

## Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

# How to Submit a Resolution to Diocesan Convention

Resolutions can be effective means of communicating ideas and concerns to a wider body such as Diocesan Convention. Resolutions to Diocesan Convention may be presented by individuals, parishes, or committees/commissions within the diocese. Resolutions must have a specific clause that calls for a specific action. This clause should appear at the beginning of the resolution, so those who will be debating its merits may know the thrust of the resolution without having to read much detailed information. Among such actions desired may be:

- Setting up a diocesan program
- Expanding or changing the direction of an existing program
- Funding a program
- Affirming actions taken during the preceding year by committees and commissions
- Calling upon the bishop or others to express the concern of the diocese to parish, public or corporate officials and entities
- Empowering a committee or commission to carry out some specific task on behalf of the diocese.

Resolutions have two parts:

- The resolution itself and
- An explanation which either presents an argument for the resolution or explains its source

Traditionally, the explanation comes first, in a series of *whereas* clauses. The difficulty with this format is that the convention can spend time debating these clauses, rather than the resolution itself. The *explanation* itself is not debated, though the arguments for the resolution itself may be debated before voting.

A resolution should be considered part of the convention process, not an end in itself.

A good resolution may not be acted on favorably because it was not prepared carefully or because there was no adequate follow-up. To avoid these obstacles, committees, individuals and parishes are encouraged to follow these steps in submitting a resolution:

- 1) Decide on the action needed. Assign one person to write the resolution. Critique the resolution in committee. Be sure the resolution is simple, clear, grammatical, and concise. Anticipate arguments against the resolution, and include counters arguments in the explanation (be clear and concise in the explanation as well)
- 2) All resolutions must be numbered by line beginning with Line 1, so that at Convention, when part of the resolution is referred to, members will be able to follow the reference easily. Do not number the lines of the explanation.
- 3) Send the resolution to the chair of the Committee on Dispatch of Business at the Diocesan Office. The deadline for submission of resolutions to appear in Convention is August 29, 2008.
- 4) Plan a strategy for presenting the resolution and arguing in its behalf. Have someone be present at the Open Hearings on Resolutions to answer questions delegates might have.
- 5) Be sure the proper follow-up for implementing the resolution occurs. If the resolution calls for the bishop or other diocesan leaders to write letters, offer to help with this.

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