

**DIOCESE OF OLYMPIA  
COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND CANONS**

**REPORT TO 2017 ANNUAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION:**

At its two meetings this year, our Committee considered clarifications to several canons and provided input to others with respect to resolutions that might involve amendments to the Diocesan Constitution or Canons. We assisted other diocesan groups in formulating their proposals for canonical changes. The following are changes that the Committee recommends for passage at Convention.

**First Vote on Changes to Constitution**

Our diocesan Constitution provides (in Article XXI) that it may be amended by a majority vote of the two orders voting separately at two successive annual meetings of Convention. The following amendments are proposed for their first vote.

**Constitution, Art. VII (Members of Convention)**

Section 4(a) currently requires that the lay delegates from each congregation “shall be in equal numbers men and women”. After reviewing some thoughtful research presented by new Committee member Tony Ramsey, it was suggested that deletion of this language would give small congregations (with limited delegate pools) more flexibility in selecting their convention delegations, and it was also pointed out that not every congregation is divided equally between men and women. The proposed amendment is therefore to delete the equal representative requirement, as follows:

The lay members of Convention shall consist of:

- a. Lay delegates elected from each Parish and Mission in union with the Convention ~~\_, who shall be in equal numbers men and women...~~

**Second Vote on Changes to Constitution**

**Constitution, Art. XII (Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention)**

Although the Canons have not previously made it clear, the practice (under national Canons) is that clerical deputies must be canonically resident in the Diocese of Olympia.

In addition, a question arose as to whether a 16-year-old adult communicant can be elected as a deputy to General Convention (as distinct from participating in the organized group youth presence at that gathering). Although the national canons do not seem to prohibit deputies or alternates under the age of 18, there are practical problems with sending an unaccompanied minor to another state for a convention where deputies are expected to check into a hotel on their own and handle personal charges by credit card. The Diocesan Handbook for Those Who Work with Children or Youth establishes standards to protect young people who participate in Diocesan activities. The Committee recommends clarifying that nominees should either be 18 years old at the time of General Convention or they should undertake to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**Section 1:** ...a concurrent majority vote of the clerical and lay orders, voting separately, shall elect four clerical Deputies who are canonically resident in the Diocese, and four lay Deputies, who are adult Communicants in Good Standing...

**Add a new Section 5:**

Adult Communicants in Good Standing who are elected as Deputies or Alternate Deputies to General Convention must be at least 18 years old at the start of General Convention or must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in compliance with applicable Diocesan procedures for those who work with children or youth.

**Notes on Changes to Canons:**

Pursuant to Canons 28 and 29, canons can be enacted or amended by a "vote of a majority of each Order". These amendments "take effect upon the adjournment of the meeting of Convention at which they are enacted" unless the Convention votes unanimously for the changes to take immediate effect.

**Canon 2, section 2 (Lay Members of Convention):**

This is a parallel amendment to the proposed amendment to the Constitution, Art. VII, Section 4(a), described above.

The proposed amendment would be:

[regarding lay representation at Diocesan Convention]

~~This representation shall be divided equally between men and women.~~

**Canon 12 (Business Methods in Church Affairs):**

Under national canons, our Diocese is required to have a Finance Committee, and the current Canon (Section 1(e)) defines this committee as including a Comptroller. Our Diocese does not, however, currently have a Comptroller. What we do have is a broadly representative Joint Finance Panel (JFP) that can readily serve the intended function. The proposed amendments would clarify the composition and role of our Joint Finance Panel.

In addition, the proposed amendment would memorialize an existing practice that requires Missions and other diocesan institutions (other than Parishes) to obtain consent from the diocesan Board of Directors before withdrawing funds from the Diocesan Investment Fund (established under Canon 7, Section 4). Although the Board only meets once a month, it has established expedited procedures for approving small withdrawals and withdrawals needed for an emergency.

The proposed amendments would be:

**Section 1(d):**

...audits and reviews [of congregations and diocesan institutions] shall follow all applicable guidelines established by the diocesan Joint Finance Panel ~~Committee as defined in the following section.~~

**Section 1(e):**

For purposes of the ~~the is Canon and related National~~ Canons of the Episcopal Church, the ~~Joint Finance Panel shall operate as Treasurer and Comptroller of the Diocese shall together comprise~~ the Finance Committee of the Diocese. The Joint Finance Panel shall comprise the diocesan Treasurer and representatives selected by Diocesan Council, Standing Committee and the Office of the Bishop. The ~~Joint Finance Panel Committee~~ shall have authority to approve depositories for church funds, to require submission of account documents for review, and to approve audit committees other than independent public accountants.

**Section 1(i):**

The ~~Joint Finance Panel Committee~~ shall report annually to the Convention of the Diocese upon administration of this Canon.

**Section 4 (new):**

When a Parish wishes to withdraw funds from the Diocesan Investment Fund, it shall give advance notice of that withdrawal to the diocesan Board of Directors. When a Mission or other diocesan institution wishes to make such a withdrawal, it shall first obtain approval from the Board of Directors or the Board's delegee.

**Canon 24: Diocesan School of Ministry and Theology**

Since the Diocese does not currently have a School of Ministry and Theology, this Canon's details on how to manage such a school are superfluous. Rather than completely deleting the Canon, however, the Committee recommends leaving a general statement authorizing one or more future schools if and when they may be needed.

The proposed amendments are:

**CANON 24: Diocesan Schools ~~of Ministry and Theology~~**

Section 1: There may be one or more ~~a~~ Diocesan Schools of Ministry and Theology, accountable to the Bishop, the purpose of which shall be to:

- a. Further the education, formation, and ministry of all baptized people.
- b. Provide training for specialized ministries.
- c. Provide continuing theological education.

~~Section 2: When the School is operating, it shall have a Dean appointed by, and accountable to, the Bishop. The Dean shall be responsible for the management of the School and its program.~~

~~Section 3: When the School is operating, there shall be a Board of Directors thereof consisting of at least seven members.~~

- a. ~~The Dean of the School~~
- b. ~~A member of the faculty appointed by the Dean to a one-year term who is eligible for reappointment.~~
- c. ~~At least one student representative, elected to a one-year term by the students meeting at a site where the School offers an ongoing program.~~
- d. ~~At least four members appointed by the Bishop to three-year terms, which persons are eligible for reappointment.~~

~~Section 4: The Board shall be accountable to the Bishop. Its basic functions shall be to:~~

- ~~a. Oversee, review and evaluate the program of the School and ensure that its purpose is being carried out.~~
- ~~b. Provide support to the Dean and faculty.~~
- ~~c. Provide to the Diocese information concerning the School and its programs.~~

**Canon 26: Ecclesiastical Discipline**

Seven years ago, Convention passed Canon 26, implementing a new system of ecclesiastical discipline consistent with Title IV in the national Canons. Some of the implementing language is no longer necessary or relevant, so the Committee recommends the following amendments:

There is hereby established a ~~Court to be called a~~ Disciplinary Board, consisting of nine (9) members, five (5) of whom shall be clergy canonically and geographically resident in the Diocese, and four (4) of whom shall be adult Communicants in Good Standing and geographically resident and domiciled in the Diocese. The members of the Disciplinary Board shall be nominated by the Bishop and the nominations ratified at the Diocesan Convention. Each member shall serve for a three (3)-year term; except, if a member is filling a vacancy, the term of such member shall be the unexpired term of the member being replaced. The terms of the members shall commence on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of the year following ratification, provided that, the terms of office ~~of all members ratified in 2010 shall commence on July 1, 2011. The terms of office~~ of the Board shall be staggered and arranged into three classes, ~~with the first class of membership expiring on December 31, 2011, the second class on December 31, 2012, and the third class on December 31, 2013.~~ No member shall be eligible for renomination for a year after the end of a third consecutive term. ~~The Ecclesiastical Trial Court established under the prior canons, and its members, shall continue in office and authority until the effective date of the Revised Title IV, July 1, 2011.~~

At the end of Section 2(b)(2), a period shall be added.

Faithfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION  
& CANONS

Douglas Oles, Chair  
Judith L. Andrews, Chancellor  
Sarah S. Mack  
Ann McCartney  
Donna R. McNamara  
Dede Moore, Diocesan Staff  
The Reverend Stephen Moore  
Tony Ramsey  
The Reverend Marda Steedman Sanborn,  
Diocesan Staff