to consider the amendment is approved by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention who are present and voting as a single body.

"(l) NOTICE OF AMENDMENT.—

"(1) NOTICE AND INQUIRY.— Before filing an amendment to a resolution, the sponsor of the amendment shall—

"(A) provide the text of the amendment to the primary sponsor of the resolution; and

"(B) inquire whether or not the primary sponsor of the resolution is amenable to modifying the resolution to adopt the amendment or any part of the amendment.

"(2) CONTACT INFORMATION.— The primary sponsor of a resolution shall provide the Secretary with an email address at the time of submitting the resolution for carrying out paragraph (1).

"(3) COMPLIANCE.— It will not be in order for the Convention to consider any amendment that is not in compliance with this subsection before any amendment that is in compliance with this subsection.".

APPENDIX

This appendix shows the strikes and inserts to the text of the Rules of Order of the Convention made by the proposed amendment. New proposed text is in italics. Text proposed to be stricken is in line type.

Rules of Order of the Convention

TITLE I— GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

In these Rules of Order of the Convention:

(1) CONSTITUTION AND CANONS DEFINITIONS.— The definitions under section 101 of the Constitution of the Diocese and section 101 of the Canons of the Diocese shall apply to the Rules of Order of the Convention.

(2) PRESIDENT.— The term "President" means the President of the Convention.

(3) REMOTE ELECTRONIC MEETING.— The term "remote electronic meeting" means any meeting of the Convention that—

(A) is not held in a single location where all the participants are physically present; and

(B) uses electronic means for communication among the participants.

(3) ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.—The term "Robert's Rules of Order" means the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

(4) TRADITIONAL MEETING.— The term "traditional meeting" means any meeting of the Convention that is held in a single location where all the participants are physically present.

SEC. 102. RELATIONSHIP TO LAWS OR OTHER RULES.

(a) CONSTITUTION AND CANONS.— At any meeting of the Convention the Rules of Order of the Convention and Robert's Rules of Order are subject to the Constitution and the Canons.

(b) RULES OF ORDER.— The Rules of Order of the Convention and Robert's Rules of Order shall apply to any meeting of the Convention. To the extent that any provision of Robert's Rules of Order is inconsistent with any provision of the Rules of Order of the Convention, the provision of the Rules of Order of the Convention shall govern.

(c) TRADITIONAL MEETINGS.— Title II shall apply to any traditional meeting.

(d) REMOTE ELECTRONIC MEETINGS.— Titles II and III shall apply to any remote electronic meeting. To the extent that any provision of title II (relating to meetings of Convention) is inconsistent with any provision of title III (relating to remote electronic meetings), the provision of title III shall govern with respect to any remote electronic meeting.

SEC. 103. AUTHORITY.

Any meeting of the Convention may be held as a traditional meeting or a remote electronic meeting.

TITLE II— MEETINGS OF CONVENTION

SEC. 201. ORGANIZATION AND OPENING OF A MEETING OF THE CONVENTION.

(a) REGISTRATION.— All participants of the Convention shall register at a place designated by the Secretary.

(b) DIVINE SERVICE.— Each daily session of a meeting of the Convention shall be opened with Divine Service.

(c) ASSEMBLING OF THE CONVENTION.—

(1) PRESIDENT PRESENT.— If the President is present upon the assembling of the Convention before the call to order, the President shall request—

(A) all the participants of the Convention to be seated; and

(B) a determination of a quorum.

(2) PRESIDENT NOT PRESENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.— If the President is not present upon the assembling of the Convention before the call to order—

(i) the Convention shall elect a priest or bishop as the presiding officer in accordance with section 803 of the Constitution; and

(ii) that presiding officer shall request a determination of a quorum.

(B) PRESIDING OFFICER.— If a presiding officer is elected under subparagraph (A), subsections (e) and (f) of this section and sections 203, 206, and 208 shall apply by substituting the term "presiding officer" for the term "President" each place that term appears.

(d) QUORUM.— Upon the request for the determination of a quorum the Secretary of the preceding meeting of the Convention, or a designee of the Secretary, shall announce the total number of participants of the Convention of each order who are registered and determine whether a quorum is present.

(e) CALL TO ORDER.— If a quorum is present, the President shall announce the presence of a quorum, declare the Convention is organized and ready for business, and call the meeting of the Convention to order.

(d) SEATING.— When the meeting of the Convention is called to order, every participant of the Convention shall immediately be seated.

(f) CHALLENGES TO CERTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS.— A challenge to the certification of any participant of the Convention (including a challenge to the right of that participant to seat, voice, or vote) may be made in accordance with section 204 or 304 of the Canons. The President shall make the determination of any challenge.

SEC. 202. APPOINTMENTS.

(a) COORDINATOR FOR THE DISPATCH OF BUSINESS.— The President shall appoint a Coordinator for the Dispatch of Business who shall hold office until the next meeting of the Convention.

(b) SECRETARY.— The President shall appoint a Secretary in accordance with section 901 of the Constitution.

(c) ASSISTANTS.— The President shall appoint a First Assistant Secretary (in accordance with section 1103 of the Canons), tellers, pages and any other assistants as may be necessary. The President may appoint a Second Assistant Secretary (in accordance with section 1103 of the Canons).

(d) OTHER APPOINTMENTS.— The President shall appoint the members of committees and commissions of the Convention and any other appointments at the time as provided in the agenda for the meeting.

SEC. 203. SPEAKING TO THE CONVENTION.

(a) ADDRESSING THE PRESIDENT.— When any participant is about to speak or deliver any matter to the Convention, the member shall rise, and with due respect, address the President.

(b) RECOGNITION.— If 2 or more participants rise at the same time to speak the President shall decide who shall speak. A participant may not speak until recognized by the President. *The President may recognize speakers and take other actions to structure the debate on any matter before the Convention in an orderly manner.*

(c) PRIMARY SPONSOR.— The first participant to speak on a resolution shall be the primary sponsor or the designee of the primary sponsor.

(d) LIMITATION ON SPEAKING.— No participant may speak more than twice in the same debate nor longer than 3 minutes at one time without leave of the Convention, except that the primary sponsor or designee may speak for up to 5 minutes the first time, and up to 3 minutes the second time.

(e) LIMITATION ON DEBATE ON A PARTICULAR QUESTION.— The Convention may adopt in the agenda for a session a time limit for the debate on a particular matter. At the expiration of the time limit, any speaker currently recognized may complete their time in accordance with subsection (d). Immediately following such speaker's time, the President shall call for a vote on the matter without further debate, beginning with any amendments introduced to the Convention on the matter and concluding with the matter itself as it may have been amended.

SEC. 204. MOTIONS.

(a) REQUIREMENTS TO DEBATE MOTION.— A motion may not be debated until that motion has been seconded and presented to the Secretary in writing in any form and in any manner as the Secretary may require.

(b) PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS.— When a motion is made and seconded, no other motion shall be received except a motion (in the following order of precedence) to—

(1) adjourn;
(2) lay on the table;
(3) postpone to a certain time;
(4) postpone indefinitely; or
(5) commit or to amend.

(c) ACTIONS ON CERTAIN MOTIONS.— If a motion to lay on the table an amendment is passed, the matter before the Convention shall be proceeded with as if no such amendment had been offered. A motion to lay on the table or a motion to adjourn shall be decided without debate. The motion to adjourn shall always be in order if the mover has the floor.

SEC. 205. AMENDMENTS TO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

(a) ONLY AMENDMENTS IN 2 DEGREES PERMITTED.— If a proposed amendment is under consideration, a motion to amend the proposed amendment may be offered. It shall not be in order to offer an amendment to the amendment to the proposed amendment under consideration, but a substitute for both amendments (i.e. the first proposed amendment and the second amendment amending the first proposed amendment) may be received, which if adopted, shall operate as an amendment to the original proposition.

(b) NO PROPOSITION ON DIFFERENT SUBJECT PERMITTED.— No proposition on a subject different from the subject under consideration shall be received as an amendment or substitute.

(c) REQUIREMENTS TO DEBATE AMENDMENT.— No amendment or substitute amendment shall be debated until that amendment has been seconded and presented to the Secretary in writing in any form and in any manner as the Secretary may require.

(d) DIVISION OF PROPOSITIONS.— If a question contains several distinct propositions the same shall be divided at the request of any participant and a vote taken separately, except that a motion to strike and insert shall be undividable.

SEC. 206. QUESTIONS OF ORDER.

(a) DECISIONS.— Any question of order shall be decided by the President without debate, but any participant may appeal from that decision, and on that appeal no member may speak more than once, without express leave of the Convention.

(b) PARTICIPANT SEATED UNTIL DECISION MADE.— When any participant rises to a point of order, the member who has the floor shall be seated until the point of order is decided by the President.

(c) DETERMINATION AND RECONSIDERATION.—

(1) DETERMINATION.— Except as provided under paragraph (2), any vote shall be a final vote of the Convention and the question may not be debated again during the meeting.

(2) RECONSIDERATION.— A vote may be reconsidered if a motion to reconsider is —

(A) made by a member of the Convention who voted with the majority on the vote to which the motion applies;

(B) seconded by another member of the Convention who also voted with the majority; and

(C) passed by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body.

SEC. 207. REPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.— No question shall be taken on any report unless upon a motion to print or recommit it; but reports shall, as a course, lie upon the table.

(b) WRITTEN PROPOSALS REQUIRED.— If a committee determines any action of the Convention is desirable, the committee shall present in writing such resolutions, acts, or canons, as the committee proposes for adoption by the Convention; which only shall be subject to the action of the Convention.

(c) COMPLIANCE.— The Convention will not act upon any proposed resolution, act, or canon that is not in compliance with this section.

SEC. 208. ELECTIONS.

(a) NOMINATIONS.—

(1) ELECTIONS OTHER THAN A BISHOP.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Nominations for elections (other than an election of a bishop) shall be made in accordance with section 402 of the Canons.

(B) FLOOR NOMINATIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Nominations may be made from the floor, or by other prescribed method, but shall be confined to announcement only

of the name of the candidate and shall not be seconded. Additional nominations may be made until all nominations are closed.

(ii) BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.— Any participant of the Convention may submit biographical information on any candidate whom such participant intends to nominate from the floor, or by other prescribed method. That information shall be submitted to the Secretary not later than 7 days before the applicable meeting of the Convention, or such other deadline as may be established by the Secretary, and in a format that may be established by the Secretary.

(2) ELECTIONS OF A BISHOP.— Nominations for an election of a bishop shall be made in accordance with section 502 of the Canons.

(b) ELECTION BY BALLOT.— All elections shall be conducted by ballot unless otherwise ordered.

(c) VOTES RECORDED BY ORDERS.— The votes of the clerical members of the Convention and the lay members of the Convention shall be received and counted separately, but the vote shall be regarded as a vote of a single body, unless a vote by orders is required.

(d) LIST OF NOMINEES.— The Secretary shall prepare a list of all nominations for each elective office, indicating the number of individuals to be voted for in each office.

(e) VERIFICATION OF VOTERS.— When a joint ballot is taken, the tellers shall first verify that each voter is a certified member of the Convention with the right to vote, and then allow each voter to cast a vote.

(f) REPORT OF THE TELLERS.— After the votes have been received and tallied, the Head Teller shall combine the votes of the clerical members of the Convention and the lay members of the Convention into one joint report and present to the Convention—

(1) the total number of votes in each order and the number needed to elect in each order and in total; and

(2) the number of votes in each order and in total for each individual voted for on the ballot.

(g) STATEMENT OF RESULTS.— After the report under subsection (f) is presented, the President shall state the result of the joint ballot to the Convention.

(h) DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS RESTRICTED.— Except as otherwise ordered by the Convention, no books, pamphlets, or other printed matter shall be distributed at any meeting of the Convention, or be placed in the seats of the members without the express permission of the President; but this prohibition shall not apply to the report of a Committee, or to any other document presented to or accepted by the Convention, or printed by the authority of the Convention.

SEC. 209. SUSPENSION OF RULES OR CHANGE IN AGENDA.

The Convention may suspend any of the Rules of Order on a motion passed by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body. The Convention may change the agenda on a motion passed by more than 50 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body.

SEC. 210. ALTERNATE LAY MEMBERS.

Any application of an alternate lay member of the Convention to a seat in place of the principal shall be presented to the Secretary. If the Secretary determines that an alternate is entitled to a seat in accordance with section 303 of the Canons, the Secretary shall announce that substitution to the Convention. If no objection is raised following the announcement, the alternate shall take his seat.

SEC. 211. RESOLUTIONS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE CANONS.— Any proposal to amend the Canons shall be submitted in accordance with section 7002 of the Canons. This section shall apply to any resolution other than a proposal to amend the Canons.

(b) INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY SUBMIT A RESOLUTION.— Any member of the Convention may submit a resolution.

(c) PERIOD FOR SUBMISSION.— A resolution shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary not later than 60 days before any meeting of the Convention at which the resolution is to be considered.

(d) TRANSMISSION TO COMMITTEE.— The Secretary shall transmit the resolution to the appropriate committee of jurisdiction.

(e) DISCRETION TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY TO TRANSMIT.— The committee of jurisdiction may direct the Secretary to transmit the resolution to each participant of the Convention.

~~(f) COPIES OF RESOLUTION.— Any member of the Convention who submits a resolution to the Secretary before the 60-day period described under subsection (c) shall provide sufficient copies of the resolution to distribute to the participants of the Convention attending the meeting of the Convention. The Committee on Resolutions shall transmit to each Regional Assembly and to each participant of the Convention a copy of all resolutions, accompanied by its report on each resolution, not later than 30 days before the meeting of the Convention.~~

(f) POSTING OF RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS.— Not later than 30 days before the day of the meeting of the Convention at which the resolution is to be considered by the Convention, the Secretary shall post on the Diocesan website—

(1) any resolution submitted before the 60-day period described under subsection (c);

(2) any report of the Committee on Resolutions relating to that resolution; and

(3) any other explanatory materials relating to that resolution the Secretary determines useful.

(g) LIMITATION ON RESOLUTIONS NOT SUBMITTED IN ADVANCED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.— Any resolution that is not submitted to the Secretary before the 60-day period described under subsection (c) may not be considered by the Convention, unless—

(A) the sponsor or individual submitting the resolution shows cause as to the reasons that the resolution could not be submitted before that 60-day period; and

(B) the Convention agrees to the consideration of the resolution by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body.

(2) RESOLUTIONS OF COURTESY.— Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any resolution of courtesy.

(h) RESOLUTIONS IMPACTING THE BUDGET.— If a resolution has a potential impact on the budget of the Diocese and is agreed to be considered by the Convention under subsection (g)(1), the resolution shall be forwarded to the Committee on Finance by the Secretary and the Committee on Finance shall report its findings to the Convention before consideration of the resolution by the Convention.

(i) COST NEUTRAL RECOMMENDATIONS.— Any resolution described under subsection (h) or any motion that requires funding not specifically provided for in the budget submitted to the Convention for consideration, shall contain a recommendation for a corresponding decrease in the funding of another item which is included in the budget so that the impact of the resolution or motion is cost neutral.

(j) SPONSOR AND HEARING REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) COMPLIANCE.— A resolution that is not in compliance with this subsection may not be considered at a meeting of the Convention, unless—

(A) the sponsor or individual submitting the resolution shows cause as to the reasons that the resolution could not be submitted in compliance with this subsection; and

(B) the Convention agrees to the consideration of the resolution by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention present and voting as a single body.

(2) SPONSORS.— At the time of the submission of a resolution, the resolution shall have a single primary sponsor and not fewer than 4 additional sponsors who are clerical members of the Convention and not fewer than 4 additional sponsors who are lay members of the Convention. The sponsors shall include lay members or clerical members from at least 4 different parishes. Additional sponsors may be added to the resolution at any time.

(3) HEARINGS.— There shall be a hearing organized by the President on the resolution at which not fewer than 20 members of the Convention are in attendance that occurs before the applicable meeting of the Convention. Hearings may be conducted as remote electronic meetings.

(k) AMENDMENTS.—

(1) FILING REQUIREMENT.— All first degree amendments to any resolution shall be filed with the Secretary not later than 12:00 noon on the third day before the day of the meeting of the Convention at which the resolution is to be considered by the Convention. A first degree amendment shall be in the form of a complete substitute for the resolution, accompanied by text showing proposed changes and an explanation of the amendment.

(2) CONSIDERATION OF LATE AMENDMENTS.— A first degree amendment that is not filed with the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1) may be considered by the Convention if a motion to consider the amendment is approved by not fewer than 67 percent of all members of the Convention who are present and voting as a single body.

(l) NOTICE OF AMENDMENT.—

(1) NOTICE AND INQUIRY.— Before filing an amendment to a resolution, the sponsor of the amendment shall—

(A) provide the text of the amendment to the primary sponsor of the resolution; and

(B) inquire whether or not the primary sponsor of the resolution is amenable to modifying the resolution to adopt the amendment or any part of the amendment.

(2) CONTACT INFORMATION.— The primary sponsor of a resolution shall provide the Secretary with an email address at the time of submitting the resolution for carrying out paragraph (1).

(3) COMPLIANCE.— It will not be in order for the Convention to consider any amendment that is not in compliance with this subsection before any amendment that is in compliance with this subsection.

SEC. 212. AMENDMENT AND APPLICATION OF RULES.

These Rules of Order of the Convention may be amended by the Convention and shall apply to each meeting of the Convention.

SEC. 213. JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS.

The Journal of Proceedings shall be submitted to the President for approval by the President before publication.

TITLE III— REMOTE ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

SEC. 301. CONDUCT OF A REMOTE ELECTRONIC MEETING.

(a) NOTICE OF MEETING.— The Secretary shall provide notice at least 30 days in advance of any remote electronic meeting. Before the meeting, the Secretary shall provide notice of the electronic platform through which electronic participation will be permitted, and information for registration and access to the platform. The platform shall permit each participant to hear the President and any person recognized to speak, and to speak and vote and take other action that such participant is authorized to take under the Constitution, Canons, and Rules of Order.

(b) CONVENTION MANAGERS.— In order to facilitate the conduct of a remote electronic meeting, the President may appoint one or more Convention Managers to report to and assist the Coordinator for the Dispatch of Business and to assist the President and Secretary of the Convention.

(c) QUORUM.— The Convention Managers shall determine and report to the Secretary the presence of a quorum as required by the Constitution on the basis of login information. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be presumed, unless any participant demands the determination of a quorum, which shall be determined by the electronic login record of the platform. Such a demand may be made following any vote for which the announced totals add to less than a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, the meeting may be adjourned as provided in section 401 of the Constitution.

(d) TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND MALFUNCTIONS.— Each participant is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections. No action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a participant's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

(e) MUTING AND FORCED DISCONNECTIONS.— The President may direct that all participants' connections be muted and that a Convention Manager unmute a connection when a participant is recognized. During the meeting the President may cause or direct the muting or disconnection of a participant's connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The President's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any participant, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

(f) ASSIGNMENT OF THE FLOOR.— To seek recognition by the President, a participant shall use the feature of the platform designated by the President, for example the Zoom Chat feature, and await recognition. The participant shall specify the nature of the request for recognition (for example, to propose an amendment or raise a point of order). Once the pending action is completed, the Convention Manager shall clear the online queue. Section 203(a) shall not apply during any remote electronic meeting.

(g) INTERRUPTING A PARTICIPANT.— A participant who intends to make a motion or request that under the rules may interrupt a speaker shall use the feature of the platform designated by the President, for example the Zoom Chat feature, for so indicating, and shall thereafter wait a reasonable time for the President's instructions before attempting to interrupt the speaker by voice.

(h) MOTIONS SUBMITTED IN WRITING.— A participant intending to make a main motion, to offer an amendment, or to propose instructions to a committee, shall, before or after being recognized, submit the motion in writing to the online area or other mechanism designated by the Secretary for this purpose, preceded by the participant's name, parish affiliation or ex officio designation, and the nature of the submission (e.g., "John Smith, Rector of St. Mary's, Springfield, Amendment to Resolution #1"; "Richard Roe, St. Joseph's, Middletown, Amendment to Resolution #2"). The participant shall also include contact information, including a telephone number, which a Convention Manager may use to address questions relating to the submission. Use of the online area or other mechanism designated by the Secretary for this purpose shall be restricted to posting the text of intended motions.

(i) SECONDING OF MOTIONS AND RELATED POSTS.— Participants responding "so moved" to a request from the President for a motion, or seconding any motion that requires a second, shall do so using the feature of the platform designated by the President, for example the Zoom Chat feature, without needing to be recognized by the President.

(j) DISPLAY OF MOTIONS.— The Secretary shall designate an area for the display of the immediately pending question and other relevant pending questions (such as the main motion, or the pertinent part of the main motion, when an amendment to it is immediately pending), which may include display through the meeting platform. To the extent feasible, the Secretary, or any assistants appointed by the Secretary for this purpose, shall cause such questions, or any other documents that are currently before the meeting for action or information, to be displayed therein until disposed of.

(k) VIDEO DISPLAY.— The President, the Secretary, or their assistants shall cause a video of the President to be displayed throughout the meeting, and may also cause display of the video of the participant currently recognized to speak or report (if such display is available). Each participant, by making such display available, consents to display of the video.

(l) BROADCASTING.— The Convention Manager may arrange for broadcasting through livestreaming or otherwise so that the public and members of the Diocese other than participants may observe the proceedings.

SEC. 302. FLOOR NOMINATIONS AND VOTING.

(a) NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR.— Any nominations from the floor permitted by the Constitution, the Canons, or section 208(a)(1) shall be made by using the feature of the platform designated by the President, for example the Zoom Chat feature, to seek recognition from the President, and upon such recognition to announce the nomination.

(b) VOTING.— Votes not requiring ballots may be taken through unanimous consent or by the platform feature designated by the President, for example the Zoom polling feature. Other votes, including balloting for elections, shall be taken through the voting mechanism designated by the President, for example an online voting portal for which each participant is provided an individual login code. Voting through this feature will be considered to satisfy any requirement for a written ballot.

MARYLAND PARISHES AS RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS UNDER MARYLAND STATE LAW

During 2024, the Chancellor and the Canon to the Ordinary and Chief Operating Officer initiated a major effort to address a long standing problem relating to the corporate status of the 51 parishes in the Diocese located in Maryland. For years many of those parishes had difficulties in routine corporate functions, such as opening bank accounts, applying for grants, and establishing documentation of incorporation because those corporations were governed by the Maryland Vestry Act of 1798 which is not part of the Maryland Annotated Code. There was confusion in the administration of corporate laws with respect to those parishes by Maryland State agencies because of the oddity of that uncodified statute. Business entities entering into legal relationships with those parishes were often uncertain about the corporate status of those parishes.

The Chancellor drafted a bill for the Maryland General Assembly that repealed the remaining provisions of the Vestry Act and made the affected parishes subject to the provisions of the Maryland Annotated Code that apply to all religious corporations in the State of Maryland. Those parishes are now provided the same corporate treatment as any other religious corporation in the State of Maryland. Delegate Todd Morgan (Republican, District 29C) and Senator Jack Bailey (Republican, District 29) introduced and shepherded the bill throughout the legislative process to its enactment. It is very unusual for a bill of this type to be enacted in the first year of its introduction in the General Assembly. The Diocese is now in the process of assisting in the transition of the affected Maryland parishes to their new corporate status as religious corporations in order to maximize the benefits from the recently enacted statute.

The Committee on the Constitution and Canons provided analysis and recommendations to the Diocese on the issues relating to the transition of parishes to religious corporations under the statute. The Committee in the coming year will also be examining necessary changes in the Diocesan Constitution and Canons to best coordinate and conform to the changes in the

Maryland State law and will, upon request of the Bishop or Chancellor, provide further analysis and recommendations on related issues.