

A Michigan United Methodist Guide to Helpful Legislation

There is an issue you care about. There is policy you want examined. You are thinking about submitting a resolution to the Michigan Annual Conference. Here are some helpful tips.

Begin by asking, “What is my goal, and will passing a resolution at Annual Conference accomplish my goal?”

- If your goal is a specific change in Annual Conference policy or structure, submitting a resolution to the Annual Conference session is exactly the appropriate action to take.
- If your goal is to help educate or inform Michigan United Methodists, particularly Annual Conference members, about an issue you care about as a follower of Jesus, a resolution at Annual Conference may be helpful.
- If your goal is to change a government policy on an issue you care about as a follower of Jesus, it seems less likely that having the Michigan Annual Conference approve a resolution will be a significant step toward your goal.

When writing your resolution, be clear and succinct in stating your proposed action.

- What specifically are you asking?
- Who specifically are you asking to take action?
- When should the proposed action occur? What timeline are you proposing?
- If your resolution proposes communication to public officials, identify them by office and not by name.

When writing your resolution, keep your rationale succinct and accurate.

- Check your work for spelling and grammar. A well-written resolution communicates to the Annual Conference members that you have given your resolution thought, care and attention.
- Avoid including extraneous information. Again, be clear and succinct.
- It is better to state your case positively. Let the members know what you are for more than what you are against.
- Be clear about any financial implications. Note rule 5.1.2.4: *A copy of any resolution that would require an expenditure of more than \$1000 must be sent to the Council on Finance and Administration, along with a five-year cost projection, no later than February 1.*
- If you feel the need to include the mention of public officials in your rationale, identify them by office and not by name.

A couple of helpful reminders

- It can be very helpful to consult with other groups in the Annual Conference who may be affected by your resolution.
- Listen again to the words of Colossians 4:6: *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt*

- Remember the words of John Wesley: *They who “walk in the Spirit,” are also led by God into all holiness of conversation. Their “speech is always in grace, seasoned with salt”; with the love and fear of God. “No corrupt communication comes out of their mouth; but only that which is good,” that which is “to the use of edifying,” which is “meet to minister grace to the hearers.”* (from sermon, “The First Fruits of the Spirit”)