

A Guide to Submitting and Discussing Resolutions

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

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What is the function of a resolution?

A resolution is an especially important motion that is made in writing. Listed below are three types of resolutions and their functions.

- A **Mind-of-the-House Resolution** is used to express the opinion of the majority of delegates to the diocesan convention on an issue on the record.
- A **Diocesan Convention Resolution** is used to call for action to be taken, either by the Diocesan Convention itself or by some person or group accountable to the Diocesan Convention.
- A **General Convention Resolution** is used to call the attention of the General Convention to issues of national significance. However these must conform to the Rules of Order found in the [Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church](#).

Should I submit a resolution?

A resolution should be submitted if one of the above functions is necessary. In contrast, points of clarification, requests for resources, and other housekeeping should be directed to the appropriate person or group and a resolution is not required.

Composing and submitting a resolution

Resolution Requirements

Because of their importance, resolutions traditionally consist of two parts. The first is the reason why the resolution is initiated (“whereas...”) and the second is the resolution itself (“be it resolved...”) which is the action or statement that is being considered by the organization.

Each resolution must include the following **elements**:

- A rationale of 25 words or less summarizing the reasoning for the resolution.
- A formal rationale
- A formal resolution

Resolutions **may only be submitted by** the following entities:

- The Diocesan Council
- The Standing Committee
- A group of four clergy and four lay delegates

How to Propose an Effective Resolution¹

Formation

1. Be sure that each resolution deals with a single issue. People will not support what they do not understand, and understanding is difficult if more than one issue is addressed in a single resolution.

¹ Language taken from the Guidelines for Submitting Resolutions from the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

2. Ask yourself what outcome you desire. What do you want the resolution to accomplish or prevent? Specify the action to be taken and by whom. Consider whether the action requires a report, to whom, and by what date. If there are costs, specify how the action would be funded. Some things cannot be legislated no matter how desirable they may be. You can ask Diocesan Council to promulgate a program; you cannot ask "all Episcopalians" to buy into it. Be sure that your proposal is not inconsistent with the theology and practice of the Episcopal Church.
3. Ask yourself who can most effectively accomplish your goal. Is it an individual, a Diocesan body, local parish vestries, a subsequent Convention of the diocese, or the General Convention?

The Resolutions Committee will be glad to provide guidance on drafting resolutions. Our goal is to help you present your interest or concern in the most effective way possible. Those requesting feedback from the Resolutions Committee should do so well in advance of the submission deadline.

Composition

- Plain language is the best language for a resolution. Don't try to make it sound "legal" and avoid unnecessarily complex or compound sentences. There are specific requirements as to form, and you may wish to use one of the samples provided as a model. The committee will clarify language and format, if necessary, for consistency.
- Make sure the actions you call for are concrete, measurable, well defined, and achievable. You might keep in mind that no one likes to feel that some diocesan body is about to micro-manage their parish, so concentrate on the goals to be achieved and leave the "how-to" to the people who have to implement the resolution, if adopted.
- Please provide a 25 word or less rationale to the Resolutions Committee. The rationale will be appended to the resolution but is not itself adopted if the resolution passes. The Resolutions Committee will do due diligence to include any supportive material in the convention packet but, please remember that brevity increases support.
- Resolutions begin with a "whereas" clause used to introduce the rationale for the resolution. The clause beginning "Let it be resolved..." states the action to be taken.

Submission

- Submissions must be made to the Secretary of Convention, 924 N. Niagara St., Saginaw, MI 48602. No later than 30 days before convention.
- For your convenience, submissions may be made in writing or [online](#). The form can also be accessed at www.eastmich.org/convention.

What to Expect Once Submitted

Once a resolution has been submitted to the Secretary of Convention, it will be recorded and forwarded to the Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee will review and address the following:

- Have the proper submission requirements been met?
- Does the resolution follow canonical requirements?
- Does the resolution require any clarification?

Once reviewed, the Resolutions Committee will contact a representative of those who have made the submission to discuss or confirm their review.

Responsibilities of the Submitters

A representative of the body of submitters must attend one of the scheduled pre-convention meetings.

- Wednesday, September 27th from 6-7PM at St. Matthew's, Saginaw
- Sunday, October 1st from 3-4PM at Grace, Lapeer
- Wednesday, October 4th from 6-7PM at St. Andrew's, Gaylord

How to Participate in Convention Discussion

Who presents the resolutions?

Resolutions are presented in a report made by a member of the Resolutions Committee. At this time, the formal elements of the resolution are read aloud. If necessary, a representative of the submitting body may be asked to present a short summary of their rationale. Once the resolution has been reported the floor is opened for discussion by the chair or president of the Convention.

Who moderates the discussion?

Discussion is moderated by the President of Convention. All participants follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Roberts Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order "provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language."² While this may sound intimidating, knowing a few basic terms and protocols can help everyone feel comfortable and discussion run smoothly.

Listed below are a few basic guidelines. An additional "cheatsheet"³ of terms, actions, and how to use them is attached.

- Discussion can begin when the resolution has been stated. The **President will ask if there are any questions or discussion**. If none, the President calls for the vote.
- One may **obtain the floor** (the right to speak) by raising their hand once the floor is opened for discussion by the President or the previous speaker has finished; state "Mr./Madam President." You must be recognized by the President before speaking. Speaking while another has the floor is out of order.
- Members may move to **postpone consideration, request information, amend, or call for the end of debate**, of the motion among many other actions. Moves such as these require a second before being honored or voted upon.
- A member can not speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once.
- **All remarks must be directed to the President**. Remarks must be courteous, avoid all personalities, and not allude to others by name or to motives.

² <http://www.robertsrules.org/>

³ Cheat Sheets can be found in Appendix B

- The agenda and all committee reports are recommendations. When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes may occur.

Appendix A

Mind-Of-The-House-Resolutions

“Whereas (insert rationale)...

Be it resolved that that it is the mind of this (year of convention) Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan (insert opinions for the record)...”

Diocesan Convention Resolutions

“Whereas (insert rationale)...

Be it resolved, that this _____ Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan directs...; and be it further

Resolved, that the Bishop be encouraged...; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention requests the Vestry of each of its constituent parishes to... and be it further

Resolved, that Diocesan Council be directed to report on... at the _____ Convention of this Diocese.”

General Convention Resolutions

“Whereas (insert rationale)...

Be it resolved, that this _____ Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan approves the following resolution for submission to the _____ General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that...”

Appendix B⁴

TO	YOU SAY	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND NEEDED	DEBATABLE	AMENDABLE	VOTE NEEDED
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, temp, etc...	"Point of privilege. My point is..."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table this."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move that we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

⁴ Taken from the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies of UNC

TO	YOU SAY	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND NEEDED	DEBATABLE	AMENDABLE	VOTE NEEDED
Object to procedure or personal affront	“Point of order... my point is...”	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	“Point of information.”	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	“I call for a division of the house.”	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	“I object to consideration of this question.”	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	“I move we take from the table...”	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	“I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to...”	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of it's scheduled order	“I move we suspend the rules and consider...”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the chair	“I appeal the Chair's decision”	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).