

WHY WE WRITE RESOLUTIONS

Among the benefits of participating in Women of the ELCA is the opportunity to have a voice in determining the activities and direction of the organization. Where we go and what we do as a churchwide organization and as synodical organizations is very much up to you. That is why we meet in conventions, and at those conventions, we conduct business via resolutions. A resolution should be thought of as:

- A way to participate in the democratic process and have your voice heard;
- A means of educating women about a need or concern;
- A vehicle for inspiring others to take action.

If you are intimidated at the idea of writing a resolution, you shouldn't be. It isn't that difficult. Resolutions are a way to introduce and deliberate business when you assemble a fairly large number of people together. Five people sitting around a table can discuss business one way; 100 people in a banquet hall must conduct business in a more formalized way if they are going to make any progress.

Resolutions are also a way to plan and think ahead, and to hold ourselves accountable for the decisions we make: A resolution, when passed, is no longer an idea to consider—it is a commitment.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESOLUTIONS

The goal of a resolution is to inform and educate the readers so that they are inspired to take action and approve the resolution. Therefore, every resolution should:

- have a clear and concise title.
- address only one issue—call attention to a need for action.
- call Women of the ELCA to action on something it can influence.
- address concerns relevant to Women of the ELCA that relate to our mission, purpose, ongoing activities, triennium theme, triennium focus, or governance.
- propose an action or a solution to a problem.
- be based on sufficient background and analysis. You should be able to back it up.
- provide enough background to give someone with little knowledge of the subject sufficient information to make an intelligent and informed decision.
- be a source of direction, an instrument in planning.

A successful resolution will thus:

- (1) identify and explain what you want to be addressed. This is the WHEREAS portion.
- (2) propose a solution, a plan of action. This is the RESOLVED portion.

THE “WHEREASES”

This first portion of a resolution is a sort of preamble. It consists of declarations of fact that you can support and back up. Opinions are not expressed in this portion of the resolution.

Each fact should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with WHEREAS, followed by a semi-colon. The final WHEREAS ends with a semi-colon followed by "therefore be it."

THE "RESOLVEDS"

This second portion of the resolution states the action that you propose to address what you identified in the WHEREAS portion. When writing the RESOLVED section, a guide to keep in mind is that this section ought to be able to stand on its own—you shouldn't have to refer to the WHEREAS section to understand what is being asked for.

This is the portion of the resolution where the author or authors express opinions. If more than one solution or action is proposed, each separate solution or action should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with the word "RESOLVED." When a resolution contains multiple "RESOLVED" statements, they are linked by the phrase "and be it further" at the end of each RESOLVED statement, except for the last one.

THE BACKGROUND SUMMARY

This is the narrative portion of the resolution. It doesn't have to be long, but it should provide the rationale for bringing the resolution forward and include a summary of the facts supporting the resolution. It provides answers to the question, "where did this idea come from?" that go beyond simply the facts provided in the WHEREAS section. This is where you provide some context for your enthusiasm to bring forth the resolution.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, this is the part of the resolution that explains the issue or problem; and
WHEREAS, each resolution should address only one issue or problem; and
WHEREAS, each "Whereas" statement should address only one fact, idea or supporting argument related to the issue or problem; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this is the part of the resolution that restates the basic issue or problem and proposes a solution to the issue or problem identified in the "Whereas" statements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each "Resolved" statement should address a separate action to be taken or solution proposed to resolve the issue or problem; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the "Resolved" statement should stand alone and the action proposed therein should be clearly understood by the reader without having to refer back to the "Whereas" statements.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF BROADENING THE SCOPE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS:

Involving young women in Women in of the ELCA in greater numbers

WHEREAS, Women of the ELCA is committed to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, and support one another in our callings;

WHEREAS, Women of the ELCA is called to foster creative programming;

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA is called to recruit, prepare and support new leaders;

therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the _____ synod develop ways to involve young women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the _____ synod partner with local youth on an annual local servant project; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each cluster of the _____ synod bring at least two young women to the annual convention.