

# Writing effective resolutions for conventions

BCGEU – November 2019



## About our conventions

- Every three years (triennial)
- Conventions are the union's policy-making body
- Resolutions are presented, discussed and voted on by delegates
- Once adopted, resolutions become part of the BCGEU's overall mandate
  
- **Our next convention is June 10–13, 2020**



## What is a resolution?

- A resolution is a **call to action** made by union members
- Resolutions are submitted to **convention** for consideration by delegates



## What's in a resolution

- Resolutions may ask that the union:
  - Take a position on an important issue
  - Implement a new policy
  - Change the constitution or structure of the BCGEU



## How do resolutions get to convention?

- Resolutions usually start as a suggestion from members
- They are then debated, merged with similar resolutions, and voted on by the following bodies, in order:
  1. Local executive
  2. Component executive
  3. Provincial executive resolutions committee
  4. Provincial executive
- Resolutions can also come from the Provincial Executive or its committees



## What are resolutions about?

- Resolutions start with an idea, something a member feels strongly about
- They can address a wide range of issues:
  - Social, public policy, or political issues
    - e.g. Eliminate MSP premiums; lobby for pay equity
  - Internal union issues
    - e.g. videoconference technology for meetings; conduct a disability accessibility audit on our buildings



## The format of a resolution

1. **The resolve** – what you want the union to do
  - This is the most important part, “The BCGEU will...”
  - The resolve should be able to make sense on its own
  - It is the only part recorded once passed
2. **The explanation** – why you want the union to take this action
  - Follows the resolve and gives context, “Because...”
  - Not recorded once passed



## What makes a good resolution?

- Clear and simple modern language
- Addresses only **one** subject
- Goal should be achievable
- Results should be measurable



## Clear and simple modern language

- Although there are no word limits, being concise helps delegates follow your intention
  - **Unclear, not concise:**
    - Wherefore, be it henceforth resolved that at this, the 51st British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union Triennial Constitutional Convention, 2020, that the BCGEU delegates at the aforementioned Convention will all have tea and crumpets daily for a third of an hour, said period to commence promptly one hour after the commencement of the morning session of the Convention proceedings, and for the duration of the Convention, effective immediately.
  - **Clear, concise:**
    - BCGEU Convention delegates will have a 20-minute refreshment break at 10:00 AM.



## Achievable and measurable

- **Unachievable, not measurable**
  - The BCGEU will create world peace
- **Achievable, measurable**
  - The BCGEU will lobby the government to support arms control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons



## Other things to keep in mind

- The union can't compel a government body to do anything
- Successful resolutions appeal to the broad interests of most delegates
- A national or international focus? Refer to our affiliated bodies.
  - The resolve may be a call to action or cooperation from the BC Federation of Labour (BC Fed), National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) or the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)



## Previous resolutions

- Local and component executives should review the tracking document for previous resolutions to convention
  - You can find examples of previous (successful and unsuccessful) resolutions
  - You may want to consider whether a resolution is redundant if a similar one was passed at a previous convention and action taken by the union



## Example: MSP premiums (2017)

The BCGEU will

- lobby the British Columbia government to eliminate MSP premiums;

BECAUSE the rest of Canada has moved away from the monthly premium charges; and

BECAUSE British Columbia is the only province which continues to charge flat-rate premiums.



## Example: Disability Audits (2017)

The BCGEU will

- conduct disability accessibility audits on all BCGEU buildings, meetings, conventions, and events;

BECAUSE disability accessibility audits are a useful means of assessing the current state of accessibility and usability of members with varied disabilities; and

BECAUSE adapting to meet the access needs of members with different disabilities are likely to make it easier for members to be involved by identifying, and removing barriers of exclusion.



## Timelines

- Our next convention is June 10–13, 2020
- Non–Provincial Executive resolutions must be submitted first to locals. Look for a notice with the deadline for your local.
- Local executives: notices should clearly indicate that resolutions will be considered at the local meeting and include a resolution form.
- **Deadline for submission of resolutions to HQ: by or before April 10, 2020**

