



Open Hearing Rules

The purpose of the Open Hearings on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws and Resolutions (Thursday, April 22) is to allow Committee members to receive comments and feedback from delegates and official observers on their proposals. The goal is to hear as many varied points of view as possible in an orderly fashion. Customs of formality serve to maintain the Committee Chair's necessary position of impartiality and help to preserve an objective approach to the Open Hearing process. The following rules will help both Committees to achieve this goal.

1. Each Chair will guide discussion by systematically reviewing each provision/resolution so that comments can be provided.
2. Delegates and Official Observers are required to wear the badge issued to them if they wish to offer comments during the Open Hearing.
3. To provide comments, an individual must go to the microphone and wait in line to be recognized. When the Chair recognizes the individual, the person should state his/her name and the organization that he/she represents.
4. An individual making comments should note the page(s) and line number(s) (if they exist) to which his/her comments refer.
5. A person may offer comments of no more than two minutes and may not offer comments on the same issue more than once. Any attached commentary is not subject to discussion/amendment. This includes, but is not limited to the Summary of Changes in the Report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee or explanatory text accompanying each resolution.
6. All remarks must be addressed to the chair. Individuals cannot address one another directly. The intent of the Open Hearing is to provide feedback to the responsible Committee.
7. Comments must be germane to the topic. The Chair reserves the right to interrupt any speaker who comments on matters that are not presently before the body.
8. Comments must be constructive. If a person speaks against a section of the proposed document, he/she should offer a specific suggestion for revision. Under no circumstances can an individual attack or question the motives of another individual.
9. Individuals should avoid repeating points already made by previous speakers.
10. Any suggestions to change the proposed language should be submitted in writing to the presiding chair or his/her designate.

An amendment to the Constitution and/or Bylaws may be proposed in writing by ten or more delegates at any session of the Membership Meeting except the final session. Such an amendment shall be referred to the Board of Trustees, which shall report on it at the next succeeding session. Amendments submitted in this fashion require approval of not less than seven-eighths of the members present and voting.

A resolution that was not submitted to the Resolutions Committee thirty days before the Membership Meeting may only be considered with the permission of two-thirds of the members present and voting.