

## **General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report**

**Resolution No.:** 2022-A031  
**Title:** Amend the Constitution and Canons Relating to Mergers of Dioceses  
**Proposer:** Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons  
**Topic:** Canons, Constitution, New Dioceses

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2018-A113 Refer a Resolution on Amending the Constitution's Requirement for New Dioceses [First Reading] (Referred)  
2018-A114 Amend Canon I.10 [Of New Dioceses]  
2012-A102 On the Topic of Amending Constitution Article V on Dioceses (Rejected)

### **Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

1991-A029 Amend Constitution Article V.4 [Constitution and Canons of New Dioceses--Second Reading]

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The "direct" resolutions are attached and "indirect" resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.*

# A031 - Amend the Constitution and Canons Relating to Mergers of Dioceses

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** Yes

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**HiA:** HD

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 04 - Governance & Structure

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** No

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention amend Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution to read as follows:

Art.V

**Sec. 4.** Whenever a new Diocese is formed and erected out of an existing Diocese *or out of two or more existing Dioceses or parts of them*, ~~it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese out of which it was formed, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese~~ *the formation process of the newly formed Diocese, including the adoption of its Constitution and Canons, shall be as set forth in the Canons.*

~~Whenever a Diocese is formed out of two or more existing Dioceses, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of that one of the said existing Dioceses to which the greater number of Members of the Clergy shall have belonged prior to the erection of such new Diocese, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese.~~

And be it further

*Resolved*, That Canon I.10 be amended to read as follows:

Can.I.10

**Sec. 1.** Whenever a new Diocese is proposed to be formed within the limits of any Diocese, or by the junction of two or more Dioceses, or parts of *two or more* Dioceses, the Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Standing Committees of the Dioceses involved in the proposed new diocese shall submit for approval to the Conventions of each Diocese involved a joint agreement of union setting forth their agreements, including the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan and other Bishops (if any), the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the new Diocese, and such other matters as may be necessary or proper. Upon approval by the Conventions of each of the involved Dioceses, the joint agreement of union shall be submitted for ratification by the General Convention no less than ninety days prior to the first legislative day of the next meeting of the General Convention.

Can.I.10

**Sec. 2.** Promptly after ratification by the General Convention, the Ecclesiastical Authority of the new Diocese, as set forth in the joint agreement of union, shall call the ~~Primary~~ *first* Convention of the new Diocese, for the purpose of enabling it to organize, and shall fix the time and place of holding the same, such place being within the territorial limits of the new Diocese.

Can.I.10

**Sec. 3.** Whenever one Diocese is about to be divided into two Dioceses, the Convention of such Diocese shall declare which portion *or portions* thereof ~~are~~ *is* to be in the new Diocese, and shall make the same known to the General Convention before the ratification of such division.

Can.I.10

**Sec. 4.** Whenever a new Diocese shall have organized in *first* ~~Primary~~ Convention in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons in such case made and provided, and in the manner prescribed in the previous Sections of this Canon, and shall have chosen a name and acceded to the Constitution of the General Convention in accordance with Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution, and shall have laid before the Executive Council certified copies of the Constitution adopted at its *first* ~~Primary~~ Convention, and the proceedings preparatory to the formation of the proposed new Diocese, such new Diocese shall thereupon be admitted into union with the General Convention.

Can.I.10

**Sec. 5.** In the event of the erection of an Area Mission into a Diocese of this Church, as provided in Article V, Section 1 *of the Constitution*, the Convocation of the Area Mission shall be entitled to elect Deputies to the succeeding General Convention, and also to elect a Bishop. The jurisdiction previously assigned to the Bishop in the Area Mission shall be terminated upon the admission of the new Diocese.

## Can.I.10

**Sec. 6.** When a Diocese and one or more other Dioceses that were formed either by division therefrom or by erection into a Diocese or a Missionary Diocese formed by division therefrom, shall desire to be reunited into one Diocese, the proposed reunion must be initiated by the approval of the Conventions of the involved Dioceses of a joint agreement of union setting forth their agreements, including the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan and other Bishops (if any), provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the new Diocese, and such other matters as may be necessary or proper. If the agreement of the Dioceses is made and the consents of their Conventions are given more than three months before the next meeting of the General Convention, the fact of the agreement and consents shall be certified by the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Secretary of the Convention of each involved Diocese to all the Bishops of the Church having jurisdiction and to the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses; and when the consents of a majority of such Bishops and of a majority of the Standing Committees to the proposed reunion shall have been received, the facts shall be similarly certified to the Secretary of the House of Deputies of the General Convention, and thereupon the reunion shall be considered complete. But if the agreement is made and the consents given within three months of the next meeting of the General Convention, the facts shall be certified instead to the Secretary of the House of Deputies, who shall lay them before the two Houses; and the reunion shall be deemed to be complete when it shall have been approved by a majority vote in the House of Bishops, and in the House of Deputies.

## Can.I.10

**Sec. 7.** When the union of two or more Dioceses or portions of Dioceses or the reunion of the two or more Dioceses shall have been completed, the facts shall be certified to the Presiding Bishop and to the Secretary of the House of Deputies. Thereupon the Presiding Bishop shall notify the Secretary of the House of Bishops of any alteration in the status or style of the Bishop or Bishops concerned, and the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall strike the name of any Diocese that will cease to exist or is being renamed from the roll of Dioceses in union with the General Convention and, if appropriate, amend the name of the newly united Diocese on the roll of Dioceses in union with the General Convention.

## Explanation

These amendments allow Dioceses more flexibility when planning mergers or formation of new Dioceses from Dioceses or portions of one or more Dioceses by deferring to the Canons for the details of the formation process. As the church gains more experience with this process, future changes to the process can be made at one General Convention to facilitate the formation or combination of the Dioceses rather than requiring two General Conventions to approve a change to the Constitution.

The Article V, Section 4 changes proposed in this Resolution build on the efforts of the Standing Commission in the prior two triennia. The intent of the changes is to build greater flexibility into the opportunities dioceses may identify for merger, unification and such. The structure of the revisions is to move more details into the canons, hence the proposed amendments to Canon I.10.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-A113  
**Title:** Refer a Resolution on Amending the Constitution's Requirement for New Dioceses [First Reading]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Referred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:*

**Sec. 4. Whenever a new Diocese is formed and erected out of an existing Diocese, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese out of which it was formed, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese.**

~~Whenever a Diocese is formed out of two or more existing Dioceses, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of that one of the said existing Dioceses to which the greater number of Members of the Clergy shall have belonged prior to the erection of such new Diocese, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese.~~ *the Constitution and Canons of the newly formed Diocese shall become effective upon the effective date of the union.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 771.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-A114  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.10 [Of New Dioceses]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention amend Canon I.10 as follows:*

**Sec. 1.** Whenever a new Diocese ~~shall~~ *is proposed* to be formed within the limits of any Diocese, or by the junction of two (2) or more Dioceses, or parts of Dioceses, and such action shall have been ratified by the General Convention, the Bishop of the Diocese within the limits of which a Diocese is formed, or in case of the junction of two or more Dioceses, or parts of Dioceses, the senior Bishop by consecration, shall thereupon call the Primary Convention of the new Diocese, for the purpose of enabling it to organize, and shall fix the time and place of holding the same, such place being within the territorial limits of the new Diocese. ~~the Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Standing Committees of the Dioceses involved in the proposed new diocese shall submit for approval to the Conventions of each Diocese involved a joint agreement of union setting forth their agreements, including the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan and other Bishops (if any), the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the new Diocese, and such other matters as may be necessary or proper. Upon approval by the Conventions of each of the involved Dioceses, the joint agreement of union shall be submitted for ratification by the General Convention no less than ninety (90) days prior to the first legislative day of the next meeting of the General Convention.~~

**Sec. 2.** ~~Promptly after ratification by the General Convention, the Ecclesiastical Authority of the new Diocese, as set forth in the joint agreement of union, shall call the Primary Convention of the new Diocese, for the purpose of enabling it to organize, and shall fix the time and place of holding the same, such place being within the territorial limits of the new Diocese. In case there should be no Bishop who can call such Primary Convention, pursuant to the foregoing provision, then the duty of calling such Convention for the purpose of organizing and of fixing the time and place of its meeting, shall be vested in the Standing Committee of the Diocese within the limits of which the new one is erected, or in the Standing Committee of the oldest of the Dioceses by the junction of which, or of parts of which, the new Diocese may be formed. And such Standing Committee shall make the call immediately after ratification of the General Convention.~~

**Sec. 3.** Whenever one Diocese is about to be divided into two Dioceses, the Convention of such Diocese shall declare which portion thereof is to be in the new Diocese, and shall make the same known to the General Convention before the ratification of such division.

**Sec. 4.** Whenever a new Diocese shall have organized in Primary Convention in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons in such case

made and provided, and in the manner prescribed in the previous Sections of this Canon, and shall have chosen a name and acceded to the Constitution of the General Convention in accordance with Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution, and shall have laid before the Executive Council certified copies of the Constitution adopted at its Primary Convention, and the proceedings preparatory to the formation of the proposed new Diocese, such new Diocese shall thereupon be admitted into union with the General Convention.

Sec. 5. In the event of the erection of an Area Mission into a Diocese of this Church, as provided in Article V, ~~Sec.~~*Section 1*, the Convocation of the said Area Mission shall be entitled to elect Deputies to the succeeding General Convention, and also to elect a Bishop. The jurisdiction previously assigned to the Bishop in the Area Mission shall be terminated upon the admission of the new Diocese.

Sec. 6 (a) When a Diocese, and ~~another Diocese~~*one or more other Dioceses which has been* that were formed either by division therefrom or by erection into a Diocese or a Missionary Diocese formed by division therefrom, shall desire to be reunited into one Diocese, the proposed reunion must be initiated *by the approval of the Conventions of the involved Dioceses of a joint agreement of union setting forth their agreements, including the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan and other Bishops (if any), provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the new Diocese, and such other matters as may be necessary or proper.* ~~a mutual agreement between the Conventions of the two Dioceses, consented to by the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese.~~ If the said agreement of the Dioceses is made and the consents of their Conventions are given more than three months before the next meeting of the General Convention, the fact of the agreement and consents shall be certified by the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Secretary of the Convention of each *involved* Diocese to all the Bishops of the Church having jurisdiction and to the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses; and when the consents of a majority of such Bishops and of a majority of the Standing Committees to the proposed reunion shall have been received, the facts shall be similarly certified to the Secretary of the House of Deputies of the General Convention, and thereupon the reunion shall be considered complete. But if the agreement is made and the consents given within three months of the next meeting of the General Convention, the facts shall be certified instead to the Secretary of the House of Deputies, who shall lay them before the two Houses; and the reunion shall be deemed to be complete when it shall have been ~~sanctioned~~*approved* by a majority vote in the House of Bishops, and in the House of Deputies ~~voting by orders.~~

(b) ~~The Bishop of the parent Diocese shall be the Bishop, and the Bishop of the junior Diocese shall be the Bishop Coadjutor, of the reunited Diocese; but if there be a vacancy in the Episcopate of either Diocese, the Bishop of the other Diocese shall be the Bishop, and the Bishop Coadjutor if there be one shall be the Bishop Coadjutor, of the reunited Diocese.~~

(c) ~~Sec. 7~~ When the union of two (2) or more Dioceses or portions of Dioceses or the reunion of the two (2) or more Dioceses shall have been completed, the facts shall be certified to the Presiding Bishop and to the Secretary of the House

**of Deputies. Thereupon the Presiding Bishop shall notify the Secretary of the House of Bishops of any alteration in the status or style of the Bishop or Bishops concerned, and the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall strike the name of the ~~junior~~any Diocese that will cease to exist or is being renamed from the roll of Dioceses in union with the General Convention; and, if appropriate, amend the name of the newly united Diocese on the roll of Dioceses in union with the General Convention.**

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1114-1116.





**Resolution Number:** 2012-A102  
**Title:** On the Topic of Amending Constitution Article V on Dioceses  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected  
**Text of Resolution:**

**[Resolved, that Canon V.4. be amended to read as follows:]**

Sec. 4. Whenever a new Diocese is formed and erected out of an existing Diocese, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese out of which it was formed, except as local circumstances may prevent, until ~~the same be altered in accordance with such~~ *the convention of the new diocese adopts its own* Constitution and Canons ~~by the Convention of the new Diocese.~~ Whenever a Diocese is formed out of two or more existing Dioceses, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of that one of the ~~said~~ existing Dioceses to which the greater number of Members of the Clergy shall have belonged prior to the erection of ~~such~~ *the new Diocese*, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the ~~same be altered in accordance with such~~ *convention of the new Diocese adopts its own* Constitution and Canons ~~adopted by the Convention of the new Diocese.~~