

NB 2. Recommendation regarding Nominations from the Floor of Annual Conference

Background

The impetus for this recommendation comes from a number of conversations within Nominating Committee and Standing Committee over a period of years. Recognizing that nominations from the floor may have originated from a desire for a system that includes checks and balances or that strengthens a sense of inclusion or transparency for some, ongoing concerns about this process nonetheless continue to surface.

Nominating Committee and Standing Committee discussions about floor nominations have noted the following issues:

- Those wanting to nominate a candidate have 5-6 months to do so before the Nominating Committee and Standing Committee process of forming a ballot takes place.
- Floor nominations exclude the steps of discernment present in the established nominating process. (Names of credentialed clergy are checked with the Office of Ministry to be certain no ethics violations exist; Nominating Committee spends time in reading nominating materials, prayer, discussion, and decisions around creating the 1st ballot of four names/office; Standing Committee members do some of the same as they vote on the final ballot of two names/office to go to Annual Conference.)
- A floor nomination by a single person allows for automatic inclusion on the ballot, when the established process requires multiple voices and levels of approval. Incentive to participate in the full process may also be diminished as a result.
- Candidates placed on the ballot during the established process have been preparing and planning for some months for the possibility of serving if elected; adding names can seem dismissive of this preparation.
- Delegates have very limited time to consider a name nominated from the floor, given the time constraints of the election process at Annual Conference, as opposed to having several months to consider names on the ballot presented by Standing Committee.
- When nominations are made from the floor of Annual Conference, there is often confusion for the delegates about the reasons for these additional nominations. Names are given for nomination, but no explanation, background, or rationale is included.

The following recommendation addresses some of these concerns. If adopted, it will require that anyone rising to make a nomination from the floor of Annual Conference will be asked, before presenting a name, to offer reasons why the ballot as it exists for a particular position is inadequate. Prior to any candidate from the floor being named, Annual Conference delegates will be asked to vote on whether to accept a new nomination based on the reason offered. If a ma-

1 jority of delegates vote to approve, the person seeking to present an additional
2 nominee may continue with presenting a name. If the motion fails, the intended
3 nomination shall not be presented nor named.

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5 This change emphasizes that the delegate body as a whole has the authority to
6 change the ballot and must vote to do so before any names of additional nom-
7 inees would reach the delegate body. This takes seriously the fact that the ballot
8 has been prepared in keeping with the prayerful process of discernment that
9 polity expects Nominating Committee and Standing Committee to provide. Sec-
10 ondly, having the nominator name the reason that they believe the ballot for a
11 position is inadequate allows more transparency and honesty, informing the
12 whole delegate body as to why the ballot might need to be changed. The dele-
13 gates can therefore make a more informed decision when they vote.

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15 This recommendation does not resolve concerns about the in-depth discern-
16 ment made by the nominees who have prepared over the course of months to
17 make themselves available to the church, nor the time and energy invested by
18 the Nominating Committee in prayerfully preparing the ballot. It does, however,
19 address concerns regarding balance of perspectives and sharing of power.

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21 The Nominating Committee and the Standing Committee believe this proposal
22 offers the best way forward at this time as we strive to honor our collective wis-
23 dom when it comes to calling leadership, including the wisdom of those who
24 feel excluded or concerned about our nomination process. It also provides a
25 process that does not undermine the hard and careful work of those whom we
26 have called to prepare the ballot for the Annual Conference.

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28 This change in procedure would happen by amending Conference Rule #12,
29 which currently states:

30 "A nomination from the floor must be made by name only at the time the
31 ballot is being considered. Biographical information and written consent by
32 the nominee must be submitted to the Annual Conference Secretary at that
33 time for publication and distribution."

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35 The proposed change is shown in the recommendation below.

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37 [Note: the footnote would not become polity; it would simply be shown with the
38 amended Conference Rule as approved procedure, in keeping with our current practice.]
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40 Recommendation

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42 That Conference Rule 12 be amended as follows:

43 "A nomination from the floor must be made in a two-step process: First,
44 one must make a motion to permit further nominations for one specific
45 position, stating the reason why they believe the ballot for that position to
46 be inadequate. The presentation and explanation of the motion will be lim-

ited to one minute. If the motion fails, the intended nomination shall not be presented nor named. If the Annual Conference delegates vote to permit a further nomination, then a nomination from the floor must be made by name only at the time the ballot is being considered. Biographical information and written consent by the nominee must be submitted to the Annual Conference Secretary at that time for publication and distribution."¹

Action of the 2022 Standing Committee: On July 8, 2022, the 2022 Standing Committee adopted a motion to present this item of business to the 2023 Annual Conference recommending the adoption of this change in Conference Rule #12 concerning nominations from the floor.

1.1979 Minutes (1975-1979), "Annual Conference Elections," 572. The Annual Conference Officers request that persons intending to make a nomination from the floor inform the Officers in advance. A form will be made available online and on the Nominating Committee table at Annual Conference for writing out a motion to make a nomination from the floor. The motion must be made using the format on that form: "I move to permit additional nominations for the position of _____ because the ballot is inadequate for this reason: _____." The form shall be submitted to a messenger to be taken to the Officers before the motion is made.