

# Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Guidelines for Developing a Resolution for Diocesan Convention - 2023

Deadline for receiving Resolutions is **Friday, September 1, 2023 at 5 pm**

## **Phase One: Draft Your Resolution**

The Resolutions Committee recommends for consideration by the Convention only resolutions that express sentiments or views that are **not** already subject to the Convention's control.

*(Any proposal that would have significant implications for the diocesan budget or that falls under the purview of an existing diocesan commission or committee should be submitted directly to that commission or committee, and the Resolutions Committee will not consider the resolution.)*

Please use the following format when submitting resolutions to the Resolutions Committee. A sample resolution is appended to the end of these instructions.

- (1) **The Title:** A brief description of what the resolution is about.
- (2) **The Name(s) of the Submitter(s):** A resolution must be submitted by a member of the Convention (i.e., 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)):
  - The substance of the resolution appears in the "resolved" clause(s).
  - All clauses in the resolution should begin with the word "Resolved."
  - If there is more than one clause, then the phrase "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.
  - In keeping with the practice at the Episcopal Church's General Convention, preliminary "whereas" clauses should not be used. Many good resolutions have failed because of overuse of the "whereas" clause, which can detract from the focus and intent of the resolution. Information of the kind provided in "whereas" clauses is more appropriate and effective in the succeeding explanation (see Section 4 below).
- (4) **The Explanation For the Resolution:** A brief explanation providing the rationale for the resolution. The explanation portion also provides a space for providing background, and clarification or reasons for supporting the resolution. The explanation should be as short and concise as possible.

(5) **The Statement Against the Resolution:**

In 1997 the Diocesan Convention mandated that the Resolutions Committee provide statements “against” each resolution, in addition to the explanation(s) “for” the resolution, in order to give Convention members some opposing positions to consider in advance of the resolution’s presentation on the Convention floor, and to encourage conversation about its ramifications. The Resolutions Committee asks the submitters of resolutions to seek conversation with *real* critics of the substance of your resolution in order to supply a brief and effective “against” statement for each resolution.

(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 Steering Committee, and the bishops have asked submitters of resolutions to include a summary of these requirements for each resolution. This statement **must** include a good faith estimate of time, financial cost (modest at most), and materials required of the diocese to fulfill all clauses of the resolution. This statement must also include a designated person or persons who will oversee the implementation phase of the resolution.

## **Phase Two: “Interrogate” Your Resolution**

Before submitting your resolution, please revisit it and ask yourself the following four questions. Your answers will help you refine your resolution and make effective use of diocesan structures that are already in place to address issues of interest to members of the Diocese of Massachusetts. ***The Resolutions Committee will not consider any resolution that would have significant implications for the diocesan budget or that falls under the purview of an existing diocesan committee -- any such resolution submitted to the Resolutions Committee will be referred to the appropriate diocesan committee and will not be proposed to Convention by the Resolutions Committee. Additionally, the Resolutions Committee will not consider any resolution that is incomplete or late.***

1. Does your proposed resolution ask Convention to **create, endorse, or support a diocesan program or a program endorsed by a diocesan committee or organization?** If yes, you must submit your proposal to the appropriate diocesan committee or organization for support and action. These committees and organizations are encouraged to review such proposals in light of diocesan mission and goals and, if supported, to seek appropriate diocesan communications venues 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 organizations of the diocese. If yes, you must submit your

proposal to the appropriate diocesan committee 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?** If yes, 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. If you need assistance determining where to direct your proposal, please email Margaret Lias at [mlias@diomass.org](mailto:mlias@diomass.org) for help.
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 a sustainable global economic order. If yes, the subject matter of the proposed resolution is appropriate for presentation directly to Diocesan Convention. *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 talk with you to discuss them. Please contact the Convention Office at [mlias@diomass.org](mailto:mlias@diomass.org).

## **Phase Three: Submit Your Resolution**

Resolutions must be submitted by the stated deadline of Friday, September 1, 2023, by 5:00 pm. Submission is through an online form. **No late submissions will be accepted.** 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.

## **Phase Four: Respond to Resolutions Committee**

After the deadline for submitting resolutions, the Resolutions Committee of the Diocesan Convention will meet and consider all properly submitted resolutions. **A member of the Resolutions Committee will make initial contact with you during the week of September 4, 2023. Please be sure the listed contact person expects to be available to respond promptly to any questions and concerns.** (It is the goal of the Resolutions Committee not to critique the validity of your resolution's intent but to assist you in presenting your resolution to Convention in good order. To that end, the Committee may suggest formal or substantive changes to your resolution.)

## **Phase Five: Attend Zoom Resolutions Discussions and Pre-Convention Forums**

The Resolutions Committee will host one Zoom session on **Tuesday, September 12 at 7:00 pm** that will be open to members of Convention. The goal of this session is for Convention members to ask questions of and provide feedback to the submitters of resolutions. Please be sure that there are submitters of your resolution who are available to participate in the Zoom session.

The Convention Committee will be hosting pre-Convention forums. These forums provide an overview of the business of Convention and include time for discussion of resolutions. Please be sure that there are submitters of your resolution who are available to participate in the pre-Convention forums.

- Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 - 8:30 pm: Central Region
- Thursday, October 5, 7:00 - 8:30 pm: Northern and Western Region
- Friday, October 6, 2:00 - 3:30 pm, Any Region
- Tuesday, October 10, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, Southern Region

## **Sample Resolution**

**A Resolution in Support of a Carbon Tax as a Way to Combat Climate Change** submitted by The Rev. Stephen Ayres, The Rt. Rev. Roy Cederholm, Dr. Anne Ipsen Goldman, Ms. Dawn Tesorero, The Rev. Deborah Warner, The Rev. Dr. Christian Brocato.

**Resolved**, that the 228th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts calls upon all members of congregations and affiliated organizations to support efforts to establish a carbon tax to discourage the use of fossil fuels because of their impact on climate change; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the 228th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts endorses Massachusetts House Bill 2532, an act providing an economic incentive to reduce carbon emissions and to generate tax revenue for the improvement and promotion of public transportation; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the 228th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts directs the Secretary of Convention to convey our support of House Bill 2532 to the governor of Massachusetts and every legislator representing portions of the diocese; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the delegates to the 228th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts are urged to encourage their parishes and individual parishioners to communicate support of a carbon tax to their respective legislators.

#### Explanation

The vast majority of scientists, including climatologists, agree that the emission of carbon dioxide through the consumption of fossil fuels is a major contributing factor causing global warming. A carbon tax would be levied on individuals and companies that use fossil fuel and exacerbate climate changes around the world. These effects of climate change are disproportionately affecting children and adults at risk who live in neighborhoods and nations marked by poverty.

As Christians, we should be good stewards of creation and “this fragile earth our island home.” Indeed as baptized brothers and sisters in Christ who are bound by our Baptismal Covenant, it is our responsibility to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being” (BCP, p. 305).

A carbon tax is the most direct way to discourage overconsumption of carbon. Simple laws of supply and demand indicate that raising the price of carbon will lower our consumption. Using some of the proceeds of a carbon tax to build energy saving public transportation will reduce carbon consumption.

Greenhouse gas emissions, which are driving the earth’s average temperature upward toward increasingly dangerous levels, are examples of “externalities.” “Externalities” involve costs associated with the production and marketing of raw materials, goods, and services that are borne not by the corporations or the consumers that generate them. A carbon tax will help establish the true cost of fossil fuel consumption and provide a financial incentive to change our energy consumption habits.

#### Statements Against

- The dangers of climate change are exaggerated and the benefits too often ignored.
- Taxes discourage economic development and the creation of jobs.
- A carbon tax will place an undue burden on the poor.

#### Implementation Requirements

The Secretary of Convention will convey the Convention’s support of a carbon tax to the governor and the state legislature. The Secretary of Convention will communicate that support to each congregation, urging congregations to also write their legislators in support of a carbon tax.