



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



For immediate release

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Bishops announce results of five constitutional amendments; two fail to get required two-thirds majority

WASHINGTON, D. C. The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church has completed canvassing of the votes of annual conferences on the five constitutional amendments that were approved by the 2016 General Conference.

Summary of Votes by Annual Conferences

Amendment	Total "Yes" Votes	Total "No" Votes	% of Yes Votes
Amendment I	31,304	15,753	66.5%
Amendment II	29,049	18,317	61.3%
Amendment III	42,639	4,578	90.3%
Amendment IV	43,770	3,340	92.9%
Amendment V	38,087	8,828	81.2%

The five proposed amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church as contained in *The Book of Discipline (BOD)* were as follows.

- I. The first amendment proposed a new paragraph between current Paragraph 5 and Paragraph 6. This new paragraph would have focused on gender justice.
- II. The second amendment proposed changes to the wording in Paragraph 4 in *The Book of Discipline*. If it were ratified, the proposed amendment would have added "gender," "ability," "age" and "marital status" to the protected membership groups.
- III. The third amendment dealt with the election of delegates to the General Conference as contained in Paragraph 34. As ratified, the amendment adds this sentence to Paragraph 34: "Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast."
- IV. The fourth amendment clarified the time of election of bishops in Central Conferences as contained in Paragraph 46. As ratified, the amendment adds the following words to Paragraph 46: "provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."

- V. The fifth proposed amendment adds language to Paragraph 50 regarding how the Council of Bishops holds its individual members accountable for their work. As ratified, the amendment adds the following sentence to the end of Paragraph 50: “These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.”

With today’s announcement of the annual conferences votes, the three amendments that garnered more than the required two-thirds majority become effective immediately.

[Click here to see the breakdown of each annual conference vote](#)

Bishops react with dismay

In reaction to the results, the Council of Bishops expressed dismay that proposed amendments I and II had failed. “While we are not completely clear concerning the motivation that caused them to miss the two-thirds required majority by slim margins, we want to be clear that we are unequivocal in our commitment to the equality of women and their full inclusion in our Church,” said the Council statement.

[Click here to read the statement from the Council of Bishops](#)

Female bishops offer pastoral letter

The female bishops have also issued a pastoral letter, noting their renewed commitment to ensure that all people are treated with respect, compassion, and grace and that all doors of opportunity and leadership are open to them.

“Like Rachel weeping for her children, so we as episcopal leaders weep for our church. We weep for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harm that is inflicted upon women and girls because of this action. We weep for those who are denied the ability to use their gifts to make a difference in the world. We also weep for those who are not protected from exclusion in the church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition,” the letter from the female bishops said.

[Click here to see the letter from the female bishops.](#)

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