

MONTANA SYNOD
GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS
BY THE ANNUAL SYNOD ASSEMBLY

All resolutions submitted to the annual Montana Synod Assembly for action will be first reviewed by a Resolutions Committee appointed by the Montana Synod Council. The purpose of the review by the committee is to insure that all resolutions are in an appropriate form and that they adhere to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Montana Synod. The following guidelines are offered (1) to help persons as they draft resolutions for consideration and (2) to indicate how the committee evaluates and prioritizes the resolutions it receives.

1. Submission of Resolutions

Resolutions may be submitted by congregations of the synod, current synod assembly voting members, and the synod council. Resolutions will be accepted for consideration if received six weeks prior to the opening of the assembly. The synod staff will inform congregations in the first synod newsletter/communication after January 1st of the deadline for submission of resolutions. Resolutions submitted after the deadline may be accepted by the committee if it deems that there will be sufficient time at the assembly for their consideration. In terms of late resolutions, priority will be given to those judged by the committee to be of overriding importance, or those which address a previously accepted resolution.

All resolutions requiring expenditures of funds will need to contain an estimate of the fiscal impact of the resolution's adoption. Note that the Montana Synod Constitution (S10.4) stipulates that: "Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption."

On alternating years resolutions, by constitution, are limited. According to the Montana Synod Constitution (S7.11.12): "Biennially, the Synod Assembly shall meet in conjunction with the Synod Theological Conference. On these years the business conducted by the Synod Assembly shall be limited to elections, approval of a budget, oral reports by the bishops of the ELCA and the synod, reception and/or approval of written reports, and any other business considered essential by the Synod Council, synod bishop, or a majority of the members of the Synod Assembly present and voting."

2. Review of Resolutions by the Committee

The first priority of the committee is to review the resolutions that have been received by the published deadline. Normally the committee will meet to screen these resolutions during the day prior to the opening of the assembly. At this time the authors of resolutions submitted before the deadline are entitled to a hearing with the committee. Scheduling of such a hearing may be arranged through the resolutions committee chair.

The second priority of the committee is the consideration of resolutions which have been submitted after the published deadline, but prior to the opening of the assembly. If there is sufficient time for the committee to meet with the authors of such resolutions before the assembly opens, the committee chair will notify the authors. Such a hearing, however, cannot be guaranteed.

The third priority of the committee is to consider resolutions which have been submitted after the opening of the assembly. Because of time constraints it is likely that the committee will have to give its recommendations concerning such resolutions without opportunity to consult with their authors.

In addition to reviewing submitted resolutions as above, the committee may be called on the consider resolutions that are referred to it as a result of assembly action. Also, the committee may be asked by the officers, the Montana Synod Council or the assembly to draft courtesy resolutions.

Resolutions will be evaluated by the committee using the following criteria:

A. Does the resolution address a synodical purpose (as listed in Chapter 6 of the Montana Synod Constitution), a synodical ministry, administrative matter or other issues affecting the Montana Synod?

B. Is the action sought by the resolution consistent with the Montana Synod Constitution and Bylaws and other synodical governing documents?

C. Is the form of the resolution appropriate and is it clearly drafted?

D. Are the statements in the resolution accurate and relevant to an understanding of the resolution and the action it calls for?

3. Recommendation of Resolutions to the Assembly

The resolutions committee, by majority vote of its members, will adopt a recommendation for each resolution and report that recommendation to the Montana Synod Assembly. The recommendation may be one of the following:

A. **CONSIDER.** The resolution meets the criteria outlined in 2.A through 2.D listed above and is forwarded to the assembly for action.

B. **REFER.** The resolutions committee moves that the resolution be forwarded for consideration by the Montana Synod Council or other specified agency, institution or group, without approval or disapproval by the assembly. A motion to refer may mean that the resolution fails to meet one or more of the criteria listed above in 2.A through 2.D. The specific reason for a recommendation to refer will be reported to the assembly.

C. **DO NOT CONSIDER.** The resolutions committee moves that the resolution not be considered. The resolution--in the judgment of the committee--fails to meet the criteria in 2.A through 2.D, and likely would not be corrected by referring it to another body. The specific reason for a recommendation of “do not consider” will be reported to the assembly.