

Mechanics of a Policy Resolution **(From the Liberal Party's Guide to Policy Development)**

A resolution is a statement, or set of statements, that clearly expresses a belief or judgement on an issue of public policy and calls upon the Party to take a position or press for action accordingly.

Resolutions should be concise, clear, based on accurate facts, written to achieve a specific purpose and contain no more than 250 words in total.

Resolutions have four distinct sections:

1-Title

The title of the resolution should be concise, accurate and quickly convey the subject of the resolution.

2 - Preamble

Each preamble begins with “whereas”. The preamble describes the situation, issue, or context that gives rise to the resolution. As well, it also lists facts necessary for the reader to understand the thrust of the resolution. The preamble may press the case for the reason the resolution is important. Finally, it offers arguments or attempts to anticipate counter-arguments, in order to elicit support. Not all resolutions have preambles. For those that do, it is crucial that it be clear, focused, accurate and concise.

3 – Direction

The “Be it Resolved” section is the core of any resolution. It communicates what the mover wants the party to do, or what position the mover wants the party to take. There may be several statements in the direction, depending on the complexity of the resolution. The directions should not repeat information already in the preamble.

4- Authorship

The name of the resolution's sponsoring body must always be listed.

In drawing up a resolution, you should always remain focused on what you are trying to achieve.

Do you for example wish to:

- Express support for a government action or stance
- Suggest alternatives to current practices
- Ask the Party to achieve a specific goal

If your attention is the last you should bear in mind:

- What is the actual goal: what do you really want to achieve?
- What are your objectives, and what (if any) are your suggested means?
- Is the goal feasible?
- Does it fall under the authority of the level of government you are directing the resolution at?

- How would you measure achievement of the goals?
- In what time frame should success occur?
- Do cost and benefits of your goal need to be addressed in your resolution?

A resolution is unlikely to be passed unless it calls for action or establishes a position that Liberals understand and support. If a resolution is adopted it will have the desired effect if the effect is clear and recognizable.

Common pitfalls in resolutions:

- Never exceed 250 words
- Avoid resolutions that are without meaning, that would not result in any action
- Bear in mind that because several months will pass between drafting resolution and the Biennial Convention, you must ensure that your resolution addresses matters that will be current throughout the process
- Avoid inflammatory language
- Ensure that your facts are accurate

At some point, you should ask yourself, “If I could achieve anything in government, what would it be? What sort of country do I want? What must government do to achieve that?” The policy process is a unique opportunity to influence the direction of our country. We should seize it with both hands.

Here is an example of four different sections of a resolution:

(Title) Land Mines

(Preamble) WHEREAS Canada has taken a leadership role in the elimination of landmines, with the recently signed Landmines Treaty;

WHEREAS these landmines have caused mass destruction, continue to kill and maim and destroy the quality of life for innocent people;

WHEREAS this treaty only deals with the manufacture of new land mines, the use of existing landmines and the destruction of already placed landmines;

WHEREAS the public has played a key role in furthering the principles of humanity as evidenced by the grassroots call for a total ban of anti-personnel mines;

(Direction) BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada supports the government of Canada’s efforts to continue leading internationally to ensure early ratification, universalization and implementation of the treaty, also known as the “Ottawa II” Process;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada urge that the government of Canada broaden its outreach activities with schools, communities, NGO’s and service organizations and work with these groups to establish a Canadian Mines Action Trust Fund to assist with the rehabilitation of persons affected by anti-personnel mines.

(Authorship) York University Young Liberals