

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A111
TITLE: Amend Article V of the Constitution
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
TOPIC: Constitution

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-D003 Amend Constitution Article V.1 [New Dioceses--First Reading]
2012-A101 On the Topic of Re-aligning Dioceses (Rejected)
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)

2009-D082 Urge Study of Pastoral and Organizational Issues During Episcopal Transitions
1982-A010 Amend Constitution Article V.1 [Admission of New Dioceses--Second Reading]

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

(*Blue Book*) Report to General Convention, [Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons](#), see pages 422-424.

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

A111 Amend Article V of the Constitution

Proposer	Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
Topic	Constitution
Endorsed by	
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. 5
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Resolution Filed
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That Article V of the Constitution be amended as follows:
- 2 Sec. 1. A new Diocese may be formed, with the consent of the General Convention and under such conditions as the General Convention shall prescribe by General Canon or Canons, (1) by the division of an existing Diocese; (2) by the junction of two (2) or more Dioceses or of parts of two (2) or more Dioceses; or (3) by the erection into a Diocese of an unorganized area evangelized as provided in Article VI. The proceedings shall originate in a Convocation of the Clergy and Laity of the unorganized area called by the ~~Bishop~~ *Ecclesiastical Authority* for that purpose; or, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~ *Ecclesiastical Authority*, in the Convention of the Diocese to be divided; or (when it is proposed to form a new Diocese by the junction of two (2) or more existing Dioceses or of parts of two (2) or more Dioceses) by mutual agreement of the Conventions of the Dioceses concerned, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~ *Ecclesiastical Authority* of each Diocese. ~~In case the Episcopate of a Diocese be vacant, no proceedings toward its division shall be taken until the vacancy is filled.~~ After consent of the General Convention, when a certified copy of the duly adopted Constitution of the new Diocese, including an unqualified accession to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, shall have been filed with the Secretary of the General Convention and approved by the Executive Council of this Church, such new Diocese shall thereupon be in union with the General Convention.

EXPLANATION

Allowing the dioceses to determine how the Bishop Diocesan and other leadership would be selected is consistent with the Episcopal Church's trend toward moving away from mandating positions based upon seniority. Prior to 1919, the Presiding Bishop was the most senior bishop by date of consecration, now any Bishop may be chosen as Presiding Bishop. Until 1991, the bishops sat in the House of Bishops by seniority, with the most senior bishop by consecration date in the front row; now the bishops sit in table groups with a diversity of age, time since ordination, geography, and other demographic factors at each table. Until 1991, the three (3) most senior bishops by consecration were the ones who had to consent to bishops being inhibited upon a finding of Abandonment, now it is the Advisory Council to the Presiding Bishop consisting of one (1) bishop from each Province, elected by the bishops of the Province. The proposed amendments allow dioceses to consider factors relevant to

their local needs.

The Standing Commission recommends that persons with expertise and experience in organizational combinations, diocesan and congregational viability and vitality, finance, endowments, buildings and property, human resources, and other relevant areas be engaged to assist dioceses in the process of discernment, formulation of a plan and agreement of merger, and implementation of the plan. This discernment process could be done as a part of the Missional Review process to be employed prior to an episcopal election, as recommended by the Task Force on the Episcopacy. The expenses of this process would be borne by the dioceses. The Standing Commission also recommends that the Office of Pastoral Development maintain a current listing of persons with experience and expertise to assist dioceses.

The consultants could assist the dioceses in determining whether a merger or some other form of union is advisable and assist the dioceses in developing a joint plan of union or other appropriate agreement or covenant. Upon approval of the Bishops (if any) and Standing Committees of each diocese that would be a part of the union, a joint plan of union would be presented to the Diocesan Convention of each diocese for approval. The process is based upon the process employed by some dioceses for changing the status of a mission to a parish. The joint plan of union would include how the bishop of the newly united diocese would be determined and how other bishops in the newly united diocese might serve, issues with respect to endowments, the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the newly united diocese, and other issues of importance.

The proposed amendments to Canon I.10 can be implemented prior to the approval of the proposed amendment to Article VI, Section 4 because uniting dioceses will have approved the new Constitution and Canons for the united diocese prior to submitting the proposed union to General Convention. Therefore, the united diocese will already have its governance documents approved and will not need to operate under the current Constitution and Canons until Article VI, section 4 are approved.



Resolution Number: 2015-D003
Title: Amend Constitution Article V.1 [New Dioceses--First Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That Article V, Section 1 is amended to read as follows:

A new Diocese may be formed, with the consent of the General Convention and under such conditions as the General Convention shall prescribe by General Canon or Canons, (1) by the division of an existing Diocese; (2) by the junction of two or more Dioceses or of parts of two or more Dioceses; or (3) by the erection into a Diocese of an unorganized area evangelized as provided in Article VI. The proceedings shall originate in a Convocation of the Clergy and Laity of the unorganized area called by the ~~Bishop~~*Ecclesiastical Authority* for that purpose; or, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~*Ecclesiastical Authority*, in the Convention of the Diocese to be divided; or (when it is proposed to form a new Diocese by the junction of two or more existing Dioceses or of parts of two or more Dioceses) by mutual agreement of the Conventions of the Dioceses concerned, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~*Ecclesiastical Authority* of each Diocese. ~~In case the Episcopate of a Diocese be vacant, no proceedings toward its division shall be taken until the vacancy is filled.~~ After consent of the General Convention, when a certified copy of the duly adopted Constitution of the new Diocese, including an unqualified accession to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, shall have been filed with the Secretary of the General Convention and approved by the Executive Council of this Church, such new Diocese shall thereupon be in union with the General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 356-357.



Resolution Number: 2012-A101
Title: On the Topic of Re-aligning Dioceses
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of the Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 77th General Convention request that the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church convene a consultation on the effectiveness of dioceses, with a focus on the potential for re-aligning dioceses to maximize their effective witness and ministry; and be it further

Resolved, that the Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider including in the 2013–2015 budget \$25,000 to fund such consultation.



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

[*Resolved*, that Article V.1 of the Constitution be amended to read as follows:]

Sec. 1. A new Diocese may be formed, with the consent of the General Convention and under such conditions as the General Convention shall prescribe by ~~General Canon or Canons~~, (1) by the division of an existing Diocese; (2) by the junction of two or more Dioceses or of parts of two or more Dioceses; or (3) by the erection into a Diocese of an unorganized area evangelized as provided in Article VI. The proceedings shall originate in a Convocation of the Clergy and Laity of the unorganized area called by the Bishop for that purpose; or, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~*Ecclesiastical Authority*, in the Convention of the Diocese to be divided; or (when it is proposed to form a new Diocese by the junction of two or more existing Dioceses or of parts of two or more Dioceses) by mutual agreement of the Conventions of the Dioceses concerned, with the approval of the ~~Bishop~~*Ecclesiastical Authority* of each Diocese. In case the Episcopate of a Diocese be vacant, no proceedings toward its division shall be taken until the vacancy is filled. After consent of the General Convention, when a certified copy of the duly adopted Constitution of the new Diocese, including an unqualified accession to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, shall have been filed with the Secretary of the General Convention and approved by the Executive Council of this Church, ~~such~~*the* new Diocese shall thereupon be in union with the General Convention.