#3 Changing the Resolutions Process

SPONSOR: Dispatch of Business Committee & The Executive Council

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RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont endorse the implementation of a new process for managing resolutions submitted to the annual Diocesan Convention as presented below and approved by the Dispatch of Business Committee and by the Executive Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont approve that resolutions at future Diocesan Conventions will cover how our diocese operates, how The Episcopal Church operates, and how our mission as a Diocese is supported; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that resolutions presented to future Conventions should propose action rather than only state an opinion, that is, be actionable rather than purely symbolic; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that resolutions must pertain to the work of congregations, missions, committees, and task forces, not Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that resolutions must include a clear financial plan for support of the expenses of implementing the resolutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that resolutions may also be submitted to the Executive Council in May and September, representing matters of public policy, social justice, and issues not identified with the specific mission values of the diocese; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that the resolutions presented to the Executive Council should propose action rather than stating an opinion, be actionable rather than purely symbolic, and identify the source of funding for the resolutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont affirm that the Executive Council may refer the matter to a governing body or committee, refer to Diocesan Convention, create a working group or task force, or take no action on the proposed resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the process described in this resolution will take effect upon adjournment of the 194th Diocesan Convention.

EXPLANATION

This proposal addresses the need for a more robust process for resolutions and their impact on our diocesan household.

There has been growing concern about the length of time spent presenting and debating resolutions at Convention. These concerns have increased dramatically in the past two years, voiced to members of the Dispatch of Business Committee, clergy in our congregations, Bishop and the diocesan staff members, and some members of Executive Council.

The number of resolutions and lengthening time spent on them has resulted in waning participation during the Business Session, with delegates and clergy signing off or falling asleep while online. This loss of participation impacts voting: we risk losing quorum and then would need to schedule an additional Business Session; we lose focus and attention to the matter at hand;

Some proposers of resolutions have been unable to submit before Convention deadlines. Some matters in church and society are ill-timed for a later fall meeting. Adding two dates for resolutions to be submitted and taken up by Council offer more opportunities for the diocesan household to act.

The number of resolutions coming before Convention has grown over the years, greatly lengthening the Business Session. Parochial clergy and vestries report difficulties recruiting nominees for delegate positions because of the time commitment needed for the Business Session. Shortening the Session and moving it to daytime will help but may also curtail the opportunity for resolutions to be heard. Adding the review process with Executive Council offers opportunities for resolutions to be reviewed and acted upon.

Resolutions which make a statement but do not call for action, and resolutions which do not include financial support are ineffective for our diocesan household. A resolution which is grounded in our diocesan household's values and mission plus offers financial support will be more effective in God's people actually doing the work called for.

The process of managing resolutions must be done by Convention. We need these changes so we can have a more robust process with full participation.