

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D022
Title: Create a Task Force on the Legislative Process
Proposer: Haight, Mr. Scott
Topic: General Convention, Rules of Order, Structure

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A138 Amend House of Deputies Rule VIII [Legislative Committees]
2022-A301 Special Rules of Order for the House of Deputies
2022-D027 Encourage the Use of Virtual Meetings in Church Governance

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 2022, 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](#).

D022 - Create a Task Force on the Legislative Process

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Haight, Mr. Scott

Endorsed by: Fleener, Jr, Mr. William, Russell, Ms. Laura

Supported by: The Deputies of Color

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$40,000.00

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: Yes

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: Yes

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 01 - Joint Rules of Order

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention authorize a Task Force on the General Convention Legislative Process to assess the Rules of Order, and whose mandate includes but is not limited to (1) assessing the changes to the legislative process first introduced at the 80th General Convention, particularly the process of pre-Convention online legislative committee meetings and hearings; (2) review the technology used for legislative committees, determining the best technology for maximum participation by all members of both Houses; (3) making recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements and the General Convention Office for the legislative process for the 82nd General Convention; (4) proposing amendments to the Rules of Order for the House of Bishops and / or the House of Deputies, and / or the Joint Rules for the House of Bishops and House of Deputies to further refine the legislative process in light of the findings of the Task Force; (5) develop a plan for continual review of the Rules of Order for the House of Bishops and / or the House of Deputies, and / or the Joint Rules for the House of Bishops and House of Deputies by a diverse committee; and (6) developing a plan for training deputies on the Rules of Order; and be it further

Resolved, That the membership of this Task Force include up to four bishops, four clergy, and four lay persons, each of whom shall have served as bishop or deputy at least one prior General Convention; at least nine members shall have served at least three prior General Conventions; at least six members shall have served on a legislative committee at the 80th and/or 81st General Conventions, and at least six members shall have served on a legislative committee prior to the 80th General Convention; at least three members shall have chaired a legislative committee; and at least one member shall have served on the Dispatch of Business Committee; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Officer of the General Convention appoint a member of the staff of the General Convention Office to serve as consultant to the task force; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force begin its work no later than December 1, 2024, and submit a report to the 82nd General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force consult widely with bishops and deputies, including former deputies; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request \$40,000 be allocated for the implementation of this resolution.

Explanation

Online legislative committee meetings and hearings for the 80th General Convention were introduced of necessity during the COVID pandemic. At that convention, the House of Deputies amended its Rules of Order to permit electronic meetings, including meetings prior to the General Convention (Resolution 2022-A138). Soon after the 80th General Convention, a decision was made to utilize the process of online legislative committee meetings for the 81st General Convention.

Deputies to the 80th General Convention were invited to complete a survey about their experience of the electronic meeting format and other changes to the legislative process. However, results of that survey were not widely circulated.

After the 80th General Convention, the President of the House of Deputies appointed a small Special Committee on the Rules of Order of the House of Deputies. The committee proposed that all committee work be completed prior to arriving at the General Convention, going beyond the stated intent of Resolution 2022-A138 that legislative committees could begin taking action prior to General Convention. The special committee's report acknowledged some of the challenges of online committee meetings, including pre-Convention workload for deputies and bishops, as well as time-zone differences, and technology concerns, but it did not make any recommendations to mitigate those concerns. The committee did not report any consultation with the House of Bishops, even though House of Bishops legislative committees are integral to the legislative process.

This resolution calls for a task force of deputies and bishops to work together to assess the advantages and challenges of pre-convention committee meetings and hearings, as well as

other aspects of the legislative process, and to make recommendations to refine the legislative process.



Resolution Number: 2022-A138
Title: Amend House of Deputies Rule VIII [Legislative Committees]
Legislative Action Taken: Adopted as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the House of Deputies amend House of Deputies Rule VIII.A.6 and VIII.B to read as follows:

VIII: Legislative Committees

A. General Rules on Legislative Committees

6. Committee Meetings

i. Meetings may be held in person or electronically in a way that all members can hear participate with all other members.

a. All electronic meetings shall be livestreamed and recorded, except for those noted in Rule VIII.A.6.x A-6.X

~~ii. i. The Secretary of the House will arrange a meeting space for each Legislative Committee. The Secretary of the House of Deputies will arrange logistics for each Legislative Committee meeting, whether conducted in person or electronically.~~

~~iii. ii. The meeting location for each Legislative Committee will be made available to the House and the public by the Secretary of the House. Information about how to attend meetings for each Legislative Committee will be made available to the House and the public by the Secretary of the House.~~

~~iv. iii. The President may direct any Legislative Committee to convene and consider matters referred to it prior to the time set for legislative committee meetings at the General Convention site by the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements. Legislative Committees may convene and consider matters referred to them prior to the time set for legislative committee meetings at the General Convention site by the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements. Such meetings may be held electronically in a way that all members can hear participate with all other members.~~

~~iv v. A meeting may be called by the Chair or by a majority of the members.~~

~~v-vi. In accordance with Canon V.3.2 a quorum will be a majority of all the members.~~

~~vi; vii. Legislative Committees may, but are not required to, meet with a parallel House of Bishops Legislative Committee assigned to consider the same matter or matters. The House of Deputies Legislative Committee must always vote separately on the final action on any matter referred to it.~~

~~vii-viii. Only members of the Legislative Committee may speak during meetings, unless the Chair invites other persons to speak.~~

~~vii-ix. All meetings of Legislative Committees will be open to the public unless the Committee votes to hold a closed meeting.~~

~~ix x. A Legislative Committee may hold a closed meeting upon a two-thirds vote of the members present. Any motion to enter a closed session must specify the topic to be discussed. No final action on a matter referred to the Committee may be taken during a closed meeting.~~

~~x-xi. Before entering a closed session to discuss a Resolution, the Committee must first hold a public hearing on the Resolution.~~

B. Legislative Committee Hearings

1. Hearing Required

i. Legislative Committees must hold a hearing on every Resolution, Memorial, and other matter referred to them for action or proposed by them before taking final action. *Such hearings may be held in person or electronically in a way that enables all participants to hear participate with all speakers.*

ii. Legislative Committees should try to schedule all Resolutions, Memorials, or other matters on the same subject for hearing at the same time.

iii. ~~Hearings may be held by Legislative Committees as early as two days before the first legislative day of General Convention.~~ *Hearings may be held by Legislative Committees as early as 90 days before the first legislative day of General Convention.*

2. Notice of Hearings

~~i. Two Days before the First Legislative Day. For hearings to be held two days prior to the first legislative day of General Convention, a Legislative Committee will deliver a Notice of Hearing to the Secretary of the House of Deputies at least seven days before the hearing. Upon receipt the Notice of Hearing will be posted by the Secretary on the General Convention website.~~

i. For hearings to be held between 90 and 14 days prior to the first legislative day of General Convention, a Legislative Committee will deliver a Notice of Hearing to the Secretary of the House of Deputies at least seven days before the hearing. Upon receipt the Notice of Hearing will be posted by the Secretary on the General Convention website.

ii. For hearings to be held during or not more than one day before the first legislative day of General Convention, a Legislative Committee will deliver the Notice of Hearing to the Secretary of the House of Deputies so that it can be posted by the Secretary on the General Convention website at least eight hours before the hearing. For hearings scheduled before 10:00 a.m., the Notice of Hearing must be posted by the Secretary by 6:00 p.m. of the day before the hearing.

iii. The Secretary of the House of Deputies will specify the form for the Notice of Hearing.

3. Testimony at Hearings

~~i. Any person may testify at a hearing before the Legislative Committee.~~

i. Any person may testify at a hearing before a Legislative Committee.

~~ii. All persons who wish to testify at a hearing before the Legislative Committee must register by signing a witness sheet.~~

ii. All persons who wish to testify at a hearing before a Legislative Committee must register in a manner provided for by the Committee.

iii. At electronic meetings, those wishing to testify must be provided the opportunity to declare their intent to testify up to and including the day of the hearing.

iv. Persons testifying must identify themselves by name, status (Deputy, Bishop, Alternate, or Visitor), Diocese, organization represented, if any, and the Resolution or matter on which they wish to testify.

v. The committee shall provide for means of taking day of testimony, noting restrictions the chair may impose pursuant to Rule VIII.B.3.V

vi. The Chair may limit the number of persons who may testify, set time limits, alternate pro and con, give preference to Deputies or other groups of persons and otherwise regulate the hearing.

4. Record of Hearings

i. The Secretary of the Legislative Committee will keep (or cause to be kept) a record of the:

a. time and place of each hearing;

- b. attendance of Committee members at each hearing;**
 - c. Resolutions and other matters considered at each hearing; and**
 - d. name and identifying information of each person testifying before the Legislative Committee and the Resolution or matter upon which each spoke; and**
 - e. *Digital recording of public portions of each electronic hearing***
- ii. The Secretary of the Legislative Committee will file the record of each Legislative Committee hearing with the Secretary of the House at the conclusion of each hearing.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 557-559.



Resolution Number: 2022-A301
Title: Special Rules of Order for the House of Deputies
Legislative Action Taken: Adopted with Amendment
Final Text:

Resolved, That, notwithstanding any other House of Deputies Rule of Order to the contrary, and in light of the extraordinary challenges presented by the COVID-19-shortened General Convention, the House of Deputies adopts the following Special Rules of Order to govern all committee and legislative deliberations and actions for the 80th General Convention, including those taken prior to the convening of the convention. To the extent that these rules conflict with the Rules of Order of the House, these rules control:

I. General Rules

- a. Notwithstanding any Rule of Order, only seated deputies, first alternates, essential volunteers, essential staff, officers and those invited by the President will be allowed in the Hall or on the floor of the House. First alternates will be provided a special seating area distanced from and adjacent to the floor of the House.
- b. A public live stream will be provided for viewing open sessions of the House.

II. Committee Meetings, Hearings and Deliberations

- a. Before General Convention, all committees will meet, conduct hearings, deliberate and act only by remote means. All meetings and hearings will be conducted to enable all committee members to simultaneously hear one another with reasonable accommodations and participate in the meetings. All committee meetings and hearings conducted under the guidelines of this special rule will be considered valid, notwithstanding any conflict with the standing House of Deputies Rules of Order.
- b. Committees will be required to conduct at least one electronic hearing for all resolutions submitted before convention. Following an electronic hearing, the committee may adopt its final report to the convention on the resolutions referred to the committee.
- c. All committee pre-convention hearings and work, including committee actions commending amendments to resolutions, must be completed by June 30, 2022.
- d. Except for the Committees on Dispatch of Business, Credentials, Privilege & Courtesy, and Certification of Minutes, or as directed by the President or by the House, committee meetings during the convention will be limited to considering floor amendments adopted by the House of Bishops to resolutions for which the House of Bishops is the House of Initial Action, or which were previously adopted by the House of Deputies. Attendance of non-members at these committee meetings may be limited to accommodate social distancing and capacity requirements.

III. Resolutions

- a. Notwithstanding any other rule of the House, except for resolutions proposed by the Committee on Dispatch of Business, the Committee on Privilege & Courtesy or the President, any resolution submitted for consideration to the Secretary after June 6, 2022, will be considered out of order unless the House votes to consider it.

IV. Legislative Calendar and Consent Calendar

- a. The Legislative Calendar and Consent Calendar must be published at least 12 hours in advance of the session at which it is to be considered except on the final legislative day,

when the Committee on Dispatch may add items to the calendar as needed to ensure the timely completion of the business of the House.

b. The Consent Calendar will be considered twice a day, as the first legislative order of the morning and afternoon sessions.

c. A resolution may only be removed from the Consent Calendar by a vote of the House, the Committee on Dispatch of Business or by the President.

d. A motion to remove an item from the Consent Calendar is not debatable and requires a vote of one-third plus one.

e. All courtesy resolutions will automatically be placed on the Consent Calendar unless the Committee on Privilege & Courtesy or the Committee on Dispatch of Business votes to remove one from the Consent Calendar.

V. Debate; Committee Reports

a. Debate on all resolutions will be governed by the following rules:

i. A total of 20 minutes will be allowed for debate on a matter and all amendments and motions related to the matter.

ii. During the first six minutes, no deputy may move to amend, substitute or end debate, unless no one wishes to speak on the matter.

iii. Following the first six minutes of debate, the House will automatically consider any amendments submitted on a matter in the order they are submitted. Debate on any amendment will be limited to four minutes. Once the 20-minute limitation expires, the matter will be automatically put to a vote.

b. Committee reports may not exceed two minutes in length, or up to four minutes if the presenter requires translation into English.

VI. Amendments

a. Any deputy wishing to propose a primary amendment on a matter during a session must submit that amendment to the Secretary after 12 noon EDT on July 5, 2022, and before the beginning of the session at which the matter is to be considered. All amendments must be submitted in the manner prescribed by the Secretary. Any primary amendments not submitted in advance will be out of order. Primary amendments will be taken up in the order in which they were filed.

VII. Motions and Deferral

a. Changes to existing motions:

i. A motion to recall from committee may be brought on or after the second legislative day. A motion to limit or extend debate is not debatable.

b. Additional Type of Motion:

i. Deferral to the 81st General Convention

1. The House may vote to defer consideration of a resolution to the 81st General Convention. A motion to defer is:

a. a secondary motion;

b. not debatable;

c. not amendable; and

d. requires a majority vote.

2. A Legislative Committee or the Committee on Dispatch of Business may vote to defer consideration of a resolution to the 81st General Convention during a committee meeting.

a. The vote of any Legislative Committee or the Committee on Dispatch of Business recommending deferral of action on a resolution to the 81st General Convention will be deemed accepted by the House without coming to the floor unless the House

votes to suspend the rules, recall the resolution from the committee and place it on the Legislative Calendar.

3. Any *calendared* resolution on which the House takes no vote of any kind on the floor will be deemed submitted for consideration to the 81st General Convention in its original form. Any proposed amendments or recommended actions by the Legislative Committee to which the resolution was referred will be included as a supplemental report to the 81st General Convention.

VIII. Nominations and Elections

a. Nominations:

i. All nominations must be submitted to the Secretary on the form provided by the Secretary. No nominations will be made from the floor.

ii. Deadlines for nominations are as follows:

1. Nominations for all offices, except for the office of Secretary and Vice-President, must be submitted by 12 noon on the first legislative day.

2. Nominations for the office of Vice-President must be submitted by 6 p.m. on the second legislative day.

iii. All nominations must meet the standard qualifications required by the Constitution, Canons or Rules of Order.

b. Elections:

i. Elections will take place on the following schedule:

1. Elections for the office of Secretary will take place on the first legislative day.

2. Elections for all offices except Vice President and Secretary will be the first item of business following the consent calendar on the second legislative day.

3. Elections for the office of Vice President will be the first item of business following the consent calendar in the afternoon session on the third legislative day.

And be it further,

Resolved, That the need to adopt these Special Rules of Order, both for decisions and actions made and taken already to conduct the legislative process and for the effective management of legislation during the 80th General Convention, arises from unprecedented specific and unique circumstances, details, and considerations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic; and be it further

Resolved, That the decisions and actions stated and reflected in these Special Rules of Order are not intended to establish, act, operate, be construed, be cited, be interpreted, or serve as precedent, policy, analysis, evidence of past practice, interpretation, or determination, in any way or for any purpose, of the Constitution, Canons, House of Deputies Rules of Order, or the authority of any office or body, or any other matter.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 234-238.



Resolution Number: 2022-D027
Title: Encourage the Use of Virtual Meetings in Church Governance
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention encourages greater utilization of virtual meetings in lieu of in person meetings for the Executive Council, Interim Bodies, and any other organization within the Governance of the Episcopal Church at any level of the Church when either 1: A flight or other extensive travel generating a significant carbon footprint is required and/or 2: The costs of virtual meeting(s) represents a significant savings for the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention recognizes that we are inheritors of God's charge in Genesis 2:15 to "till and keep" the land, and that it is our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation and preserve this fragile Earth, our island home; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention encourages the Church, across all levels of governance, to consider, explore, and continuously implement new and innovative ideas to promote new ways to better learn about and interact with our colleagues throughout the Church and throughout the world, promoting strengthening our Church and community through virtual settings; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention expresses its sense that, moving forward, Governance meetings and other administrative gatherings of the Church should be held virtually if substantial travel is required, unless there is good cause to hold such meetings or gatherings in person.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 549-550.