

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-A112  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 on Eligibility and Term of Office of the Presiding Bishop  
**Proposer:** Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons  
**Topic:** Canons, Presiding Bishop

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### Directly Related: (Attached)

2006-D010 Amend Canon I.2.2 [Of the Presiding Bishop]  
2000-A117 Amend Canon I.2.2 [Commencement of Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]  
1994-A130 Amend Canon I.2.2 [Of the Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]  
1985-A152 Amend Canon I.2.2 [Retirement age of the Presiding Bishop]  
1976-A006 Amend Canon I.2.2 [Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]

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

None

*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.*

# A112 - Amend Canon I.2.2 on Eligibility and Term of Office of the Presiding Bishop

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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:** HB

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 02 - Constitution & Canons

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** Yes

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## Resolution Text

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

That the 80th General Convention amend Canon I.2.2 to read as follows.

### Sec. 2.

~~a. The term of office of the Presiding Bishop, when elected according to the provisions of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution, shall be nine years, beginning the first day of the month of November following the close of the Convention at which the Presiding Bishop is elected, unless attaining the age of seventy-two years before the term shall have been completed; in that case the Presiding Bishop shall resign the office to the General Convention which occurs nearest to the date of attaining such age. At that Convention a successor shall be elected, and shall assume office on the first day of the month of November following the close of that Convention. This subsection a. applies to elections of the Presiding Bishop that occur according to the provisions of the first paragraph of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution.~~

*1. Electing Convention. A meeting of the General Convention at which a Presiding Bishop is elected shall be called an "Electing Convention."*

*2. Eligibility - Age. A Bishop who is expected to be 65 years of age or younger on December 31 of the year of the Electing Convention may be elected Presiding*

*Bishop. No Bishop who is expected to reach 66 years of age on or before December 31 of the year of the Electing Convention may be elected Presiding Bishop.*

*3. Commencement of term. The term of office of the Presiding Bishop shall begin on the 91st day following the adjournment of the Electing Convention, or immediately upon the death, resignation, retirement, or disability of the Presiding Bishop.*

*4. Length of term. If the Presiding Bishop is 62 years of age or younger on December 31 of the year of the Electing Convention, the term of office shall terminate at the end of the 90th day after the adjournment of the third successive regular meeting of the General Convention following the Electing Convention. If the Presiding Bishop is 63, 64, or 65 years of age on December 31 of the year of the Electing Convention, the term of office shall terminate at the end of the 90th day after the adjournment of the second successive regular meeting of the General Convention following the Electing Convention.*

*5. Exception. Notwithstanding subsection (4), in the event that the regular meeting of the General Convention at which the Presiding Bishop's successor is expected to be elected is postponed beyond the date originally set in accordance with Canon I.1.14.c, and if as a result of such postponement the Presiding Bishop attains the age of 72 years before a successor can be elected and take office, then the Presiding Bishop may serve until the successor takes office, regardless of having attained the age of 72 years, but no later than 90 days after the adjournment of the next meeting of the General Convention.; ~~except that when~~*

**b.** *When a Presiding Bishop has been elected by the House of Bishops to fill a vacancy, as provided for in the second paragraph of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution, the Presiding Bishop so elected shall take office immediately.*

## **Explanation**

The postponement of the 80th General Convention resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic revealed a complication in the current canonical definition of the term of office of the Presiding Bishop. Unlike other terms of office defined in the canons to expire at the conclusion of a regular meeting of the General Convention, terms which automatically continue should a regular meeting of the General Convention be postponed, current Canon I.2.2 provides that the Presiding Bishop's term "shall be nine years" beginning November 1. Under this current provision, the term expires on October 31, no matter what and regardless of whether a new Presiding Bishop has been elected. Should some unforeseen crisis, such as a resurgent COVID-19 variant pandemic, require the postponement of the 81st meeting of the General Convention (an electing convention) from 2024 to 2025, for example, the Presiding Bishop's term will have expired on October 31, 2024, leaving the office vacant for a year. This proposed amendment redefines the term of office of the Presiding Bishop so that its expiration is tied to a regular meeting of the General Convention (usually triennial) and extends the expiration date of the term, through the postponed regular meeting of the General Convention - if such a meeting should be postponed

Study of the canon also revealed a need for clarification of the age at which a Bishop is no longer eligible to be elected Presiding Bishop. Article II, Section 9 of the Constitution requires all Bishops to “resign from all jurisdiction” upon attaining the age of 72. The Presiding Bishop by virtue of the office has jurisdiction over “Congregations in foreign lands” including the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and the Church in Micronesia (see Canon I.15.6), and must, under the Constitution, resign that jurisdiction when reaching age 72. The practice has been to elect as Presiding Bishop a Bishop who can serve the full nine year term before reaching age 72, although the current canon does not require this. Indeed, under the current canon, a Bishop could be elected and serve only a single interval (typically three years) between regular meetings of the General Convention before being required to resign because of age. It is recommended that, given the time and expense of the Presiding Bishop election process, and the impact of a change in Presiding Bishops on many aspects of the Church’s life, no Bishop should be elected who can serve fewer than two full intervals between regular meetings of the General Convention before being required to resign because of age.

A table illustrating the operation of the proposed amended canon follows.

[The chart illustrating this is available in supporting documents]

There is no change to the existing provisions in this Canon that specify the commencement of term when there is a vacancy in the office of Presiding Bishop due to the death, resignation, retirement or disability of the incumbent Presiding Bishop.



**Resolution Number:** 2006-D010  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 [Of the Presiding Bishop]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 75th General Convention amend the first sentence of Canon I.2.2 to read as follows:*

**Sec. 2** The term of office of the Presiding Bishop, when elected according to the provisions of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution, shall be nine years, beginning the first day of the month of November following the close of the Convention at which the Presiding Bishop is elected, unless attaining the age of ~~seventy~~*seventy-two* years before the term shall have been completed; in that case the Presiding Bishop shall resign the office to the General Convention which occurs nearest to the date of attaining such age. At that Convention a successor shall be elected, and shall assume office on the first day of the month of November following the close of that Convention or immediately upon the death, retirement, or disability of the Presiding Bishop; except that when a Presiding Bishop has been elected by the House of Bishops to fill a vacancy, as provided for in the second paragraph of Article I., Section 3 of the Constitution, the Presiding Bishop so elected shall take office immediately.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 209-210.



**Resolution Number:** 2000-A117  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 [Commencement of Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved*, That Canon I.2.2 be amended to read as hereinafter set forth, with the provision that the term of office of the Presiding Bishop serving on the effective date of this amendment shall terminate not later than the date the successor assumes office:

**Sec. 2.** The term of office of the Presiding Bishop, when elected according to the provisions of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution, shall be nine years, beginning the first day of the ~~calendar year~~ *month of November* following the close of the Convention at which the Presiding Bishop is elected, unless attaining the age of seventy years before the term shall have been completed; in that case the Presiding Bishop shall resign the office to the General Convention which occurs nearest to the date of attaining such age. At that Convention a successor shall be elected, and shall assume office ~~three months thereafter~~ *on the first day of the month of November following the close of that Convention* or immediately upon the death, retirement, or disability of the Presiding Bishop; except that when a Presiding Bishop has been elected by the House of Bishops to fill a vacancy, as provided for in the second paragraph of Article I., Section 3 of the Constitution, the Presiding Bishop so elected shall take office immediately.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 632.



**Resolution Number:** 1994-A130

**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 [Of the Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]

**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred

**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon I.2.2 be amended by striking the words "twelve years" in the third line thereof and substituting in lieu thereof the words "nine years".*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 255.



**Resolution Number:** 1985-A152

**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 [Retirement age of the Presiding Bishop]

**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended

**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the first sentence of Title I, Canon 2, Section 2, be amended so that as amended, the first sentence shall read as follows:*

**Sec. 2.** The term of office of the Presiding Bishop, when elected according to the provisions of Article I., Section 3, of the Constitution shall be twelve years, beginning ~~three months the~~ *first day of the calendar year following the election after the close of the convention at which he is elected, unless he shall attain the age of ~~sixty-five~~ seventy years before his term shall have been completed; in that case, he shall resign his office to the General Convention which occurs nearest to the date of his attaining such age; these provisions if enacted to be effective as of the date of its passage.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 428.



**Resolution Number:** 1976-A006  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.2.2 [Presiding Bishop's Term of Office]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon I.2.2 be amended to read as follows:*

**Sec. 2. The term of office of the Presiding Bishop, when elected according to the provisions of Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution, shall be twelve years, beginning three months after the close of the Convention at which he is elected, unless he shall attain the age of sixty-five years before his term shall have been completed: in that case he shall resign his office to the General Convention which occurs in or next after the year of his attaining such age. At that Convention his successor shall be elected, and shall assume office three months thereafter or immediately upon the death, retirement, or disability of the Presiding Bishop: except that when a Presiding Bishop has been elected by the House of Bishops to fill a vacancy, as provided for in the second paragraph of Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution, the Presiding Bishop so elected shall take office immediately.**

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 1976* (New York: General Convention, 1977), p. C-35.