

C-4 Amend Article III.1(e) (FIRST READING)

Proposed language:

Article III. Composition of the Convention.

Section 1.

e. The Lay members of the Standing Committee, the Lay members of the Executive Board, the Chancellor, the Presidents of the Regions, the President of the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese, one Youth Delegate (not over 21 years of age) elected by each Regional Council on or before May 1, provided, however, that any Regional Council may elect any otherwise-eligible youth communicant in good standing of a congregation in this Diocese without regard to the youth's home congregation, and five lay persons, not over 25 years of age at the time of election who are participants in an Episcopal higher education ministry in the Diocese, to be elected by the Standing Committee on or before May 1 as Collegiate Delegates shall be members of Convention ex officio.

Background of the proposed amendment to the Constitution: Youth delegates were first approved at the 197th Annual Council (1992) to bring younger voices into the governance of the Diocese; in the proceeding 198th Council (1993) the number of youth delegates was raised from four to five and responsibility shifted from election by the Executive Board to Region Councils electing them on a rotating basis as established by Standing Committee. The first five youth delegates served at the 199th Convention in 1994. In 2012, the Constitution was changed to permit a youth delegate elected by each Regional Council. Youth participation increased in the first five conventions after 2015, but participation has declined since then, with only one year (2019) having more than 50% youth participation. Only 60% of the available seats have been filled over that period, and in the last two years, participation has fallen to 22%.

Under Article III, Section 1(e) of the Constitution of the Diocese of Virginia, each of the sixteen Regions may elect one youth delegate. While no constitutional language limits elections to youth residing within a Region, that has become the practice. This leaves seats vacant when no eligible youth are available locally; at the same time, some Regions have more youth ready and able to serve than the current structure allows.

This constitutional amendment preserves the total of sixteen youth delegates but clarifies that a Region may elect any eligible youth communicant from across the Diocese. This ensures all sixteen seats can be filled, strengthens youth representation, and maintains regional responsibility for election. While a canonical amendment to Canon 2 ("Lay Representation in Convention") appears appropriate, this constitutional amendment is offered should it be deemed the more appropriate path.

<i>Council/Convention</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Possible</i>	<i>Present</i>
217th Council	2012	5	5
218th Council	2013	5	5

219th Council	2014	15	13
220th Council	2015	15	15
221st Council	2016	15	9
222nd Convention	2017	15	12
223rd Convention	2017	15	15
224th Convention	2018	16	7
225th Convention	2019	16	9
226th Convention	2020	16	6
227th Convention	2021	16	6
228th Convention	2022	16	4
229th Convention	2023	16	3
		181	109
2012-2023 Participation Rate			60%
2018-2023 Participation Rate			36%
2022-2023 Participation Rate			22%

Submitted by:

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