



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: September 30, 2019

FROM: Cathy Bouchard, national chairperson of resolutions

TO: Parish chairpersons of resolutions

CC: Parish presidents, diocesan presidents, provincial presidents and life members (on request)

“May God give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed” (Ps 20:4).

In the League, resolutions form the policy of who and what the League is as an organization. Members are excited about presenting the position of the League through resolutions but may not think they have the tools to make it happen. The first step to create a resolution is to become aware of an issue. Find a topic you are passionate about, share it with the parish council and get members participation by forming a committee. Involve people who might be experts on this topic. Decide who the concern should be directed to—to the League itself at any level, or through the voice of the League to outside groups or institutions, such as government, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, businesses, etc. “When directed within the League, its purpose is to propose a plan, establish a policy, [and] recommend action or censure. When directed to a group outside the League ... [it] is to influence others to take action that the League itself cannot take, to state the League’s position on an issue, to petition or to express concern” (*Resolution Supplement to the Executive Handbook*, page 2).

Research and gather support material. “Resolutions must be well-researched, with careful planning and attention to details” (ibid., page 3). When research is done online, copy the website address and record the date the website was accessed. Newer research on a topic is best. Examine opposing views on the topic. Working together with others in the research and action of a resolution one way to live out the baptismal call.

Write the resolved clause(s). These clearly state the desired action to be taken. It should be worded positively, be forceful, with a degree of formality and written so when read alone it makes sense. Resolved clauses contain three essential parts—the name of the council requesting the action, the title of the official or group to whom the resolution is directed and the action requested.

The next step is to **draft the whereas clause(s).** These clause(s) state the reason(s) for the requested action. The first clause defines the issue. Additional clauses “provide, in a logical order, the strongest reasons for requesting action. These clauses should be worded positively,

based on documented, accurate facts and be clear and concise” (*Resolutions Supplement*, page 5). At the national level whereas clauses are no longer considered as part of the resolution. When presented on the convention floor, these clauses are not included for debate. I suggest using whereas clauses to form the topic sentences for the brief. The national resolutions committee needs to know the reasons (whereas clauses) for the concerns; however, the reasons are not debated

In continuing the process, **craft the bridging clauses**. Bridging clauses are used to ensure action is not taken until a resolution is adopted at the level to which it is destined and the resolution is properly forwarded to its destination. The resolution must be brought to the parish council level as a motion (moved, seconded, discussion where it may be amended, vote) A majority vote decides a resolution’s fate.

Draft the Accompanying Brief, a concise statement of fact, expanding on a resolution and explaining why the resolution is necessary. The brief should inform and persuade the intended audience. The brief is accompanied by a **works cited** document. This list supplies sufficient background information and pertinent facts to facilitate study by the resolutions committees at other levels. If the League is to approach a government or other group with a resolution, it must be sure facts or statistics are accurate, relevant to support the argument and obtained from reliable sources.

Draft a proposed **action plan** to implement action on resolved clauses, for example, members to become aware..., invite speakers..., write letters to..., become familiar with a particular law, publication, government stand, etc. An action plan should support the objective of the resolution.

The resolution is **presented for adoption** at each level to bring it to the desired audience. A resolution may be directed with the municipality, diocese or province. You may wish to direct attention to others through the voice of the number of women represented at each level (parish council, diocesan council...) to influence others by bringing awareness of the concerns of members. Remember each member not only represents the League, but family members, friends and those who work with members and know the League has their interest and will make this known. When a resolution is worked on by a committee, it no longer belongs to the originator.

When in doubt, check the League website for examples of resolutions, briefs, works cited and/or consulted, and action plans as listed in past national resolutions. There is material available from the national website or from the next level chairperson of resolutions to assist in developing a resolution. Be sure to ask for help. The best source is the *Resolutions Supplement to the Executive Handbook* available at cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/618-Resolutions-Supplement-to-Executive-Handbook-2014.pdf.

Remember to pray at every stage of the development of a resolution, that God’s will be done, that the work and resolutions will be a reflection of the love God alone can give. We ask that God’s love touches others through our lives, deeds and actions. We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ and through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

(Information used for this memo from the *Resolutions Supplement to the Executive Handbook*.)

“For God and Canada.”