

Submitted by:

The General Convention Deputation of the Diocese of Florida

Resolution Title:

Calling on Diocesan Council to include one youth position as a member of Diocesan Council.

Submission of Resolution:

Whereas, the youth of our church are deeply concerned with the well-being and future of the Episcopal Church, and their active participation is essential for the church's growth and sustainability;

Whereas, the youth desire to have their voices heard at the councils of the church, ensuring that their perspectives and ideas are considered in decision-making processes;

Whereas, the youth can bring a fresh and different perspective to the vestries and mission boards of our diocese, contributing innovative ideas and approaches that can benefit the church community as a whole;

Whereas, adult communicants, as defined in the Canons of the Episcopal Church¹, are aged 16 and older and are expected to be confirmed;

Whereas, section 617.0802 of the Florida Statutes² stipulates that Boards of Directors, such as Diocesan Council, may have one member aged 15 or older.

Be it resolved, that Canon 10, Sections 2 and 3 of the Canons of the Diocese of Florida be amended as follows:

CANON 10
Of the Diocesan Council

SECTION 2. Composition. The Diocesan Council shall be composed of:

- A. the Bishop (seat, voice, and vote on Diocesan Council),
- B. the Regional Canons appointed by the Bishop (seat, voice, and vote on Diocesan Council),
- C. five lay members at-large elected by Diocesan Convention (seat, voice, and vote on Diocesan Council),
- D. two clergy members at-large elected by Diocesan Convention (seat, voice, and voted on Diocesan Council),
- E. ***one youth member at-large (aged 16-17) elected by Diocesan Council (seat, voice, and vote on Diocesan Council)***,
- F. the Secretary of the Diocese (seat, voice, no vote on Diocesan Council),
- G. the Treasurer of the Diocese (seat, voice, no vote on Diocesan Council),
- H. the Chancellor of the Diocese (seat, voice, no vote on Diocesan Council), and
- I. the President of the Standing Committee (seat, voice, no vote unless the Standing Committee is acting as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, then vote on Diocesan Council).

¹ Title I, Canon 17, section 1(b) and (c)

² Qualifications of directors. - (1) Directors must be natural persons who are 18 years of age or older but need not be residents of this state or members of the corporation unless the articles of incorporation or bylaws so require. For a corporation organized according to the provisions of s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, but not for a corporation regulated by chapter 718, chapter 719, chapter 720, chapter 721, or chapter 723 or a corporation for which membership in such corporation is required pursuant to a document recorded in the county property records, one director may be 15 years of age or older if so permitted in the articles of incorporation or bylaws or by resolution of the board of directors. The articles of incorporation or the bylaws may prescribe additional qualifications for directors.

SECTION 3. Terms and Election of Members.

- A. Each at-large member of the Diocesan Council shall be elected for a term of three years and shall serve until the member's successor is installed.
- B. ***The youth member at-large of the Diocesan Council shall be elected for a term of one year and shall serve until the youth member's successor is elected.***
- C. The Regional Cannons shall serve as members of Diocesan Council during their period of appointment as Regional Canons.
- D. The Secretary of the Diocese, the Treasurer of the Diocese, the Chancellor of the Diocese and the President of the Standing Committee will serve as members of Diocesan Council for the period of time they fill their respective positions.
- E. For purposes of election, the lay members shall be slated by Region but elected by the entire Diocesan Convention. One at-large lay member shall be a member of a parish in each Region of the Diocese. Each at-large lay member shall be continuously throughout their term of office a member of a parish in the Region from which they were elected.

Explanation:

As a member of the Official Youth Presence (OYP) to the 2024 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Evan Van Brunt, a member of our diocese, was moved by the power of the legislative process of our Church and the ability of the OYP to share their thoughts and opinions as the House of Deputies deliberated on various resolutions and matters before the House. During legislative sessions and committee hearings, members of the General Convention, as well as visitors and guests, listened intently to the words of the OYP who shared heartfelt concerns and opinions regarding the matters being considered. As part of the Convention, the OYP was asked to present to the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. Evan was one of a few that spoke to the House of Deputies regarding their place in the life of the Episcopal Church and felt called to bring voice to the youth of our diocese at our Diocesan Convention and on our vestries and mission boards.