

Constitutional Amendments – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who IS eligible to vote on proposed constitutional amendments?

- Clergy members (elders and deacons) in full connection (§602.1.a, *Book of Discipline*.)
- Lay members of annual conference (§602.6, *Book of Discipline*.)

2. Who IS NOT eligible to vote on proposed constitutional amendments?

- Provisional deacons and elders (§602.1.b, *Book of Discipline*.)
- Associate and affiliate clergy members (§602.1.c, *Book of Discipline*.)
- Full-time and part-time local pastors (§602.1.d, *Book of Discipline*.)

3. May an annual conference amend a proposed constitutional amendment?

- No. Members may debate a proposed amendment, but they cannot amend it. The only voting option is to vote *yes* to approve the amendment or *no* to reject it. Each amendment has already been approved by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, and every annual conference will be voting on the identical amendment.

4. What determines whether a proposed amendment is made to the Constitution?

- A constitutional amendment must be ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members voting in all annual conferences (§59, Article I, *Book of Discipline*).
- The vote, after being completed, shall be canvassed by the Council of Bishops, and the amendment voted upon shall become effective upon their announcement of its having received the required majority (§59, Article I, *Book of Discipline*).

5. How many constitutional amendments were approved by the 2008 General Conference and now await action by annual conferences?

- A total of 32 (see rationale)
- 23 of the amendments were proposed by the Task Force on the Global Nature of the Church: Amendments III, IV, V, VII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XX, XXI, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, and XXXII. All 23 amendments relating to the global nature of the church propose (1) changing the name “central conference” to “regional conference” wherever the term *central conference* occurs in the constitution, and (2) placing at the end of the affected paragraphs a parenthetical provision that the name change takes effect on January 1, 2013, at which time the parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.

**Rationale for Proposed Constitutional Amendments
The United Methodist Church
Voted General Conference April-May 2008**

- I. The proposed amendment emphasizes the wideness of God’s mercy and the availability of the ministry of the church to all.**
- II. The proposed amendment requires the adoption of ethics and conflict of interest policies to ensure accountability and fiduciary integrity.**
- III. The proposed amendment allows the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.**
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- VI. The proposed amendment allows for representation in the General Conference at other than proportional levels during a transitional period for the admission of an annual conference into the United Methodist Church.**
- VII. The proposed amendment allows the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.**
- VIII. The proposed amendment would add “gender” to those categories of persons protected in this list of duties of General Conference.**
- IX. The proposed amendment would ensure a minimum basis of support for the election of bishops at jurisdictional conferences.**
- X. The proposed amendment allows the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.**

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- XV. The proposed amendment allows definition of the lay and clergy membership of the annual conference by the General Conference without going through the constitutional amendment process. This portion of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Section VI, Article I of the Constitution) has been amended 16 times since 1968.
- XVI. The proposed amendment allows the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.
- XVII. The proposed amendment would make supporting constitutional changes to allow reinstatement of legislation adopted by the 2004 General Conference and subsequently declared unconstitutional by the Judicial Council to allow lay persons on the committee on investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
- XVIII. The proposed amendment allows the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.
- XIX. The proposed amendment would allow additional clergy members to participate in the election of clergy delegates to general, jurisdictional or central conferences.

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- XXII.** The proposed amendment formally recognizes that the Baltimore-Washington Conference has been appointing pastors, superintending the congregations and integrating the congregations of Bermuda into the life of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The General Board of Global Ministries and the Baltimore-Washington Conference recognize these churches as United Methodist congregations.
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Amendments III, IV, V, VII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XX, XXI, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, and XXXII are all part of the Worldwide Nature of the United Methodist Church proposal. The rationale is identical for these amendments.

Amendments V and VI are both for ¶ 15. Amendments VII and VIII are both for ¶ 16, but for different subparagraphs. Amendments XIV and XV are both for ¶ 32. Amendments XVI and XVII are both for ¶ 33. Amendments XIX and XX are both for ¶ 35.