

The General Convention (GC) Legislation Song “I’m a resolve at GC”

Words by Sarah Dylan Breuer, Music by Dave Frishberg

in salute to *Schoolhouse Rock*

commissioned by the *Count Me Faithful* youth gathering team, 2003

Person: Jeez, it’s a long walk to the Convention Center from our hotel – I wonder what that little scrap of paper sitting outside the House of Deputies is?

1) I'm a resolve at GC,
yes a resolve at GC,
and I'm hoping that they're gonna pass me,
'Cause it's a long, long journey just to get out this far,
But if I get some floor time I know I'll be a star,
If the bishops concur, When I PASS
the House of Deputies
Then I'll be the new church policy!

Spoken interlude 1:

"Welcome to Minneapolis, Ms. Resolve!"

"Thanks."

"Wow, you've sure got a lot of stamps on your bags. Where did you come from?"

"Take a look at this big letter I'm wearing. That should tell you."

"How would that letter tell me where you're from?"

2) I'm a resolve at GC,
and all resolves at GC
get letters ranging from 'A' to 'D.'
The letter tells you from where the idea came
to send us to convention for our moment of fame.
So look at what I'm called, look CLOSE
and I know that you will see
Just how I came to be at GC.

Spoken interlude 2:

"OK, so your resolution number has an 'A' in front of it. Does that mean you were good in school?"

Ms. Resolve: "Actually, I've got an *A* -- I came from a Standing Commission."

Person: "A Standing Commission?"

Ms. Resolve: "Yes. You see, there are groups of people who are appointed to see to things in between General Conventions, so they're called 'interim bodies.' At the last General Convention in Denver, a resolution was passed telling my Standing Commission to study an issue. When they looked at it, they decided on all sorts of things that needed to be done and my brothers and sisters and I were born in that Standing Commission. And because I was born in an interim body -- one of these groups of people who help make decisions between General Conventions -- I get

an 'A!'"

Person: "So what do other letters mean?"

Ms. Resolve: "If I'd been proposed by a group from the House of Deputies, I'd be 'Resolution D-something,' or if I were from a group in the House of Bishops, I'd be 'Resolution B-something.' Sometimes diocesan conventions pass a resolution asking General Convention to consider something. Resolutions born that way are labeled with a "C."

"But once you're here, it's smooth sailing, right?"

"Not always." *sigh*

3) I'm a resolve at GC,
yes a resolve at GC,
And I'm hoping that they're gonna pass me
The Standing Commission supports me so I did get sent here,
but my journey's not over, and the next step I fear
Just might be my last, though I HOPE and pray that it won't
and I'll get to the floor for a vote

Spoken interlude 3:

Person: "What do you mean, Ms. Resolve? Where are you going now?"

Ms. Resolve: "I'm going to a legislative committee, and I'm not really sure what's going to happen there. You see, they get so many resolutions that they can't always deal with them all. I might be left behind!"

Person: "Oh no! But if they do take you up and discuss you, you'll be sent to the bishops and deputies for a vote, right?"

Ms. Resolve: "Maybe not. If they see lots of other resolves that they think are similar, they might decide to combine me with them. They could change my language to make it clearer, or to make it consistent with the canons. I could get quite a make-over -- even if I get through, you might not recognize me?"

Person: "What if they do pass you in committee, Ms. Resolve? What happens then?"

4) I'm a resolve at GC,
yes a resolve at GC,
I hope I'll be discussed real prayerfully!
If I cause controversy within deputies' borders
the House of Deputies may call for voting by orders
And the clergy and LAY
If their votes don't agree
Then I will not get passed at GC

Spoken interlude 4:

Ms. Resolve: "You see, the Episcopal Church has four orders of ministry -- bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people. No one order of ministry gets to make an important decision for the whole church without people from all orders of ministry having a say. The House of Bishops has one order of ministry -- bishops -- and so the House of Bishops has to clear any resolve before it passes. And the House of Deputies has lay people, deacons, and priests, and they also have to clear resolves before they pass. To make sure that a resolution has support from both lay people

and clergy, sometimes the House of Deputies will call for a 'vote by orders.' The four clergy from each diocese get to cast one vote together, and the four lay people from each diocese get to cast one vote together. If those four people can't agree on a vote because two of them say yes and two say no, then the vote counts as a no. To pass in a vote by orders, a resolution has to get over half of the possible clergy votes AND over half of the possible laity votes."

Person: "That's kind of confusing, and it sounds like it would be really hard to pass a resolution that way."

Ms. Resolve: "It is sometimes, but it's really important in the Episcopal Church that lay people, clergy, and bishops all get a voice in decisions, so that's how we do things with the really difficult decisions."

Person: "So if you do pass one house, you get sent to the other, and if it's really important, then priests and deacons, lay people, and bishops each get a chance to have their say separately. What if you pass one house, and then the other house passes an amendment to change you?"

Ms. Resolve: "Then I go back to the first house for another vote on the amendment, so everybody gets a chance to weigh in again."

Person: "Wow. Good luck, Ms. Resolve!"

5) I'm a resolve at GC,
Yes a resolve at GC,
I've dotted every I, and I've crossed every T
I need your support -- bishop, clergy, and lay
If I'm going to carry the day ...and I know I will carry the DAY
... if it's God will, I pray!

Another Person: They both passed you, Ms. Resolve! Now you're an act of General Convention!
Ms. Resolve: Yay!