

The Episcopal Church in Delaware

Tips for Writing an Effective Resolution

adapted from resources of the General Convention's House of Deputies

1. Choose a clear, descriptive title (the shorter and more unique the better).
2. Give necessary information about the submitter:
 - name, address, and contact information
 - indicate if a cleric or delegate, or submitting on behalf of a congregation
 - if not eligible to speak on the convention floor, indicate the delegate or cleric authorized by the congregation to respond to questions at convention
3. Write Strong and Focused Resolve Paragraphs
 - a. The word "RESOLVED," should be capitalized and underlined, and followed by a comma and the word "THAT," which is capitalized. Each resolve paragraph may end with a period or with a semicolon and the words "and be it further." *Special Note:* "Therefore be it" and "and be it further" **end** a clause. They are **not** used at the beginning of a "RESOLVED" clause.
 - b. Single Subject Rule: A resolution should be about a single subject (for example, "Apportionment"). Each "RESOLVED" within a resolution is about a single point within the larger subject. Again, focus and concision lead to successful resolutions.
 - c. These paragraphs are what the convention will debate and vote upon, and what will be considered official action of the convention.
4. Use the Explanation Wisely

Clearly and succinctly set forth the reasons for the proposed action called for in the resolution. Avoid inflammatory rhetoric or hyperbole to maximize your reach. The explanation is for information only and not part of the formal resolution. Again, keep this brief and clear for maximum effect.
5. Avoid the Whereas and Wherefore Curse in Debatable Resolutions

The use of preambles and "Whereas" and "Wherefore" clauses are **highly** discouraged in resolutions up for debate. Experience teaches that these clauses often lead to minimally important, time-consuming arguments on introductory language that cause the entire legislation to be lost. The reasons, purposes, intentions, and justifications for resolutions are best included – briefly and elegantly – in the explanation.

Sample Resolutions with Explanations

adapted from resources of the General Convention's House of Deputies

Sample 1

RESOLVED, That the 77th General Convention call upon the planners of the 78th General Convention to make all materials available electronically, both prior to and during the convention, and to make Wi-Fi available on the floor of both houses. In addition, planners are called upon to make electrical outlets available on the floor of both houses for participants who wish to use laptop computers or other electronic devices to access these materials.

EXPLANATION:

The actions outlined above would provide a number of important benefits. The transmission of information (resolutions, amendments, announcements, etc.) via electronic means could streamline the convention process dramatically, allowing for faster and more accurate dissemination of up-to-date materials. Significant reductions to printing and paper costs would offset the expense of providing access to electrical outlets on the convention floor. To be responsible stewards of the earth's resources, it is our duty to drastically reduce the amount of paperwork generated by convention. The potential for cost savings and greater efficiency provides an added incentive to plan for a paperless convention.

Sample 2

Title: Continued Development of Province IX Curriculum Project

RESOLVED, That the 77th General Convention commend Province IX for their creative and collaborative work in creating curricula for use in their province that is created from the grassroots and speaks in the language and idioms of the people that will use those curricula; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center of The Episcopal Church Center be directed to complete the Province IX curriculum project, continuing the face-to-face process of development that has begun creating these resources, and that this process be further developed as a model for the creation of formation and educational materials that are to be used in non-Anglo contexts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 76th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$120,000 for the implementation of this Resolution during the 2009-2012 triennium.

Courtesy Resolutions

Resolutions of courtesy, which are written to be read aloud and typically profess admiration, recognition, or gratitude, may have "whereas clauses" but should **not** include an explanation following the resolution. The form is otherwise the same as that used for resolutions.