

## **OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE Legislation Guidelines for 2019**

Friends and colleagues, the 2019 Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference will meet in Eugene, OR on June 12 through 15. This article is about how to draft legislation so that it may be approved by the Annual Conference. Although the conference is still months off, the process to submit and adopt legislation starts now.

### **Legislative Schedule**

March 19, 2019: Requested Deadline for Submission of Proposed Legislation. Later Submissions Accepted but Drafting Support/Editing Not Available.

March 29, 2019: Later Deadline, For Submissions Without Benefit of Edit or Consultation. Any legislation after March 29, 2019 may, or may not, be accepted.

April 27, 2019: Legislative Assembly Meets in Lake Oswego, OR.

April 30, 2019: Proposed Legislation Posted on Conference Website.

June 12 through June 15, 2019: Annual Conference.

### **Legislative Definitions and Process**

Your Legislative Team hopes to make this process more accessible with this description and with a schedule that establishes the best time to submit your legislation.

Here's how it works:

If you believe that it would be good for the annual conference to change a rule, establish a new process, or make a statement about an issue, we encourage you to submit a petition. We are here to help you draft something that is well thought out and carefully crafted.

Please consider contacting Rev. Ruth Marsh ([revruthmarsh@gmail.com](mailto:revruthmarsh@gmail.com)) and/or Rev. Adam Briddell ([adambriddell@gmail.com](mailto:adambriddell@gmail.com)), Legislative Co-Coordinators, if you have questions.

Three kinds of legislative proposals can be submitted to the Annual Conference:

- Annual Conference Action Requests;
- Annual Conference Standing Resolutions: and
- General Conference Resolutions.

#### **1. Action Requests:**

Action Requests [ARs] are petitions to guide the behavior of the annual conference. Action Requests must pass by a majority vote to be adopted. Examples of Actions Requests include to:

1. establish that the district superintendents do particular things during charge conferences;
2. determine that local churches take particular actions;
3. propose new or modified rules\*;
4. direct the annual conference to send a letter or make a statement\*; or
5. direct the annual conference to spend or gather its funds in particular ways, to name a few examples.

While there are no special considerations for the first two categories above, there are special considerations for the last three kinds of Annual Conference Resolutions, as follows...

### **Proposing New Rules or Modifications of Existing Rules**

If you wish to propose a change to conference rules, start with the "Conference Rules" section of volume II of the conference journal to find out what rules are already in place, so that you can determine how your rule would fit into the whole. Proposed changes to conference rules should be submitted to the Rules Committee for review before you bring them into the legislative process - so you need to start this process early! You can find the list of members of the Rules Committee in your Conference journal, Volume I and on the conference website.

Steve Mitchell is the chair of the rules committee ([smitchel@cluge.com](mailto:smitchel@cluge.com)). Do be aware that positions of leadership can change, and so it is important to consult the latest journal.

### **Directing the Annual Conference to Send a Letter or Make a Statement**

If you submit an annual conference resolution that would require the Conference Secretary to take a particular action, such as writing a letter, you must be prepared to submit the full title, name, and address of the recipient as well as a draft of the letter to the Conference Secretary before the end of the Annual Conference session, that is, by June 15, 2019. It is imperative to include this material with the resolution.

### **Directing the Ways the Annual Conference Spends or Gathers Its Funds**

If your proposed annual conference resolution involves money (send a letter to each local church, take out a newspaper advertisement, establish a paid program, use paid conference staff in a particular way, establish budget priorities or funding processes, etc.), it will be referred after passage to the Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration. You can help your item move forward by sending to them before you submit it, or at least confer with them about how it affects the budget. You can find the list of members of the Finance and Administration Committee in your Conference Journal, Volume I and on the conference website.

## **2. Standing Resolutions**

Annual Conference Standing Resolutions are statements of conviction on social issues that the Annual Conference commends to local churches for continued and further study and action. Although sincere and dedicated Christians can and do differ on these matters of Christian ethics, standing resolutions must be passed by two thirds of the people voting. Standing resolutions adopted by the Annual Conference are printed in a special section of the Annual Conference Journal. Standing resolutions must be reviewed and readopted every three years to remain in effect.

If you wish to write a resolution that will become a statement of conviction of the Annual Conference, it would be good first to look at the standing resolutions printed in Volume Two of the latest Conference Journal to make sure that you are not duplicating previous efforts. Note the format: most of them are relatively short statements, with very few being a page long. Clear, straight-forward statements that deal with only one topic are most effective. If you have an idea of something that you think would be helpful, but don't know enough to make the argument you want, talk to people in the conference who are familiar with the issue you wish to address. If you need assistance in identifying them, you can contact one of the legislative co-coordinators.

Standing resolutions do not include directions for conference actions or financial commitments. If you have something in mind that would involve both a statement and some action or direction of funding, you must submit it as two or more petitions.

### **3. General Conference Resolutions.**

The United Methodist General Conference considers petitions that modify or add to material in the *Book of Discipline* or in the *Book of Resolutions*. Any United Methodist may submit proposals for change on their own. If you wish that a proposal for change come from the Oregon- Idaho Annual Conference, you must submit it as a General Conference Resolution, usually the year before General Conference meets, though they can be submitted in other years.

If you are interested in submitting a General Conference Resolution, please contact your legislative co-coordinators for the proper form.

The laws and required processes of the church are in *The Book of Discipline*. If you want to propose or change a law or process, you must list the specific paragraph, by number, for the change you are proposing. A resolution requiring, for example, that red-headed clergy refrain from wearing orange stoles must list the appropriate paragraph for that rule to be considered.

The Programs and Social Statements of The United Methodist Church are contained in the *Book of Resolutions*. If you wish to modify a resolution that already exists, you list its Resolution Number and the change you propose. If you want to propose an entirely new program or social statement, you write it all. Proposals asking the General Conference to "create a program to help the homeless" or "take a stand against child abuse" are redundant and incomplete. They would not be successful.

## **The Process for All Submissions**

Once you have determined which kind of resolution you wish to submit, have consulted with others as appropriate, and have perfected your resolution, it is time to record it on the appropriate form, which will be one the conference web site.

Determine who will be prepared to speak for the resolution, and prepare the supportive materials that accompany the resolution. It is important to note that nothing except what appears in the first section of the proposal, the "I/We propose that the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference ..." section, will be debated, amended, adopted, or printed in the conference journal. That supportive material is there only to help people in making up their minds and to address issues of cost. You must decide which material is necessary for the resolution itself and which is not.

If you would like assistance to make sure that your proposed resolution is in good shape, again, we encourage you to submit it early. The legislative team can assist you to make your resolution clear and more likely to be effective.

We encourage those who would like assistance to submit their resolutions as soon as possible. We will be able to help any submissions received by March 19, 2019. Resolutions received thereafter may not be reviewed. The final deadline is March 29, but we strongly encourage you to submit by March 19. If you cannot submit by March 19, please contact the co-coordinators so that the team may be aware that you will submit later.

## **Legislative Assembly**

The Legislative Assembly will hear from the resolution spokesperson, consider, amend, and vote to accept or defeat the proposed resolutions. Those resolutions that receive a vote of 90%, either to accept or to defeat the resolution, will go on the Annual Conference consent calendar, with these exceptions: mandated reports, new Standing Resolutions, and Resolutions with budgetary implications cannot be placed on the consent calendar. Any item can be lifted from the consent calendar for debate by the annual conference session if a motion to lift it is supported by 40 members of annual conference before the vote is taken on the consent calendar.

If you are submitting legislation please keep the date of Legislative Assembly open, so that you (or an alternate) may speak on behalf of your submission and answer any questions. This year, Legislative Assembly will meet on April 27, 2019 at Lake Oswego United Methodist Church in Lake Oswego, Oregon.