

Proposed Change to the Rules of Order

The Committee on Constitution and Canons is submitting a proposed amendment to the current Rules of Order, Section B, paragraphs 4, 5, and 6. The amendment will replace current paragraphs 4-6 with the following:

Four Deputies and Alternate Deputies in each order to General Convention are to be elected by a majority of those present and voting. Those voting shall rank nominees in order of preference with 1 being the most preferred candidate, 2 the second most preferred and so on. All candidates shall be ranked.

Counting will proceed as follows:

If a candidate receives a majority of first place ballots, that person is elected. That name is then removed from all future rounds of counting. The ballots marking that person as first preference shall then be distributed by adding those ballots' next highest preference to the remaining candidates as though they were first preference votes. If one of the remaining candidates then has a majority of the votes cast, that person is declared elected, and removed from future balloting and the ballots for that person distributed to the appropriate remaining candidates. That process shall continue until no remaining candidate has a majority, or all deputies and alternates have been elected.

If in a round of counting, no candidate has a majority of highest preference ballots, the ballots cast for the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes shall be distributed to the next highest preference on that ballot. That process shall be followed until all slots for deputies and alternates are filled. In subsequent rounds all unelected nominees shall be included in counting until all slots are filled.

Current Rules of Order: (Part of Section B: General Rules)

Four Deputies in each order to General Convention are to be elected by a majority of those present and voting. If after the first ballot sufficient Deputies have not been elected, there shall be a second ballot prepared by eliminating from the ballot such nominees in each order, beginning with the nominee in each order who received the least number of votes on the first ballot, as may be necessary to reduce the number of nominees in each order to twice the number of vacancies to be filled from that order.

If after the second ballot, all vacancies have not been filled, by consent of a majority of those present, a motion may, then or after any succeeding ballot, be entertained to elect unanimously to the vacancy or vacancies still existing in each order the nominee or nominees of that order who received the highest number of votes, but less than a majority, on the preceding ballot and the same shall be declared duly elected.

Alternate Deputies shall then be elected from among the remaining candidates in each order by plurality vote and shall rank in the order of the number of votes received.

Rationale: The current system results in multiple votes scattered throughout the day during convention, and both can disrupt the convention's focus on other items, and prolongs the proceedings. Ranked choice voting will allow this to be done in one ballot. Ranked choice voting has been used for many years in some countries and has been introduced at the state level in several U.S. states. The Diocese of Massachusetts has long used a form of ranked choice voting at its conventions. Ranked choice does ensure that candidates with the broadest support are at the top of the order while not pitting individual candidates against each other in later rounds, as has often happened with the third or fourth ballots. By passing the change in 2024, the diocese has time to familiarize itself with the method before having to use it at the 2025 convention.