

# Demystifying the Legislative Process

## Required Elements of Resolutions to Amend the Blue Book

Pursuant to S.R. 55.150, a resolution to amend must:

- Quote in full all existing laws affected by the resolutions as they read without amendment, including the numbers and titles of the laws.
- Quote in full the same laws as they would read if the resolution were to be adopted
- Be signed by member of Grand Lodge.
- Be filed with the Grand Secretary no later than April 1 (Grand Master may waive filing date).

## Optional Elements of Resolutions to Amend the Blue Book

The resolution may:

- Highlight the changes (technically optional, but very important if the author hopes to get the legislation passed).
- Use **bold face**, underline, or *italics* for additions.
- Use strikeout for deletions.

Three versions sometimes may be helpful if the changes are extensive:

- Version 1 – The current law.
- Version 2 – The proposed amendments, with additions and deletions highlighted as suggested above.
- Version 3 – The law as it will read after amendment.

The author should consider including the rationale for the amendment (what is hoped to be accomplished and why) to give the Members of Grand Lodge a complete understanding of the legislation.

## Jurisprudence Committee Review

The Jurisprudence Committee must review all resolutions. The committee's review addresses these questions:

- Is the resolution in proper form? (Please note: The committee does not rewrite or correct resolutions.)
- Are there other laws affected by the resolution but omitted from the resolution?
- Does the resolution create conflicts with other laws, especially those of greater precedence?
- Can the resolution be implemented?

## Jurisprudence Committee Report

The Jurisprudence Committee reports the following to Grand Lodge:

- Is the resolution in proper form?
- Are there omissions, conflicts, or implementation problems?
- What is the effect on Masonic Law, Lodge or Grand Lodge operation, obligations or rights and privileges of members, or other matters if the proposal is adopted?

The Jurisprudence Committee may need to contact the author of proposed legislation either prior to or during Annual Communication. For that reason, the written resolution should provide:

- The email address and cell phone number of the author.
- The name and cell phone number of the proponent of the legislation at Annual Communication, if that person is not the author.

### Different Laws, Different Processes

Different types of resolutions follow different process.

Resolutions to amend the Constitution of the Grand Lodge must be considered at two Annual Communications of Grand Lodge.

At the first presentation of a Constitutional Amendment, the question to be addressed is, "Do a majority of Grand Lodge members second the proposal?"

- If yes, the proposal holds over.
- If no, the proposal is dead.

At the second presentation of a Constitutional Amendment, the question to be addressed is, "Do a majority of Grand Lodge members concur with the proposal?"

- If yes, the proposal is adopted.
- If no, the proposal is defeated.

Resolutions to amend the By-Laws of the Grand Lodge also must be considered at two Annual Communications of Grand Lodge.

At the first presentation of a By-Laws Amendment, the question to be addressed is, "Do a majority of Grand Lodge members second the proposal?"

- If yes, the proposal holds over.
- If no, proposal is dead.
- Unlike a Constitutional Amendment, a By-Laws Amendment may be adopted at the first presentation on recommendation of Jurisprudence Committee and upon receiving a unanimous vote from the members.

At the second presentation of a By-Laws Amendment, the question to be addressed is, "Do a majority of Grand Lodge members concur with the proposal?"

- If yes, the proposal is adopted.
- If no, the proposal is defeated.

Resolutions to amend the Grand Lodge Rules and Regulations may be adopted the first time the proposal is considered by Grand Lodge. The question to be addressed is, “Do a majority of Grand Lodge Members concur with the proposal?”

- If yes, the proposal is adopted.
- If no, the proposal is defeated.

Resolutions to amend the Grand Lodge Rules of Order may be adopted the first time the proposal is considered by Grand Lodge. The question to be addressed is, “Do two-thirds of Grand Lodge Members concur with the amendment?”

- If yes, amendment is adopted.
- If no, amendment is defeated.

### Amendments to Resolutions

Resolutions generally may be amended before final consideration. The Jurisprudence Committee typically recommends that the Grand Master determine that an amendment is out of order if it substantially rewrites the resolution or changes the intent or effect of the resolution to such an extent that members of Grand Lodge do not have fair notice of the question on which they will be called to vote.

### Rules of Order for Debate and Consideration

The Rules of Order of the Grand Lodge provide the following structure for debate and consideration of resolutions:

- Decorum shall prevail.
- Every motion must be seconded.
- There is no debate until the motion is stated by the Grand Master.
- Every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Grand Master or Grand Secretary requests.
- Every member must vote unless excused.
- No member may speak more than twice on a subject without permission from the Grand Master.
- During debate only the following motions are in order:
  - o To commit to a committee.
  - o To amend.
  - o To postpone to a definite time or indefinitely.

### Jurisprudence Committee Assistance

For assistance with Jurisprudence Committee related questions, contact the Jurisprudence Committee by email at [jc@ingrandlodge.org](mailto:jc@ingrandlodge.org).