



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

THE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION

Convention Procedure

Revised 6/21/07

During the legislative sessions of the Convention, we follow Roberts' Rules of Order as modified by our own Constitution, Canons, and Rules of Order. If this is your first convention in this diocese, please read and study the procedural rules printed at the end of this memorandum. The Parliamentarian of the Convention advises the President on procedural questions.

Parliamentary procedure is based on these basic principles:

- There must be a question before the body that can be answered by a simple yes or no vote.
- Only one question can be on the floor at once and debate is confined to that question.
- Members must be recognized by the chair in order to debate the question or make a procedural motion, and only one person at the time can be recognized.

Debating a question or making a motion

To enter the debate on a resolution, or to make a procedural motion, go to one of the microphones on the convention floor and take your place in line [Rule VI]. When you have been recognized by the President of the Convention, make your remarks or your motion. There may be a time limit if the issue is one on which many delegates want to speak. You should direct your remarks to the President and confine them to the point currently in debate [Rule VII]. It is improper to applaud another member's remarks [Rule XI].

Amendments

If you want to change the wording of a resolution, make a motion to amend that specifies precisely the change to be made. If your amendment inserts or changes several words, the President may ask that you put the amendment in writing and have it brought to the podium by a page before the vote is taken. [Rule IX]. A motion to amend an amendment is allowed, but not a motion to amend a pending amendment to an amendment [Rule XIV]. Amendments and substitutes must be germane to the topic of the resolution under debate.

Procedural Motions

Rule XII lists a number of permissible procedural motions, but several of them are rarely used because they do not work well in the context of a two-day convention. The permissible motions, listed in order of precedence (which differs from the order specified by *Robert's Rules*), are:

1. **To adjourn.** Not debatable. The President may discourage this motion because adoption would prevent any further business during that session.

2. **To table.** Not debatable. Use with care because adoption of this motion simultaneously terminates debate and sets the motion aside until the Convention affirmatively acts to take it up again.
3. **To call the question.** Not debatable. The effect of adoption is to end all debate and proceed to an immediate vote on the question. Also use this motion with care. It is appropriate when the debate becomes repetitive, but should not be made impatiently.
4. **To postpone to a time certain.** Debatable. This motion is rarely used because adoption could disrupt plans for getting all of the Convention's business done in an orderly fashion.
5. **To postpone indefinitely.** Debatable. This is a polite way of defeating a question without actually voting on it. It's rarely used because debate on whether to postpone takes time away from debate on the measure itself.
6. **To commit to a committee.** Debatable. This motion is also rarely used because our legislative committees meet only on Thursday evening.
7. **To amend.** Debatable. See the discussion above.
8. **To divide.** Debatable. If the resolution has more than one resolving clause, and the clauses can stand on their own, adoption of this motion will result in the clauses being voted on separately.

Votes by Orders

All elections (other than election of a bishop) and most of the votes on resolutions and procedural motions are decided by majority vote of the entire Convention, each voting member of the clergy and each lay delegate having one vote. The Convention votes by orders on constitutional amendments, election of a bishop, and on any other question when 10 delegates of either order request a vote by orders [Rule XV]. Votes by orders on constitutional amendments and election of a bishop are taken by written ballot. On other matters, votes by orders are often taken by show of hands. In this case, the lay order customarily votes first. If the measure passes in the lay order, a vote is taken in the clergy order. Concurrence of both orders is needed for the measure or motion to pass.

Committee Reports

All resolutions, except those presented by the Committee on Dispatch of Business, are referred to one of the Convention's legislative committees for study and report. Committee hearings are held on Thursday evening after the close of the first legislative session. Delegates are encouraged to attend the hearings and to participate in the discussion.

After the hearing concludes, the committee members meet in private to decide on the recommendations they will report to the Convention floor. Rule XVII allows five possible recommendations:

- To recommend adoption of the resolution as introduced.
- To recommend adoption of a substitute resolution. In this case, the committee's substitute resolution replaces the original resolution in its entirety.
- To recommend rejection. In this case, the original resolution is laid on the table.
- To recommend rejection, with a minority report attached recommending adoption of the original resolution or adoption of a substitute resolution. In this case, the question before the Convention is whether to adopt the minority report.

- To report without recommendation. In this case, the original resolution is put to the Convention with the information that the committee makes no recommendation.

If you disagree with the committee's recommendation, these are your options:

- If you oppose a resolution that has been reported favorably, you can speak against it or move to table it.
- If you favor a resolution that has been recommended for rejection, you can move to place the original resolution on the agenda for immediate consideration. If that motion passes, the original resolution will be on the floor for debate and vote.
- If you favor a resolution recommended for rejection, and there is a minority report, the original resolution will be before the Convention and you can speak in its favor.

Reconsideration

It is possible to move to reconsider any vote that has been taken at this Convention, other than an election [Rule XVI]. The motion must be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. If made on the same day or the succeeding day, the motion to reconsider requires only a majority vote. Otherwise, a two-thirds vote is required. When a motion to reconsider is adopted, the question is back before the Convention at the same stage as when the vote being reconsidered was taken.

Motions to Suspend the Rules

By a simple majority vote, the Convention can suspend any of its Rules of Order, except those prescribed by the Constitution or by Canon or for which a greater majority is required by the Rules themselves. For example, the Convention cannot suspend the constitutional requirement that no change in the canons can be considered without first having been submitted to and reported on by the Commission on Constitution and Canons [Const. Article XIII], nor can it allow introduction of a late resolution by simple majority vote because Rule XXIII requires a two-thirds vote for that action. It is inadvisable, as a general rule, to attempt to suspend the rules without consulting an experienced delegate for advice.

Special Orders and Special Rules

The Committee on Dispatch of Business often recommends Special Orders that will be taken up at a specific time. A Special Order displaces all other business on the day's agenda until it is concluded. Dispatch of Business may also recommend special rules specifying the length and manner of debate. This is often done for controversial issues on which many delegates wish an opportunity to speak.

Election of a Bishop

The Constitution requires the election of a bishop to be conducted by written ballot and by orders. Concurrence by both orders on the same ballot is required for election. The majority required in each order is a majority of the members of that order entitled to vote, including those not present. Special rules are adopted to govern the election.

Excerpts from the Rules of Order

II. Any of the rules of order may be suspended by simple majority vote of the Convention, except those rules which specify a larger majority for a specific action. Any such rule may be suspended upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting.

V. After the President has taken the chair no member shall continue standing except to address the Chair.

VI. No member shall address the Convention or make any motion except from the microphones provided for that purpose and after recognition by the Presiding Officer.

VII. Speakers shall address the Presiding Officer and shall confine themselves to the point in debate.

VIII. No motion shall be considered unless seconded and, if required by the Presiding Officer, reduced to writing.

IX. When the Presiding Officer is putting any question, the members shall continue in their seats and shall not hold any private discourse.

X. Except by leave of the Convention, no member shall speak more than twice in the same debate, nor longer than two minutes at one time. The total time of debate on any question or resolution shall be a maximum of twenty minutes.

XI. No applause shall be permitted during any debate or voting of the Convention or of the Committee of the Whole.

XII. When a question is under consideration, no motion shall be received except to lay upon the table, to call for the previous question, to postpone to a certain time, to postpone indefinitely, to commit, to amend, or to divide; and motions for any of these purposes shall have precedence in the order herein named. The motions to lay on the table, to call for the previous question, and to adjourn shall always be in order and shall be decided without debate; and of these the motion to adjourn shall take precedence.

XIII. If the question under debate contains several distinct propositions, the same shall be divided at the request of any member, and a vote taken separately, except that a motion to strike out and insert shall be indivisible.

XIV. All amendments shall be considered in the order in which they are moved. When a proposed amendment is under consideration, a motion to amend the same may be made. No amendment to a second amendment shall be in order. But when an amendment to an amendment is under consideration, a substitute for the whole matter may be received. No proposition on a subject different from the one under consideration shall be received under color of a substitute.

XV. In a vote by orders the individual votes of the clergy and laity shall be taken separately. A majority of affirmative votes in both orders shall be necessary to any decision on any vote by orders.

In any vote by orders, upon the request of any two members of the clergy who do not serve the same congregation (parish or mission), or any two lay delegates representing different congregations, the vote shall be by roll call of the clergy and lay delegates. The votes of the lay delegates shall be announced by a member designated by the delegation when the name of that church is called. The delegation shall be polled upon request of any member thereof.

XVI. A question once decided shall stand as the action of the Convention and shall not be drawn again into debate. A member of the Convention who voted on the prevailing side may move to reconsider any vote so long as the motion is made on the same or succeeding day to that on which the vote was taken, except that such a motion may be voted on at any time with the consent of two-thirds of the Convention.

XVII. (a) Reports to the Convention from all commissions, committees, temporary bodies, and institutions of the Diocese shall be in writing. All reports recommending or requiring any action or expression of opinion by the

Convention shall be accompanied by corresponding resolutions to be introduced in accordance with Rule of Order III(a).

(b) Reports to the Convention by commissions, committees, or temporary bodies that require no action or expression of opinion by that body and which have been distributed in advance shall be received as presented.

(c) A Convention Committee report on resolutions referred to it may include statements of reasons for the committee's recommendations, may be accompanied by a minority report (if signed by one-fourth of the committee's membership), and, with respect to each resolution or group of related resolutions requiring separate action, shall take one of the following forms:

1. Recommend adoption.

2. Recommend adoption of a substitute resolution.

3. Recommend rejection. In this event the resolution shall lie upon the table unless (a) a majority of the delegates present and voting call for placing the resolution on the agenda for immediate consideration, or (b) the report is accompanied by a minority report recommending adoption, in which case the question shall be consideration of the minority report.

4. Report without recommendation. In this case the presiding officer shall put the original resolution, stating that the committee makes no recommendation.

XVIII. All questions of order shall be decided by the presiding officer without debate. Any member may appeal from such decision, when, on motion by the member, duly seconded, the question shall be decided by majority vote of the Convention. On such an appeal no member shall speak more than once without leave.

XIX. No member shall be absent from the sessions of the Convention without leave or unless unable to attend.

XX. When the Convention is about to rise, every member shall remain seated until the President leaves the chair.