



## Guidelines for Submitting Resolutions to General Convention

When preparing a resolution, please use these guidelines, the resources that are noted within this document, and the Rules of Order in the [2022 Constitution and Canons](#).

### About Resolutions

A common point of confusion when writing a resolution is that two additional sections can be included with the text of the resolution itself – the explanation and supporting documents. These later two items are not part of the resolution. These two sections are optional and are to assist in the deliberation and decision-making process.

**For the purpose of this guide**, resolution refers only to the text that is calling on General Convention to take specific action on something.

### Resolution vs. Memorial

Resolutions call on General Convention to take specific legislative action. If you want the church to commend or commemorate a person, event, or other matter; take up legislative action on a particular topic but do not have specific steps to do this; or take a stance on a particular issue, a memorial may be a more appropriate choice than a resolution.

Memorials, like resolutions, will be referred to the appropriate Legislative Committee(s) which can then create or modify legislation that is put forward to the floor of General Convention. Memorials speak to the Convention on a particular topic and to draw attention to issues. This includes the Committee on Courtesy and Privilege that can take calls for commending or commemoration of people, events, etc. and create a courtesy resolution (because it's not calling on specific legislative action) that can be brought to the floor of General Convention.

### Proposer

The Interim Body, Legislative Committee, Deputy, Bishop, Diocese, or Province that writes and submits a resolution is the proposer of the resolution as referred to in the Rules of Order.

### Classification of Resolutions

Resolutions are classified by a letter representing what governing entity the proposer belongs to.

“**A**” Resolutions are submitted by Interim Bodies and Legislative Committees

“**B**” Resolutions are submitted by Bishops

“C” Resolutions are submitted by Provinces or Dioceses

“D” Resolutions are submitted by Deputies

A number will follow that indicates the order in which it was received and, pending that it was submitted correctly, filed for consideration.

### Resources for Preparing Resolutions

Some helpful questions to ask while researching to prepare your resolution include:

- 1) Has this been proposed before? If so, how did General Convention act on the matter? If the Convention has already acted, what are you asking that is different?
- 2) What other groups are working on this issue or topic? Are they planning to submit resolutions or memorials?
- 3) What other resolutions have been passed by previous General Conventions that relate to this topic?
- 4) Does this need be a resolution? Would a memorial work better?
- 5) Which governing bodies, organizations, or offices of The Episcopal Church would be responsible for acting on a resolution of this kind?
- 6) What kind of language does this resolution require? Would the work called for be best explained by a broad statement or a more detailed outline? (Specificity is helpful but can unnecessarily limit the scope of a resolution.)

### The Archives of The Episcopal Church

<https://www.episcopalarchives.org/>

The digital archives maintained by The Archives of the Episcopal Church are an excellent tool for researching your resolution's topic. Some particularly helpful areas of the digital archive to search include:

- Acts of Convention
- The resolves of Executive Council
- Episcopal News Service (ENS) articles

If you need assistance in your search, please contact The Archives at [research@episcopalarchives.org](mailto:research@episcopalarchives.org) or 800-525-9327.

### Interim Bodies

If the content of your resolution concerns a subject that a particular Interim Body may be addressing, you are encouraged to contact the Chair of that group. If you do not have contact information for an Interim Body, please send your message along with the name of the Interim Body you want to speak with to the General Convention Office at [gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org).

The descriptions (mandates) of the Interim Bodies are available online at:

[https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing\\_and\\_interim\\_bodies/interim\\_bodies](https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing_and_interim_bodies/interim_bodies).

## Writing Resolutions

As a reminder, there can be two optional parts included with your resolution text. These are the three components when crafting legislation:

1. **Resolution**  
This is the act or actions being proposed and to be voted upon.
2. **Explanation** (*optional*)  
This provides any additional details and information to support the resolution.
3. **Supporting Documents** (*optional*)  
This provides any reports, articles, documents (see full explanation further below) that are being referenced in a resolution.

**General guidelines** – *applies to all resolutions*

**For resolutions that amend the Constitution or Canons**, please use the following and see additional instructions further below.

- A resolution should have **one topic**.
- A resolution **must require specific action**. Resolutions are phrased so that, if both Houses concur, it will result in some action to be taken by the General Convention or an identified person or agency of the Church. If you do not have a specific call to action, it may be better to submit as a memorial. Resolutions don't have to say how to achieve that action. To put it another way, resolutions must be *descriptive* of the action(s) to be taken by the Church, but it does not have to be *prescriptive* of every step of the process.
- Use the **subjunctive** verb tense. *Examples*: "That the 80th General Convention *adopt* the following statement..." (instead of *adopts*); That the 80th General Convention *confirm*" (instead of *confirms*).
- If a resolution contains more than one resolved clause, the clauses should be joined with a semicolon followed by the words "and be it further" and then a line break. For example:

Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_concurring, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention {text of first resolve}; and be it further

Resolved, {text of the second resolve}

Ideally, resolutions should not contain more than three resolve clauses for reasons of clarity and execution.

- Resolutions **cannot** be submitted if the passage of one is dependent on the passage of another, separate resolution. *No conditional language about the passage will be accepted*. The two must be submitted together as different resolved clauses of the same resolution so General Convention can discuss them as one unit. For example, a resolution that calls for changing the Canons in one section but can only occur if another section of the Canons is changed must be submitted as one resolution. *Resolutions cannot be filed and considered in a particular order, i.e. to wait to see if that other change is made*.
- According to the Joint Rules (III.12), "No proposal for legislative consideration which approves, endorses, adopts, or rejects a report, study, or other document that is not generally known by the members of the House or readily available may be considered by the General Convention unless such material is first distributed to both Houses. It is the responsibility of the proposer to provide the necessary copies to the Secretary of each House." *Please see more about supporting documents further below*.
- If the resolution calls for the creation of an **Interim Body (such as a Task Force)**, it should state the composition of the proposed body, and, unless otherwise provided for in the Canons or Rules of Order, how it is to be constituted. For guidance on creating a Task Force by resolution, please use the Joint Rules. In other words, the resolution must clearly state who appoints

members of the body; how many people it is composed of; whether the members must be lay, clergy, bishops, or a mixture of all three orders and if so, if certain minimum or maximums of each order are required; the work they are tasked with completing; the length of the time needed for the completion of the assigned work; and a proposed budget, if any. Please use this format:

- *Resolved*, That the 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention authorize the establishment of a Task Force [on/for/to \_\_\_\_\_], appointed by [unless specified, the Presiding Bishop shall appoint the Episcopal members and the President of the House of Deputies shall appoint the Priests and Deacons and the Lay Persons – JR IX], composed of [number of people] as follows: [x] Bishops, [x] Priests or Deacons, and [x] Lay Persons, to complete [work assigned and any specific time frame]. The Task Force ends with the submission of their report to the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention.
- **Funding:** If your resolution contains **budgetary implications**, a cost estimate must be included within a last resolve clause of your resolution. Please use this format:

“Resolved, That the General Convention request a budget allocation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the implementation of this resolution.”
- **Note:** The General Convention Office estimates the cost of a 2.5 day, in-person meeting to be approximately \$1,700 per person.
- **Translation** of the resolution will be provided in Spanish.
- Things you **cannot** use in the text of the resolution itself (but you can use in the explanation and supporting documents):
  - Indented paragraphs.
  - Bold text. This is only used after a resolution has been passed by General Convention to indicate the finalized version.
  - Preambles or “whereas” clauses. Use the explanation section for further information, context, and rationale for the resolution.
  - Links to websites. Those can be included in the explanation and/or supporting documents.
  - Refer to or attach Congressional legislation or bills. They often change and may have “riders” attached that do not refer to the intent of the resolution being proposed.

[Click here to see an example of a resolution.](#)

## Title

Include a brief descriptive title to highlight the area of legislation. Titles should address the *subject* of the resolution, not its proposed outcome. *Example:* Support for Seminarians. For resolutions that propose amendments to the Constitution or Canons, the title should consist of the article or canon and a brief description. *Example:* Amend Canon 1.17.1.c To Clarify Full Communion. *The Office of the General Convention reserves the right to edit or change a title for clarity and consistency.*

## Explanation

The purpose, intentions, and justifications for a resolution should be included in the explanation which immediately follows the text of the resolution. After the text of the resolution, include a line break and then **Explanation** in bold to indicate the new section. Since the explanation is not part of the official text of the resolution, it can include links, references to other documents, and historical context for the resolution. *Please limit explanations to a few paragraphs.* Explanations will be translated into Spanish.

## Supporting Documents

There is now a provision in place to submit and distribute documents electronically, but please note: it is the responsibility of the proposer to provide an electronic copy of any document referenced and to have the document *either* available in Spanish or translated into Spanish (additional languages can also be accepted). No resolution that includes additional documents will be accepted without a version in Spanish.

## Editing and Review

The General Convention Office may lightly edit resolutions for formatting and correct some elements to fit standards used by the General Convention such as punctuation of titles, names of people or institutions, but will **never edit or otherwise modify the text of a resolution**. It is the responsibility of the proposer to arrange for proofreading and editing of their resolutions, explanations, and supporting materials.

## Amending the Constitution and Canons

Any resolution that proposes modification of the Constitution and Canons or will affect the structure or governance of the Church will need **additional review** before it is filed for consideration at General Convention. Please contact the **Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, and Constitution and Canons**. Send your questions and drafts to them using this form:

[https://dfms.formstack.com/forms/resolution\\_contact\\_form](https://dfms.formstack.com/forms/resolution_contact_form)

- A. Begin your resolve clause with the article or canon reference. *Example:* “That Canon 1.17.1.c is hereby amended to read as follows...”
- B. The Constitution and Canons **must be quoted exactly—do not paraphrase anything**. To minimize errors, we recommend that you copy and paste the text you are amending from the electronic version of the [2022 Constitution and Canons](#).
- C. Include the **entire section or paragraph** that you are amending. Do not omit any sections or use an ellipse ( ... ) to skip over parts. This provides clarity when the resolution is being discussed. You **do not** need include sections or paragraphs that are not being amended. *Example:* If only Canon IV.17.2(e) is under discussion, do not include paragraphs (d) or (f) or the entire section. Provide only the entirety of paragraph (e).
- D. Text to be **deleted** is indicated by a ~~strike-through~~ mark.
- E. Text to be **inserted** is indicated by *italics*.
- F. You may amend different sections of the Constitution and Canons in the same resolution, if:
  - All of the changes address a single issue (like changing all instances of the Phrase “Provincial Court of Review” to “Court of Review”).
  - or
  - If the changes are dependent upon on one another. For example, if a paragraph needs to be deleted from one section and added to another.

If you are amending more than one section of the Constitution and Canons in a single resolution, each section being changed should be a separate resolved clause.

- G. When referring to the formal orders and members of them, the words Bishop, Priest, Deacon, and Lay Person and their plurals are capitalized. Outside of this context, the words a not capitalized.

*Example of a resolution amending the Constitution or Canons:*

Title: Amend Canon I.1.1.c to update process

Resolved, That Canon I.1.1.c is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 1.c In order to aid the Secretary of the House of Deputies in preparing the record specified in Clause (a), it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese to forward to the Secretary of the House of Deputies, as soon as may be practicable, an *electronic* copy of the latest Journal of the Diocesan Convention, together with a certified copy of the testimonials of members aforesaid. ~~and a duplicate copy of such testimonials.~~ Where testimonials are received for persons from jurisdictions which have not previously been represented in General Convention, the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall ascertain that the applicable provisions of Article V, Section 1, of the Constitution have been complied with prior to such persons being permitted to take their seats in the House.

### Endorsements

#### “A” Resolutions

“A” resolutions do not require or have any endorsers beyond the Interim Body or Legislative Committee that is proposing it.

#### “B” Resolutions

All resolutions of Bishops (“B” resolutions) shall be proposed by one Bishop and endorsed by no fewer than two additional Bishops, with all three being from different dioceses. **Each Bishop may propose no more than three resolutions.** (*HOB Rules of Order IV*)

#### “C” Resolutions

“C” resolutions do not require or have any endorsers beyond the Diocese or Province that is proposing it.

#### “D” Resolutions

All resolutions of Deputies (“D” resolutions) shall be proposed by one Deputy endorsed by no fewer than two additional Deputies. **Each Deputy may propose no more than three resolutions.** (*HOD Rules of Order VI.22 (c)*)

### Supporters

**All resolutions**, “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D”, can have individuals or groups (Interim Body, Diocese, Province, organization, committee, etc.) as *supporters*. This is **not** an official endorsement but does allow the Convention to see who else backs the resolution.

If have questions about submitting a resolution, please contact [gc.support@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gc.support@episcopalchurch.org).