

June 15, 2007



To Clergy and Delegates:

Attached please find guidelines for submission of resolutions to the Diocesan Convention being held on November 2-3, 2007.

The Resolutions Committee continues to want to foster dialogue and conversation about the issues that are drawing the attention of so many and that further our mission and ministry as Episcopalian Christians. While we realize that we cannot legislate debate, we can encourage those who bring resolutions forward to write them in such a way that conversation is encouraged. It is our hope that respect for our theological diversity will be reflected in the language used in our resolutions. Further, we hope that by asking those who submit resolutions to use language that avoids labeling and polarization of others, we might actually encourage listening to those with whom we disagree. While we recognize that the very nature of the resolution process can lead to having "winners" and "losers", we believe that respectful, civil conversation can lead to far more transformation than heated debate.

Last year we were blessed to work with the sponsors of resolutions and found the process to be enlightening for us and helpful in leading to the civil and well balanced debate we experienced at last year's convention. Please note that if your resolution requires a constitutional or canonical change or impacts the work of a specific committee, then it is to be sent to the appropriate committee instead of us. (See page 3 of guidelines.) This is to insure that the constitution and canons are followed, or modified through canonical process, and that committees are given the opportunity take ownership of their own work.

We look forward to reading the resolutions you submit and working with you to facilitate a convention that is a place of welcome, conversation, education and safety to all.

Gale Davis Morris

Chair, Resolutions Committee

## The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

### Resolutions Committee Guidelines

#### Introduction

As the legislative body of the Diocese, the Diocesan Convention has ultimate authority or control under its Constitution and Canons relative to a wide range of matters such as amendments to the Constitution and Canons, election of bishops, officers and council and committee members, establishment, composition and appointment of councils and committees, and approval of the diocesan budget and clergy compensation and benefit guidelines. The initiation and consideration of such matters prior to presentation to the Diocesan Convention is governed by the Constitution, Canons, or council or committee rules, guidelines or practices. Action by the Diocesan Convention may be by vote or resolution. Resolutions offered by the bishops may be presented directly to the Diocesan Convention.

However, there are other matters regarded as important in furthering the mission of the Diocese as part of the Church Universal, including appeals for particular action by the General Convention, the expression of a sentiment or view or appeals for individual action that lie outside the Diocesan Convention's ultimate control. These matters are appropriate subjects for a resolution that may be initiated by individual proponents or ministry areas for presentation directly to the Diocesan Convention.

All such resolutions for presentation directly to the Diocesan Convention initially are referred to the Resolutions Committee which consists "of four clergy and three lay persons to whom shall be referred *all resolutions introduced into the Convention dealing with any matter not subject to its control*, and whose duties shall be to consider such resolutions and to report thereon to the Convention." (Canon 3 (5) ) [Emphasis added.]

Rule XVIII of the Rules of Order of the Diocesan Convention further provides:

Any person desiring to propose any *resolution expressing the sentiment or views of the Convention on any matter not subject to its control*, at any session of the Convention, shall submit the same in writing to the Secretary not less than eight weeks before such session, and he or she shall forward it immediately to the Committee on Resolutions. No such resolution, unless so submitted, or included in the report of the committee, shall be considered by the Convention; provided that this rule shall not prohibit consideration of resolutions designed to carry out any recommendation contained in the address of any Bishop before the Convention. Copies of such resolutions as originally submitted under the above provisions shall be mailed to all clergy and lay delegates, entitled to vote at the Convention, not less than four weeks before the meeting of the Convention. [Emphasis added.]

## What path should your resolution follow?

If you are contemplating a resolution calling for particular action by Diocesan Convention, there are a number of options or paths that you should consider initially, before you prepare your resolution. These paths are dependent upon the nature and substance of the action for which your resolution calls.

The following is offered for your assistance as you contemplate a resolution for Diocesan Convention, and is intended to make effective use of diocesan structures which are already in place to address issues of interest to members of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

1. Does your proposed resolution ask Convention to **create, endorse or support a diocesan program or a program endorsed by a diocesan committee, ministry area or organization?** In that case, you must submit your proposal to the appropriate diocesan committee, ministry area or organization for support and action. These committees, ministry areas and organizations are encouraged to review such proposals in light of diocesan and ministry area mission and goals and, if supported, to seek appropriate diocesan communications venues (such as the diocesan web site, *Episcopal Times*, etc.) for publicizing and promoting these efforts.
2. Does your proposed resolution ask Convention to **express its view or take a stand on any issue that is under the control of Diocesan Convention or its committees?** Examples would be stances on clergy compensation, the budgeting process, amendments to the diocesan Constitution or Canons, or the work of any of the ministry areas or organizations of the diocese. In that case, you must submit your proposal to the appropriate diocesan committee, ministry area or organization for support and action. These committees can take more informed and effective action relative to your resolution, and share this work appropriately with Convention through their annual reports.
3. Does your proposed resolution ask Convention for **financial support of any kind, directly or indirectly, through the development or expansion of a diocesan program or goal?** In that case, you must submit your proposal to the appropriate committee or program. If your proposal is approved, the committee will have the opportunity to submit it through the appropriate channels in the budgeting process. Please see pages 30-34 of the Diocesan Directory to determine the most appropriate committee for your proposal.
4. Does your proposed resolution ask Convention to **express its view or take a stand on any issue that is not under Diocesan Convention's control?** Examples would be statements in favor of world peace or against the arms race. In that case, the subject matter of the proposed resolution is appropriate for presentation directly to Diocesan Convention. However, before submitting the proposed resolution, please begin by researching Convention resolutions for the past 3-5 years to be certain you are not repeating stances taken by recent Diocesan Conventions. If your search finds no similar resolutions, please submit your resolution to the Convention Office by **September 7, 2007**, using the attached guidelines. Please note that proposed resolutions which have even minimal financial and/or staffing impact (mailings, publicity) must include confirmation of the availability of diocesan staff support and allocation of funds under an existing diocesan budget line.

Should you have any questions or need clarification regarding these options, a member of the Resolutions Committee will be pleased to call or meet with you to discuss these guidelines. Please contact the Convention Office at (617) 482-4826, extension 406.

## **GUIDELINES FOR FRAMING RESOLUTIONS**

The Resolutions Committee recommends for consideration by the Convention only resolutions that express sentiments or views that are *not* subject to the Convention's control. Any proposal that would have significant implications for the diocesan budget or falls under the purview of an existing diocesan committee or ministry area should be submitted directly to that committee or ministry area.

### **Submission Guidelines:**

1. Resolutions must be submitted by the stated deadline either in written or electronic form. The Resolutions Committee prefers electronic submissions whenever possible because this facilitates the editing process. Submissions should be made to loism@diomass.org. Submitters of resolutions must designate the name, e-mail address and telephone number of a contact person who is authorized to review the recommendations of the Resolutions Committee. *The contact information will be used only by members of the Resolutions Committee and will not be included in the text of the resolution as it is printed in the Delegates' Handbook.*
2. Resolutions must be submitted in the form outlined below:

**Writing a Resolution:** Please use the following form when submitting resolutions to the Resolutions Committee:

- (1) **The Title:** A brief description of what the resolution is about.
- (2) **The Name(s) of the Submitter(s):** A resolution may be submitted by any member of the Convention (canonically resident clergy or lay delegate to the Convention). *If there is more than one submitter, please indicate the name of the contact person and supply the Resolutions Committee with that person's e-mail address and telephone number to facilitate correspondence between the submitters and the Resolutions Committee.*
- (3) **The Resolution** (the "Resolved" clause(s)):
  - In keeping with the practice at the General Convention, "whereas" clauses, should not be used (see Section 4 below.)
  - All clauses in the Resolution should begin with the word "Resolved."
  - If there is more than one clause, "and be it further" or "and therefore be it" should appear at the end of the previous clause, not at the beginning of a new clause.
  - Please avoid the use of "Whereas" clauses. Many good resolutions have failed because of overuse of the "Whereas" clause, which can detract from the intent of the resolution.

- (4) **The Explanation:** A brief explanation providing the rationale for the resolution. The Explanation portion provides a space for the stating the rationale for the resolution and for providing background, clarification, or reasons for supporting the resolution. The Explanation should be as short and concise as possible.
- (5) **The Statement Against the Resolution:**  
The Diocesan Convention in 1997 mandated that the Resolutions Committee provide for statements “against” each resolution as well as the explanation “for” the motion in order to give Convention members opposing positions on each resolution to consider in advance of presentation on the Convention floor. The Resolutions Committee asks the submitters of resolutions to supply a brief “against” statement for each resolution to encourage open and balanced conversation of all its ramifications.
- (6) **The Statement of Requirements to Implement the Resolution:**  
Once they are approved by the Convention, resolutions often require additional procedures and staff resources to carry them out. The Diocesan Council, the Convention Planning Committee and the Bishops have asked submitters of resolutions to include a summary of these requirements for each resolution. This Statement must include estimated time, cost and materials required of the diocese to fulfill all clauses of the resolution.

*Please note that the Resolutions Committee will not consider any resolution that would have significant implications for the diocesan budget or falls under the purview of an existing diocesan committee or ministry area. Any such resolution submitted to the Resolutions Committee will be referred to the appropriate committee or ministry area.*

A Sample Resolution follows.

## SAMPLE RESOLUTION

### **For General Convention to Close Caption All Audiovisual Material**

Name of Submitter(s)

The Diocesan Disability Concerns Committee.

Contact person

The Rev. Roy Brown, Vicar, St. Andrew’s, Brookline; 617-XXX-XXXX; XX@XXX.com

**Resolved,** that the 217th Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts memorialize\* General Convention to support efforts of the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf to require that funding for the preparation of any and all audio-visual materials of the National Church’s programs, agencies or bodies cover the costs of close captioning for deaf and hard of hearing people, and that no such material be prepared without close captioning.

Explanation

Why should our offerings go to support any more material which functions to exclude those with hearing loss? Nearly every parish has people, particularly the elderly as well as those who may be profoundly deaf, who would benefit from the option of turning the closed captioning on, and

it can just be turned off whenever it isn't needed. Besides, national canon law 1.17.5 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities.

Statement Against

Let the film professionals deal with this as they think best. Wouldn't it be a lot of money to benefit only a few? That hardly sounds cost effective.

Statement for Requirements to Implement the Resolution

It should take diocesan staff members 10 minutes or less to email the resolution to the General Convention office.

\**Memorialize* is the technical term used to refer an issue or item to General Convention. A memorial, in this context, is defined as "a statement of facts, often with a petition that something be done, sent to a governing body, official, etc."