



NC BAPTISTS

On Mission Together

FAQ for Articles and Bylaws Proposed Changes 2022

Articles of Incorporation - Amendment of Article VI

WHY CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF A COOPERATING CHURCH?

- Like many local churches, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has many “members” who remain on the roll but no longer actively participate in the ministries of the state convention. The convention currently has no basis to remove a church from our list of cooperating churches unless it either violates the policies regarding support for homosexual behavior, or the church officially sends notice that it has voted to withdraw as a cooperating church. Otherwise, the church remains on our list of cooperating churches indefinitely. This has a cost associated with it for the convention, as all mailings sent to our churches must include those churches that do not financially support the ministry efforts of the convention through the Cooperative Program.
- The convention has a responsibility related to our 501c3 Group Exemption ruling from the IRS to only include churches that are actively involved in the ministries for which the group exemption letter was issued. The proposed requirement for a church to make financial gifts through the Cooperative Program is a minimal way to meet that standard.
- Under the current Article VI, a church from any other denomination that chooses to support one of our related ministries (for example: Baptists on Mission disaster relief, Baptist Children’s Homes, etc.) could request messenger status at our annual meeting. The proposed change in Article VI makes that highly unlikely to occur.

WHAT ABOUT STRUGGLING CHURCHES THAT SOMETIMES FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PAY THEIR PASTOR OR UTILITIES?

- It is unlikely that even the smallest church would be unable to contribute any missions dollars through the Cooperative Program over a three-year period. There is no minimum contribution required. However, should the amendment pass, the N.C. Baptist board of directors could consider a financial hardship waiver for churches that request it and demonstrate a desire to remain engaged in N.C. Baptist ministry efforts.

WHY SHOULD THE CONVENTION EXPAND ITS DEFINITION OF CHURCHES NOT IN FRIENDLY COOPERATION?

- Many N.C. Baptists would say it is obvious that culture has changed rapidly in recent years, especially regarding issues of marriage and sexuality. The article changes related to LGBTQ+ issues, racial issues and abuse issues are an important way of acknowledging that we as a convention of churches take these issues seriously and will address them biblically.
- The three issues highlighted in the proposed amendment – support for LGBTQ+ behavior, racial discrimination and mishandling sex abuse – are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are meant to be examples of gross violations of N.C. Baptist faith and practice that help guide the board of directors as it applies the affiliation parameters set forth in the convention’s articles of incorporation.

WHY DOES THE AMENDMENT CHANGE THE CALCULATION FOR THE NUMBER OF MESSENGERS A CHURCH MAY SEND TO THE ANNUAL MEETING?

- Currently, the maximum number of messengers a church can send to the annual meeting is based upon the reported membership of a church and/or the amount of Cooperative Program support given through the convention. The proposal sets a maximum number based upon active participation rather than church size. Every cooperating church will automatically qualify for two messengers, just as they do currently. To qualify for additional messengers, the church must participate in three ways.
 - It must contribute missions dollars through the Cooperative Program in the past year.
 - It must fill out an Annual Church Profile (or its equivalent) with updated information about the church and its ministries.
 - There must have been at least one registered messenger from the church in the previous annual meeting or special called meeting of the convention.

If a church participates in those three ways, it will be eligible for five more messengers to the annual meeting than were registered from that church at the previous annual meeting. So, a church could qualify for the maximum of 10 messengers if it sent at least five messengers to the previous annual meeting.

- The proposed method encourages active participation in convention ministries, rather than simply “rewarding” a church with additional messengers because it reports a large membership.

IF A CHURCH DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM, HOW WILL THE CONVENTION COMMUNICATE THAT TO THE CHURCH THE FOLLOWING YEAR?

- The church will get a letter from the convention informing it of this matter and encouraging the church to consider remaining a part of what we are doing to reach our state and the nations with the gospel.
- The church will be assigned a convention staff member for a personal follow-up to see if there are questions the church may have about the Cooperative Program, the convention’s ministries or ministry partners.

- If the church is affiliated with one of our associations, our staff will contact the Associational Mission Strategist to try to coordinate an effort to keep that church as a cooperating church.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A CHURCH NO LONGER BEING CONSIDERED IN FRIENDLY COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION?

- The church will not be eligible to seat messengers at the next annual meeting.
- The church will no longer be covered by the 501c3 Group Exemption ruling from the IRS through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.
- The church will not be eligible for discounts on group events at our camps and conference centers.
- The church will miss out on being a part of the greatest missionary sending and church planting movement in history.

Bylaws of the Baptist State Convention of NC, Inc. - 2022 Revision

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMENDING THE BYLAWS AND REVISING THE BYLAWS?

- An amendment deals with one bylaw, while a revision deals with the entire document. There are so many changes (most of them very minor) in the proposed bylaw revision that it could take hours to deal with the document in a series of amendments. Instead, the committee will have only ONE motion to approve the entire revision of the bylaws proposed.

WHY ARE WE CHANGING HOW THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-TREASURER SEARCH PROCESS IS DONE?

- In the past we have mostly relied on precedent to guide the process, since there was very little in the current bylaws about how a search and selection were to be done. Most of the proposed language is simply codifying into the bylaws what has been done in the past.
- The biggest change is that the proposed bylaws will allow the board of directors to be the decision making body for the selection of an EDT in the future, instead of having a special called convention meeting just for that process. We have nearly 100 directors representing all 10 regions of the state and a wide variety of church sizes and ethnicities who are very capable of representing our churches in this decision. At a cost exceeding six figures to have a two-hour meeting, it did not seem to be good stewardship to continue this practice. It should be noted that an EDT candidate has never been rejected during a special called meeting of the convention, so it spends a lot of ministry dollars to simply get an affirmation of a candidate.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DETAILS OF SOME OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMITTEES?

- All of the committees that have non-board members (called “special committees”) are still detailed in the bylaws. The revision allows the board president-elect and vice president-elect to determine what committees will be needed to assist the staff in serving our churches each year and assign the board members to one of those committees. We have had to propose bylaw changes many years just to change the names of committees whenever the work of the convention staff changed. These proposed bylaws will give the board flexibility without requiring frequent changes to the bylaws.

WHY IS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ATRIUM HEALTH WAKE FOREST BAPTIST HOSPITAL CHANGING?

- Following its strategic combination with Atrium Health, N.C. Baptist Hospital requested that we study a possible change in relationship with the convention. After the required six month study was completed, both parties agreed that it was best for us to discontinue a relationship based on Cooperative Program funding in exchange for the election of a portion of the hospital's trustees. We will still retain a voluntary relationship through the hospital's Faith/Health Division and work together to minister to our churches and their staff.

WHY DO THE PROPOSED BYLAWS REMOVE THE PROCESS FOR GUARANTEEING LOANS FOR RELATED ENTITIES OF THE CONVENTION?

- These bylaws were written at a time when many of the related entities may have needed the guarantee of the convention in order to obtain funding for capital projects. Our related entities are far beyond that point in their history, and it seemed time to remove those provisions from our bylaws.