

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-A080  
**Title:** Amend Canon III.11.3 and 4 reducing time for Consents to Bishop Elections from 120 to 90 days  
**Proposer:** Task Force to Assist the Office of Pastoral Development  
**Topic:** Appointments/Elections, Bishops, Canons

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

2018-A159 On the Topic of Amending Canons III.11.3 and III.11.4 [Consent Process] (Rejected)  
2012-D048 Amend Title III Canons as follows:  
1997-A011 Amend Canon III.22.4 [Date of an Episcopal Election and General Convention]

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

1997-A012 Amend Canon III.22.6 [Consents to an Episcopal Election]

*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.*

# A080 - Amend Canon III.11.3 and 4 reducing time for Consents to Bishop Elections from 120 to 90 days

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Task Force to Assist the Office of Pastoral Development

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

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

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**HiA:** HB

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 15 - Ministry

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** No

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## Resolution Text

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

That Canon III.11.3 be amended as follows:

Canon III.11.3

### Sec. 3

a. The Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop has been elected shall by its President, or by some person or persons specially appointed, immediately send to the Presiding Bishop and to the Standing Committees of the several Dioceses a certificate of the election by the Secretary of Convention of the Diocese, bearing a statement of receipt of:

1. evidence of the Bishop-elect's having been duly ordered Deacon and Priest;
2. certificates from a licensed medical doctor and licensed psychiatrist, authorized by the Presiding Bishop, that they have thoroughly examined the Bishop-elect as to that person's medical, psychological and psychiatric condition and have not discovered any reason why the person would not be fit to undertake the work for which the person has been chosen. Forms and procedures agreed to by the Presiding Bishop and The Church Pension Fund shall be used for this purpose; and

3. evidence that a testimonial in the following form was signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention:

**We, whose names are hereunder written, fully sensible of how important it is that the Sacred Order and Office of a Bishop should not be unworthily conferred, and firmly persuaded that it is our duty to bear testimony on this solemn occasion without partiality, do, in the presence of Almighty God, testify that we know of no impediment on account of which the Reverend A.B. ought not to be ordained to that Holy Office. We do, moreover, jointly and severally declare that we believe the Reverend A.B. to have been duly and lawfully elected and to be of such sufficiency in learning, of such soundness in the Faith, and of such godly character as to be able to exercise the Office of a Bishop to the honor of God and the edifying of the Church, and to be a wholesome example to the flock of Christ.**

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

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The Presiding Bishop, without delay, shall notify every Bishop of this Church exercising jurisdiction of the Presiding Bishop's receipt of the certificates mentioned in this Section and request a statement of consent or withholding of consent *to be submitted to the Presiding Bishop within not more than ninety days*. Each Standing Committee, in not more than ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *ninety* days after the sending by the electing body of the certificate of the election, shall respond by sending the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected either the testimonial of consent in the form set out in paragraph (b) of this Section or written notice of its refusal to give consent. If a majority of the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses consents to the ordination of the Bishop-elect, the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected shall then forward the evidence of the consent, with the other necessary certificates required in this Section (documents described in Sec. 3.a.2 of this Canon), to the Presiding Bishop. If the Presiding Bishop receives sufficient statements to indicate a majority of ~~these~~ *the Bishops exercising jurisdiction* consent to the ordination, the Presiding Bishop shall, without delay, notify the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected and the Bishop-elect of the consent.

**b.** Evidence of the consent of each Standing Committee shall be a testimonial in the following words, signed by a majority of all the members of the Committee:

**We, being a majority of all the members of the Standing Committee of \_\_\_\_\_, and having been duly convened, fully sensible how important it is that the Sacred Order and Office of a Bishop should not be unworthily conferred, and firmly persuaded that it is our duty to bear testimony on this solemn occasion without partiality, do, in the presence of Almighty God, testify that we know of no impediment on account of which the Reverend A.B. ought not to be ordained to that Holy Order. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.**

(Signed)

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c. Testimonials required of the Standing Committee by this Title must be signed by a majority of the whole Committee, at a meeting duly convened, except that testimonials may be executed in counterparts, any of which may be delivered by facsimile or other electronic transmission, each of which shall be deemed an original.

And be it further.

*Resolved*, that Canon III.11.4 be amended as follows:

**Sec. 4.** In case a majority of all the Standing Committee of the Dioceses do not consent to the ordination of the Bishop-elect within ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *ninety* days from the date of the notification of the election by the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop was elected, or in case a majority of all the Bishops exercising jurisdiction do not consent within ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *ninety* days from the date of notification to them by the Presiding Bishop of the election, the Presiding Bishop shall declare the election null and void and shall give notice to the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop was elected and to the Bishop-elect. The Convention of the Diocese may then proceed to a new election.

## **Explanation**

The time between the election of a bishop for a diocese and the ordination of the Bishop-elect needs to be long enough to obtain the necessary consents from a majority of bishops with jurisdiction and Standing Committees, long enough to allow for the ending of whatever role the Bishop-elect currently holds, long enough for the Bishop-elect and family to relocate, if necessary, and long enough to make the necessary preparations for the ordination and celebration. However, if that period is too long, the Bishop-elect and family, the people in the place the Bishop-elect currently serves, the electing diocese and the departing Bishop and family are in a state of limbo where no one can move forward to whatever is next. A balancing of these concerns is needed to determine the right amount of time.

The world and its use of technology has changed significantly since 1901 when the Church set the time within which consents to the elections of bishops must be in at three months for bishops and six months for Standing Committees. In 1994 the time for consents of both bishops and Standing Committees was changed to four months (and to 120 days in 1997). Gathering the consents and required certifications prior to the ordination of a Bishop-elect is the responsibility of the Presiding Bishop and the Standing Committee of the electing Diocese, and is facilitated by the General Convention Office. Beginning in 2019 bishops have been able to provide their consents online through a software module developed by the General Convention Office. Currently, the consents from bishops are actually received in roughly sixty days (two months). As of August 2019 Standing Committees can submit information on consents electronically, thus eliminating the need to provide for submitting consents by mail or delivery service from across the United States and from the other countries in which dioceses are located. The Task Force to Assist the Office of Pastoral

Development recommends that the reason to not shorten the time period for Standing Committees to less than ninety days (three months) is that some Standing Committees do not meet every month, especially during the summer months.

The Task Force believes that with the ability to provide consents electronically reducing the time within which bishops with jurisdiction and Standing Committees must provide their consents from 120 days (four months) to ninety-days (three months) will allow sufficient time for bishops and Standing Committees while reducing the time that everyone is in limbo.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-A159  
**Title:** On the Topic of Amending Canons III.11.3 and III.11.4 [Consent Process]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected  
**Text of Resolution:**

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That Canon III.11.3(a) (third paragraph) and Canon III.11.4 are hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 3 (a) (third paragraph)

The Presiding Bishop, without delay, shall notify every Bishop of this Church exercising jurisdiction of the Presiding Bishop's receipt of the certificates mentioned in this Section and request a statement of consent or withholding of consent *to be submitted to the Presiding Bishop within not more than sixty days*. Each Standing Committee, in not more than ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *sixty* days after the sending by the electing body of the certificate of the election, shall respond by sending the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected either the testimonial of consent in the form set out in paragraph (b) of this Section or written notice of its refusal to give consent. If a majority of the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses consents to the ordination of the Bishop-elect, the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected shall then forward the evidence of the consent, with the other necessary certificates required in this Section (documents described in Sec. 3(a)(2) of this Canon), to the Presiding Bishop. If the Presiding Bishop receives sufficient statements to indicate a majority of ~~those~~ *the* Bishops *exercising jurisdiction* consent to the ordination, the Presiding Bishop shall, without delay, notify the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected and the Bishop-elect of the consent.

Sec. 4 In case a majority of all the Standing Committees of the Dioceses do not consent to the ordination of the Bishop-elect within ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *sixty* days from the date of the notification of the election by the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop was elected, or in case a majority of all the Bishops exercising jurisdiction do not consent within ~~one hundred and twenty~~ *sixty* days from the date of notification to them by the Presiding Bishop of the election, the Presiding Bishop shall declare the election null and void and shall give notice to the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop was elected and to the Bishop-elect. The Convention of the Diocese may then proceed to a new election.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-D048  
**Title:** Amend Title III Canons as follows: Canon III.11.3 [Of the Ordination of Bishops] Canon III.11.4(a) [Documents to Be Transmitted] Canon III.11.9(b)-(c) [Objections to the Election Process] Canon III.11.10(c) [Election of Missionary Bishops]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon III.11.3, Canon III.11.4(a), Canon III.11.9(b-c) and Canon III.11.10(c)(4-6) be amended to read as follows:*

**Canon III.11.3**

**Sec. 3.**

~~(a) When a Diocese desires the ordination of a Bishop-elect, if the date of the election occurs within one hundred twenty days before a meeting of the General Convention, the Standing Committee of the Diocese shall, by its President, or by some person or persons specially appointed, forward to the Secretary of the House of Deputies evidence of the election of the Bishop-elect by the Convention of the Diocese, together with evidence that the Bishop-elect has been duly ordered Deacon and Priest, evidence of acceptance of election, and a testimonial signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention, and a summary of biographical information relating to the Bishop-elect, in the following words:~~

~~We, whose names are hereunder written, fully sensible of how important it is that the Sacred Order and Office of a Bishop should not be unworthily conferred, and firmly persuaded that it is our duty to bear testimony on this solemn occasion without partiality, do, in the presence of Almighty God, testify that we know of no impediment on account of which the Reverend A.B. ought not to be ordained to that Holy Office. We do, moreover, jointly and severally declare that we believe the Reverend A.B. to have been duly and lawfully elected and to be of such sufficiency in learning, of such soundness in the Faith, and of such godly character as to be able to exercise the Office of a Bishop to the honor of God and the edifying of the Church, and to be a wholesome example to the flock of Christ.~~

~~(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~The Secretary of the Convention shall certify upon this testimonial that it has been signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention.~~

~~(b) The Standing Committee shall also forward to the Secretary of the General Convention, with the testimonial and other documents, certificates from a licensed medical doctor and licensed psychiatrist, appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority with the approval of the Presiding Bishop, that they have thoroughly examined the Bishop-elect as to that person's medical, psychological and psychiatric condition and have not discovered any reason why the person would not be fit to undertake the work for which the person has been chosen. Forms and procedures agreed to by the Presiding Bishop and The Church Pension Fund shall be used for this purpose.~~

~~(c) The Secretary of the House of Deputies shall present the testimonials to the House, and if the House consents to the ordination of the Bishop-elect, notice of its consent,~~

~~certified by the President and the Secretary of the House, together with the testimonials, shall be sent to the House of Bishops.~~

~~(d) If a majority of the Bishops of this Church exercising jurisdiction consent to the ordination, the Presiding Bishop shall, without delay, notify the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing and the Bishop-elect of the consent.~~

**Canon III.11.4(a)**

**Sec.43.**

~~(a) If the date of the election of a Bishop occurs more than one hundred and twenty days before the meeting of the General Convention,~~The Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop has been elected shall by its President, or by some person or persons specially appointed, immediately send to the Presiding Bishop and to the Standing Committees of the several Dioceses a certificate of the election by the Secretary of Convention of the Diocese, bearing a statement that evidence of the Bishop-elect's having been duly ordered Deacon and Priest as to the Bishop-elect's medical, psychological and psychiatric examination required in Sec. 3(b) of this Canon have been received and that a testimonial signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention must also be delivered in the following form:

We, whose names are hereunder written, fully sensible of how important it is that the Sacred Order and Office of a Bishop should not be unworthily conferred, and firmly persuaded that it is our duty to bear testimony on this solemn occasion without partiality, do, in the presence of Almighty God, testify that we know of no impediment on account of which the Reverend A.B. ought not to be ordained to that Holy Office. We do, moreover, jointly and severally declare that we believe the Reverend A.B. to have been duly and lawfully elected and to be of such sufficiency in learning, of such soundness in the Faith, and of such godly character as to be able to exercise the Office of a Bishop to the honor of God and the edifying of the Church, and to be a wholesome example to the flock of Christ.

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

The Presiding Bishop, without delay, shall notify every Bishop of this Church exercising jurisdiction of the Presiding Bishop's receipt of the certificates mentioned in this Section and request a statement of consent or withholding of consent. Each Standing Committee, in not more than one hundred and twenty days after the sending by the electing body of the certificate of the election, shall respond by sending the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected either the testimonial of consent in the form set out in paragraph (b) of this Section or written notice of its refusal to give consent. If a majority of the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses consents to the ordination of the Bishop-elect, the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected shall then forward the evidence of the consent, with the other necessary documents described in Sec. 3(a) of this Canon, to the Presiding Bishop. If the Presiding Bishop receives sufficient statements to indicate a majority of those Bishops consents to the ordination, the Presiding Bishop shall, without delay, notify the Standing Committee of the Diocese for which the Bishop is elected and the Bishop-elect of the consent.

**Canon III.11.9(b-c)**

~~(b) If the election has taken place within one hundred and twenty days before a meeting of the General Convention, the report shall be sent with the evidence of election and testimonials as provided in Section 3(a) of this Canon.~~



~~(e) If the election has taken place more than one hundred and twenty days before the meeting of the General Convention,~~ The report of the Court of Review shall be sent to the Standing Committees of the several Dioceses, with the Certificate of the Secretary of the electing Convention relating to consent to ordain. Likewise, the Presiding Bishop shall include the report in the communication to the Bishops exercising jurisdiction.

**Canon III.11.10(c)(4-6)**

~~(4) When a Diocese, entitled to the choice of a Bishop, shall elect as its Bishop Diocesan, or as its Bishop Coadjutor, or as a Bishop Suffragan; a Missionary Bishop of this Church, if such election shall have taken place within one hundred and twenty days before a meeting of the General Convention, evidence thereof shall be laid before each House of the General Convention, and the concurrence of each House, and its express consent, shall be necessary to the validity of said election, and shall complete the same, so that the Bishop thus elected shall be thereafter the Bishop of the Diocese which has elected such Bishop.~~

~~(5) If the election of the Missionary Bishop has taken place more than one hundred and twenty days before a meeting of the General Convention, the report shall be sent with the evidence of election and testimonials as provided in Section 3(a) of this Canon.~~

~~(6) If the election of the Missionary Bishop has taken place more than one hundred twenty days before a meeting of the General Convention,~~ the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing shall give duly certified evidence of the election to every Bishop of this Church having jurisdiction, and to the Standing Committee of every Diocese. On receiving notice of the concurrence of a majority of such Bishops and of the Standing Committees in the election, and their express consent thereto, the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing shall transmit notice thereof to the Ecclesiastical Authority of every Diocese within the United States. This notice shall state what Bishops and which Standing Committees have consented to the election. On receiving this notice the Presiding Bishop shall certify to the Secretary of the House of Bishops the altered status and style of the Bishop so elected. The Standing Committee of such Diocese shall transmit to every Congregation thereof, to be publicly read therein, a notice of the election thus completed, and also cause public notice thereof to be given in such other way as they may think proper.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 725-728.



**Resolution Number:** 1997-A011  
**Title:** Amend Canon III.22.4 [Date of an Episcopal Election and General Convention]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon III.22.4.(a) is hereby amended to read as follows:*

**Sec. 4(a) If the date of the election of a Bishop occurs more than ~~three months~~ 120 days before the meeting of the General Convention, the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing shall by its President, or by some person or persons specially appointed, immediately send to *the Presiding Bishop and to the Standing Committees of the several Dioceses* a certificate of the election by the Secretary of Convention of the Diocese, bearing a statement that evidence of the Bishop-elect's having been duly ordered Deacon and Priest and the certificates as to the Bishop-elect's medical, psychological and psychiatric examination required in Sec. 3(b) of this Canon have been received and that a testimonial in the form set out in Sec. 3(a) of this Canon has been signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention. *The Presiding Bishop, without delay, shall notify every Bishop of this Church exercising jurisdiction of the Presiding Bishop's receipt of the certificates mentioned in this Section and request a statement of consent or withholding of consent. Each Standing Committee, in not more than 120 days after the sending by the electing Diocese of the certificate of the election, shall respond by sending the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing either the testimonial of consent in the form set out in paragraph (b) of this Section or written notice of its refusal to give consent. If a majority of the Standing Committees of all the Dioceses consents to the ordination of the Bishop-elect, the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing shall then forward the evidence of the consent, with the other necessary documents described in Sec. 3(a) and (b) of this Canon, to the Presiding Bishop, who shall immediately communicate them to every Bishop of this Church exercising jurisdiction. If the Presiding Bishop receives sufficient statements to indicate a majority of those Bishops consents to the ordination, the Presiding Bishop shall, without delay, notify the Standing Committee of the Diocese electing and the Bishop-elect of the consent.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), pp. 571-572.