

VOTING RIGHTS OF CLERGY AND LAY MEMBERS
TO SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE BY CATEGORY
VIRTUAL SPECIAL SESSION OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE | OCTOBER 18, 2025 | 9:00 am

- Lay members to annual conference may vote on anything on the floor of the annual conference, including constitutional amendments (this does not include clergy session, although the lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry are allowed voice and vote at clergy session). [¶602 and ¶33]. This would include: lay members elected by a charge or ministry setting, district lay leaders, district youth representatives, district young adult representatives, diaconal ministers, active Deaconesses, Home Missioners under episcopal appointment in South Carolina, Certified Lay Ministers assigned to a charge, elected conference officers, conference lay leaders, conference directors of Lay Servant Ministries, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries, president of Conference Youth organization, president of Conference young adult organization, Conference president of United Women in Faith, and Conference president of MennMinistry.
- South Carolina clergy members in full connection (this includes deacons and elders, active and retired, as well as persons in all voluntary leave categories) are eligible to vote on anything on the floor of the annual conference plus all matters that come before the clergy session. [¶602 and ¶33]
- Associate members of South Carolina (retired and active) may vote on all matters except constitutional amendments; and (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (this is basically nearly everything at clergy session). [¶602 and ¶33]
- Provisional members of South Carolina may vote on all matters except constitutional amendments; and (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Note that provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional conference; but this will not be in play at the 2025 special annual conference session. [¶602, ¶327.2 and ¶33]
- Full and Part Time Local Licensed Pastors (*including appointed retired local pastors*) who are currently (*this means at the time of the AC session*) under appointment may vote on all matters except (a) constitutional amendments; and (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Note that Local pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional conference; but this will not be in play at the 2025 special annual conference session. [¶602, ¶317.6 and ¶33]
- Recognized retired local pastors not appointed, are technically laity. They are allowed to participate in the 2025 special annual conference session with voice but not vote. [¶320.5d]
- Clergy members of other annual conferences and other Methodist Denominations currently serving under appointment in South Carolina maintain their right to vote in their home annual conference. They are allowed to participate in the 2025 special annual conference session with voice but not vote. [¶346.1]
- Clergy from other non-Methodist Denominations currently serving under appointment in South Carolina, and approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, maintain their right to vote in their home annual conference. They are allowed to participate in the 2025 special annual conference session with voice but not vote. [¶346.2 and South Carolina BOM Policy XII.c.ii-iii.]
- Clergy on Honorable Location no longer hold membership in the annual conference, and do not hold voting rights on any annual conference or clergy session matter. [¶359]
- Affiliate clergy members of the annual conference are members of other annual conferences, but appointed to extension ministry or appointments beyond the local church in the bounds of the South Carolina conference, maintain their right to vote in their home annual conference. They are allowed to participate in the 2025 special annual conference session with voice but not vote. [¶344.4]

2020/2024 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE: The annual conference, for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline of The United Methodist Church, provided that in exercise of its powers, each annual conference shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination. (**¶604.1**)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE RULES OF ORDER AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE: The procedure of the Annual Conference shall be governed by the following in the order listed: The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, The Standing Rules of the Annual Conference, The Rules of Order of the preceding General Conference and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. (**SR 1**)

RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

HANDLING A MOTION

1. Member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. Chair states the question on the motion.¹
4. Motion is pending and open for debate.²
5. Assembly decides on the motion: adopts/rejects.
6. Chair announces results of vote.

¹Until the chair states the question, the maker of the motion has the right to modify the motion or withdraw it entirely. i.e. with the agreement of the Second.

²After three speeches for and three against, the question shall be put automatically. However, the chairperson or designated member presenting the report shall be entitled to speak before the vote is taken. (SR7)

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW:

- Only one question can be considered at a time; once a motion is before the assembly:
 1. Adopts or rejects.
 2. Or disposed in some other way.
- SECONDARY MOTION:
 1. Made and considered while the main motion is pending.
 2. Must be acted upon or disposed of before direct consideration of the main question can be continued.
- Subsidiary Motions can be amended except: Motion to "Postpone indefinitely", "Previous Question", or "Lay on the Table".
- In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business, time is saved by procedure of GENERAL CONSENT: example: "If there is no objection ...". If there is objection, chair states the question and allows debate and vote.
- AN AMENDMENT of the THIRD degree is not permitted.
- It is possible to introduce a "Substitute for the substitute" which CANNOT be amended, since it is a Secondary Amendment.

TO SUBSTITUTE:

- A substitute offered for a main motion or resolution (or paragraph), is a PRIMARY AMENDMENT and usually is in order ONLY when no other amendment is pending.
- HOWEVER, superseding this is GENERAL CONFERENCE RULE OF ORDER NO. 28 – "PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING BY SUBSTITUTION": Rule of Order No. 28 used when substitutes are offered for ORIGINAL Conference Reports of Boards, Committees, or Resolutions "even if amendments are pending, a substitute may be offered by any delegate moving that the same be substituted for the report, resolution, or amendment under consideration. The substitute shall be an alternative to what is before the body and not simply a negation of the main motion."
 1. Steps For GENERAL CONFERENCE RULE OF ORDER NO. 28:
 - a. Debate on the motion to substitute will be limited to the question of substitution only, no amendments allowed.
 - b. Vote on substitute, if prevails by majority vote, becomes main motion.
 - c. Debate, amendment moves forward on main motion.
 - d. MAIN MOTION is voted upon with minimum of two speeches on each side of question.

IMPROPER AMENDMENTS ARE THOSE ...

1. not germane to the question.
2. merely making adoption of amended question equivalent to rejection of original motion.
3. making question identical, or contrary to, one previously decided during the same session.
4. proposing to change one of the forms of amendment (i.e. "to insert or add; to strike out and insert; to substitute") into another form.
5. having the effect of converting one parliamentary motion into another.
6. that strike out the word "Resolved" or other enacting words.
7. frivolous or absurd.
8. having incoherent wording or no rational purpose.
9. converting a primary amendment into an improper form.