

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Resolutions Committee Guidelines

Developing a Resolution

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 falls under the purview of an existing diocesan committee should be submitted directly to that committee. 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, "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, 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 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 and to encourage open and balanced 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, 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

Now, before submitting your resolution, 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 falls under the purview of an existing diocesan committee. Any such resolution submitted to the Resolutions Committee will be referred to the appropriate committee.***

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?** In that case, 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. In that case, 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?** 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. If you need assistance determining where to direct your proposal, please email Chelsea Smith at csmith@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. In that case, the subject matter of the proposed resolution is appropriate for presentation directly to Diocesan Convention. If your search finds no similar resolutions, please submit your resolution to the Convention Office by 5:00 p.m. on **Thursday, September 10, 2020**, using the **Phase One guidelines**, above. 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.

Please Note: Resolutions that lack clarity or are poorly interrogated often do not make it to the floor, or if they do, get voted down.

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 them. Please contact the Convention Office at csmith@diomass.org.

Phase Three: Submit Your Resolution

1. Resolutions must be submitted by the stated deadline (Thursday, September 10, 2020, by 5:00 p.m.) using the online form (https://bit.ly/EDOM_resolutions). 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 in Phase One, above.

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 in depth. The committee may contact you with questions about form, content, budgeting, or implementation. Please be open to their questions and ready to respond promptly (**a member of the Resolutions Committee will make initial contact with you during the week of September 14 or 21, 2020— please be sure the listed contact person expects to be available to respond**). 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: Special Zoom Sessions and Pre-Convention Meetings

This year's virtual convention will not allow for discussion of resolutions on the day of convention. Therefore, there will be numerous opportunities to provide feedback on proposed resolutions prior to convention. Initial resolution submissions will be posted for an open comment period from September 24-29, 2020, during which anyone may submit written feedback on submissions. This written feedback will be forwarded to resolution submitters. Following this, there will be two Zoom sessions on September 28 and 29, 2020 at 7:00-8:30 p.m. for voting members of convention, only. At these, voting members may engage in spoken discussion of resolutions. Resolution submitters are strongly encouraged to be present at both Zoom sessions to hear feedback and engage in discussion. Subsequent to the Zoom sessions, submitters will be invited to implement any feedback they felt was constructive and then re-submit the resolution in a final form by October 2, 2020 at 4:00 p.m., which will be the form presented for yeas or nays on the day of Convention, November 7, 2020.

Resolution submitters are also strongly encouraged to attend pre-Convention forums to hear feedback and engage in discussion with the wider diocesan community. Dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, Oct. 6: Cape & Islands and Mt. Hope-Buzzards Bay deaneries
- Wednesday, Oct. 7: Taunton River and South Shore deaneries
- Thursday, Oct. 8: Charles River and Alewife deaneries
- Tuesday, Oct. 13: Neponset River and Boston Harbor deaneries

- Wednesday, Oct. 14: Mystic Valley and North Shore deaneries
- Thursday, Oct. 15: Merrimack Valley and Concord River deaneries
- A daytime forum will also be held on Friday, Oct. 9, 2-3:30 p.m.

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.