

Resolutions

As the State Deputy and his fellow officers prepare for their annual meeting each spring, they will have to consider the various resolutions proposed by the councils in their jurisdiction and decide whether to support or oppose these resolutions. Most of the resolutions that are submitted at state conventions recognize notable achievements by members and clergy in that jurisdiction, pertain to issues of State Council governance, or address other matters relating to the jurisdiction. State Councils may also adopt resolutions that are intended to be submitted to the Supreme Council at its annual meeting in August. This memorandum is intended to provide general guidance on the resolutions process in the State Council and instructions submitting resolutions to the Supreme Council.

State Deputies and State Advocates should pay special attention to the resolutions that are intended to be submitted to the Supreme Council and that could lead to unnecessary controversy (*e.g.*, a resolution proposing to change a longstanding policy of the Knights of Columbus). If the State Deputy or State Advocate becomes aware of such a resolution, he should contact the Supreme Advocate as soon as possible. Resolutions that do not conform to the guidelines established in this memorandum should be rejected by the State Council's Resolutions Committee.

1. The Purpose of the Resolutions Process

The resolutions process is intended to enhance the fraternal character of the Order, to improve its governance and administration, and to serve its evangelical mission. While the Supreme Council welcomes resolutions submitted in good faith to accomplish one of these goals, it strongly discourages State Councils from submitting resolutions challenging well settled policies of the Knights of Columbus that represent the sound judgment of the Supreme Council and that have served the Order well for many years. In this regard, it is important to remember that the purpose of the resolutions process is *not* to “send a message” to the Supreme Council or to challenge policies that have been reaffirmed repeatedly by the delegates at previous Supreme Conventions.

Any resolution that would require amending the Laws of the Order must be submitted to and adopted by the Supreme Council before it can be enacted.

2. Local Councils May Submit Resolutions to the State Council

Section 56(a) of the Laws provides, in pertinent part, that “State Councils are hereby authorized and directed, at the annual meeting thereof, to take into consideration all matters whatever relating to the well-being and good order and laws of the society in the state, or throughout the Order, and pass votes and resolutions thereto . . . in all matters not in conflict with the Constitution, laws, rules and regulations of the Supreme Council, or the Board of Directors” [\[1\]](#)

Thus, pursuant to Section 56(a), each local council in a jurisdiction may, on its own initiative, draft, discuss, and adopt resolutions to be considered by the delegates at the next State Council meeting. All local council resolutions must be submitted in the time and manner specified by the State Council by-laws. Ordinarily, these resolutions will be sent to the State Secretary.

3. The Format of the Resolutions

A resolution is composed of two parts. The first part consists of one or more paragraphs setting forth the relevant facts and the rationale for the action that the delegates are being asked to take. Each paragraph in the first part begins with the word “Whereas”. The second part consists of one or more paragraphs describing with specificity an action to be taken. The first paragraph of the second part of the resolution begins with the words “Therefore be it resolved;” any subsequent paragraphs begin with the words “Further resolved”. [See attached sample resolution.](#)

4. The State Council Resolutions Committee

Each State Council is authorized by its by-laws to establish a Resolutions Committee (hereinafter, “the Committee”). The by-laws ordinarily designate the State Advocate to be Chairman of the Committee. Upon receipt of local council resolutions, the State Secretary shall promptly forward them to the Chairman of the Committee, who in turn will distribute them to the Committee members. In addition to resolutions submitted by local councils, the State Executive Committee may draft and submit resolutions to be considered by the Resolutions Committee and the delegates.

The Committee shall meet at or before the State Council meeting to review the resolutions and to prepare a recommendation as to the disposition of each resolution.

The Chairman of the Committee, working with the State Secretary, must ensure that copies of all proposed resolutions are presented to the delegates before or upon registration for the State Council meeting. As a general rule, resolutions that are not submitted in advance and reviewed by the Committee may not be presented to the delegates, though State Council by-laws may provide an exception to this general rule.

5. The Report of the Resolutions Committee

The Chairman of the Committee shall present his report to the State Council, announcing all valid and properly submitted resolutions, along with the Committee’s recommendations. As to each resolution, the Committee will offer one of the following recommendations:

- (1) Adopt;
- (2) Reject;
- (3) No Action; or
- (4) Refer to the State Executive Committee.

In addition, the Committee may offer a substitute resolution, which modifies or refines the rationale and/or proposed action of one or more submitted resolutions. The substitute resolution may articulate a more precise or comprehensive statement of the issue or may summarize the substance of multiple resolutions pertaining to the same issue. Where multiple resolutions pertaining to the same issue have been submitted, the Committee may also recommend adopting the one resolution that best expresses the State Council’s position, and taking no action on the others.

A recommendation of “No Action” does not indicate that the resolution is without merit. It indicates only that, in the opinion of the Committee: (a) the proposed resolutions should not be expressed by the State Council or the Order at this time; (b) the resolution itself requires no specific action; or (c) the resolution proposes something that is already in effect in the State Council or in the Order.

The State Executive Committee should promptly review and consider resolutions that have been referred to it. The Executive Committee may, in its discretion and in accordance with State Council by-laws, act upon these resolutions or defer action pending further study.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, the chairman of the Resolutions Committee should formally submit its recommendations in a written report to the State Council.

6. Voting on the Resolutions

As stated above, the Chairman of the Committee shall present the Committee's report to the State Council, announcing a recommendation for each resolution under consideration, along with a motion to accept that recommendation.

Robert's Rules of Order provides that a motion presented on behalf of a committee having more than one member does not need a second. Because the Committee consists of more than one member, it is assumed that, if needed, someone on the committee would second the motion.

After the Chairman of the Resolutions Committee makes a motion as to each resolution to accept the Committee's recommendation, there will be a brief pause before the Chairman of the meeting drops the gavel, marking the end of the discussion period for that resolution. If no objection is raised during that pause, it shall be understood that the motion is passed, meaning that the assembled body agrees to follow the Committee's recommendation. If a delegate raises an objection, the question may be discussed and put to a vote, in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Only duly seated delegates may address the State Council to speak in favor of or against any resolution. Upon recognition by the Chairman of the meeting (ordinarily, the State Deputy), the delegate shall give his name, his council number, and his office. He should limit his remarks to the resolution under consideration and should speak in a manner befitting a Catholic gentleman. The Chairman of the meeting may, in his discretion and in accordance with State Council by-laws and *Robert's Rules of Order*, invoke a limitation on debate, provided that the same shall apply uniformly to all delegates.

7. Resolutions Submitted to the Supreme Council

The Laws of the Knights of Columbus permit State Councils to submit to the Supreme Council resolutions that pertain to issues affecting the entire Order. It is expected that all such resolutions will be submitted in good faith and in the spirit of charity, unity, and fraternity.

The Supreme Council resolutions process was established to enable subordinate councils to:

- (1) Express gratitude or support for a person, a fraternal program, or a policy of the Order;
- (2) Amend the Constitution or Laws of the Order;
- (3) Express an official position of the Knights of Columbus on matters relevant to the mission and identity of the Order; and
- (4) Offer proposals to enhance the Order's fraternal mission.

State Councils **must not** submit resolutions that deal exclusively with matters of local significance and that are relevant only to that particular jurisdiction.

Resolutions that do not conform to these expectations and purposes may be deemed out of order, in which case they would not be published to the Supreme Convention, and would not be considered by the delegates.

In recent years there have been attempts by some to use the resolutions process to undermine or compromise longstanding policies of the Knights of Columbus that have been carefully considered and consistently reaffirmed by the delegates at previous conventions. By deliberately submitting antagonistic or detrimental proposals through the resolutions process, the sponsors of these resolutions turn away from our first principle of charity and break the bonds of unity and fraternity, regrettably bringing dishonor on themselves and on their State Councils.

Under the Order's procedures, delegates to the Supreme Council may consider only those resolutions that have been officially adopted by a State Council or submitted to the Supreme Council by the Board of Directors. Resolutions that have not been adopted by the State Council should not be submitted to the Supreme Council. A State Council must affirmatively adopt a resolution in order for the Supreme Council to consider it. "Adoption" of a resolution by a State Council means that the program, policy, or sentiment expressed in the resolution has the support of the delegates to the State Council meeting. By adopting a resolution and submitting the resolution to the Supreme Council, the State Council is effectively stating that it supports the resolution and recommends adoption by the Supreme Council.

A State Council may also use the resolutions process to amend its own by-laws. Upon adoption of a resolution proposing any changes to its by-laws, the State Council shall submit the proposed amendments to the Supreme Advocate for a preliminary review, after which he will refer the amendments to the Board of Directors. The Board will then consider and vote upon these amendments at its meeting in August.

Pursuant to Section 22 of the Laws of the Knights of Columbus, resolutions adopted by a State Council for consideration by the Supreme Council or the Board of Directors must be submitted to the Office of the Supreme Secretary no later than June 15. Please submit these resolutions by email using the following email address: supremesecretary@kofc.org

Resolutions will be acknowledged in writing and sent to the Office of the Supreme Advocate for purposes of inventory and preliminary review. Once the resolutions are categorized, organized, and published in a booklet, they will be referred to the Committee on Laws and Resolutions. Any resolutions received after June 15 will not be published to the Supreme Convention and will not be considered by the delegates.

[1] If it appears that any proposed resolution may conflict with the Charter, Constitution, and Laws of the Order, a decision of the Board of Directors, any federal state, or local law, *Robert's Rules of Order*, or guidance contained in the Officers' Desk Reference, then that resolution may be declared out of order. For procedural guidance on ruling a resolution out of order, please contact the Supreme Advocate's Office.

Rev. March 2016*