

Impacting Your Political Party's Platform

How to Write a Proposition

Compiled by D. A. Sharpe

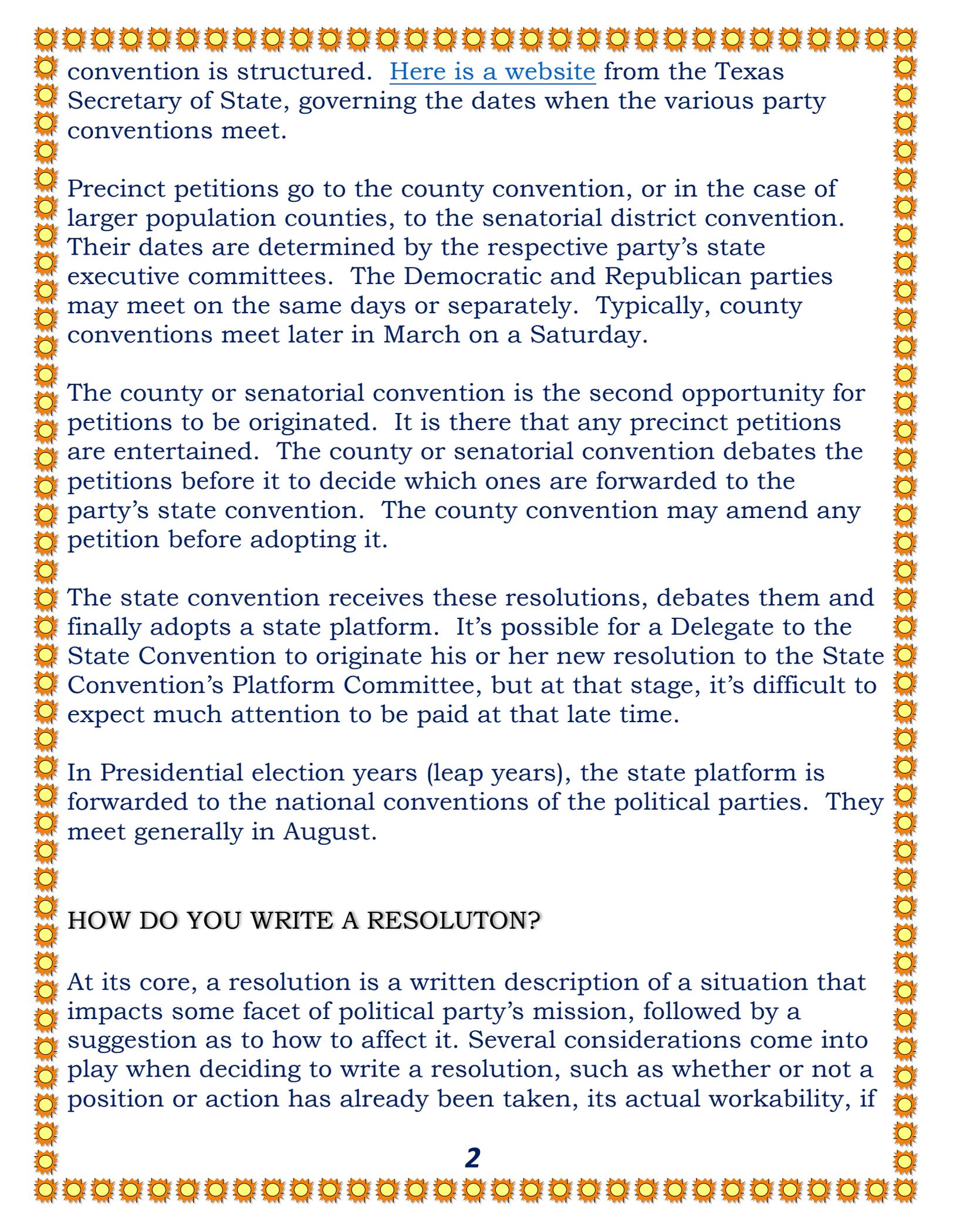
WHAT IS THE PARTY PLATFORM?

This is a document about how this is done in Texas. What is a political party's platform? It's [explained in detail](#) here. Basically, it is the series of beliefs and political positions adopted by the State Party Conventions (every even numbered year) and the National Party Conventions (every leap year – years with a February 29). It is expected that all the people who offer themselves as candidates for a party's primary election (and who subsequently are on the party's November General Election) are generally in support of his or her party's platform. Though there may not be 100% support, the huge majority of the platform is expected to be in the realm of the candidate's support.

In Texas, the two major political parties are the Democratic and the Republican Parties. Occasionally a third or fourth party arises, but such is rare in Texas and there is no record of final success for any of the few that have arisen in this century or last. Here is a display about [political parties in Texas](#).

HOW IS IT DECIDED WHAT GOES INTO A PARTY PLATFORM?

The party platform elements develop from any of several conventions. They are in the form of propositions (resolutions or petitions). The first occasion can be the Precinct Conventions that take place in the evening after the voting polls close on the first Tuesdays of each even numbered year's month of March or the leap year Marchs. [Here is a document](#) about how a precinct



convention is structured. [Here is a website](#) from the Texas Secretary of State, governing the dates when the various party conventions meet.

Precinct petitions go to the county convention, or in the case of larger population counties, to the senatorial district convention. Their dates are determined by the respective party's state executive committees. The Democratic and Republican parties may meet on the same days or separately. Typically, county conventions meet later in March on a Saturday.

The county or senatorial convention is the second opportunity for petitions to be originated. It is there that any precinct petitions are entertained. The county or senatorial convention debates the petitions before it to decide which ones are forwarded to the party's state convention. The county convention may amend any petition before adopting it.

The state convention receives these resolutions, debates them and finally adopts a state platform. It's possible for a Delegate to the State Convention to originate his or her new resolution to the State Convention's Platform Committee, but at that stage, it's difficult to expect much attention to be paid at that late time.

In Presidential election years (leap years), the state platform is forwarded to the national conventions of the political parties. They meet generally in August.

HOW DO YOU WRITE A RESOLUTION?

At its core, a resolution is a written description of a situation that impacts some facet of political party's mission, followed by a suggestion as to how to affect it. Several considerations come into play when deciding to write a resolution, such as whether or not a position or action has already been taken, its actual workability, if

the matter can be settled administratively with need for a resolution, and its political sensitivity.

Each resolution should cover only one subject. Resolutions consist of two parts, which must be written precisely for the resolution to be allowed to move forward.

The first is the preamble, or, the description of the situation. One or more clauses, each beginning with “WHEREAS,” give facts that support and justify the resolution. The beginning of every phrase after that is should be capitalized. Two or more clauses are joined by a semicolon and the word “and.”

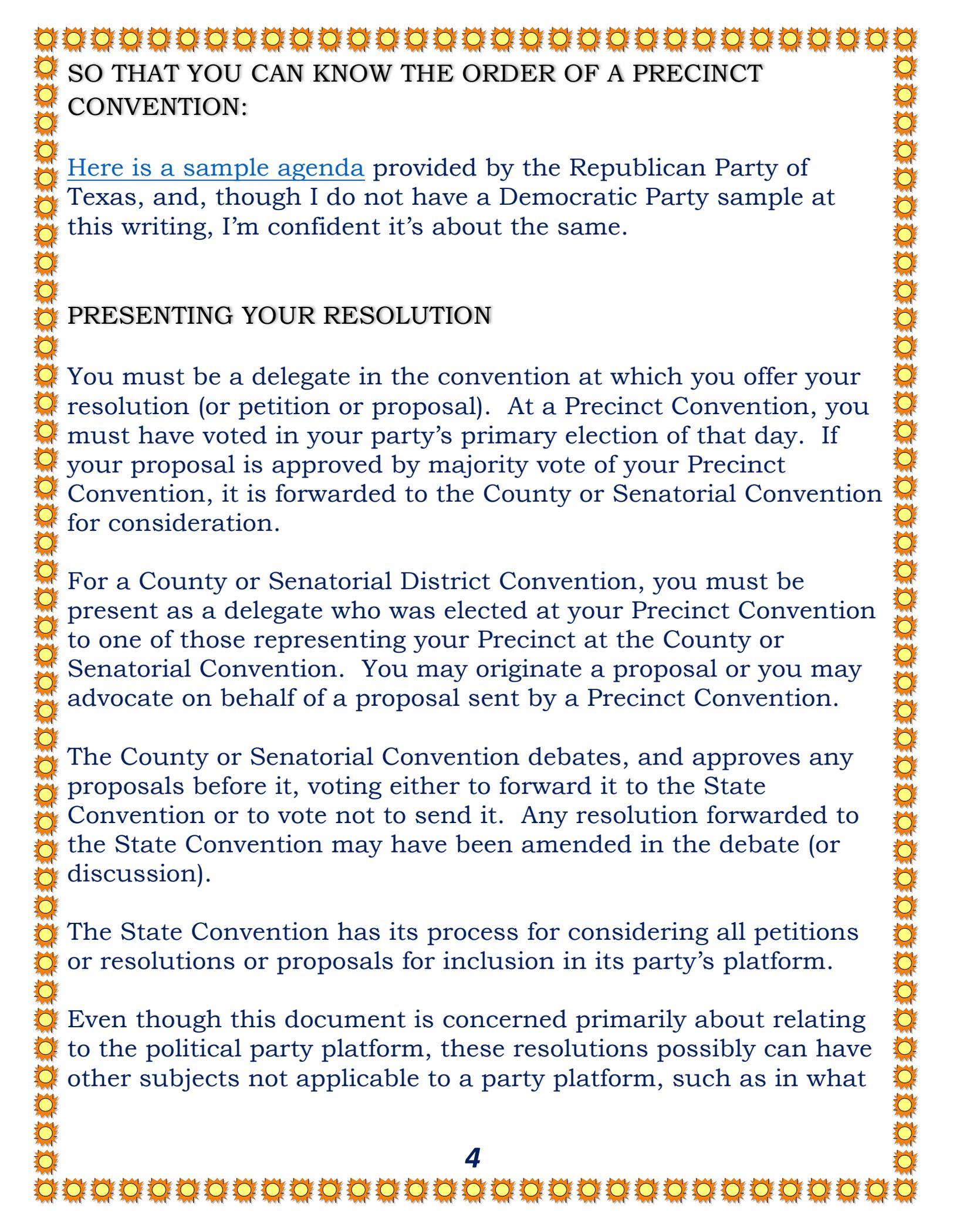
The final clause of the preamble ends with a semicolon and the phrase “now, therefore, be it”. The second part is the resolving clause, a statement of how the targeted level of the political party should address the situation.

Keep in mind that the entire resolution is one continuous sentence – the preamble ends with a semicolon, not a period. “...be it” is followed directly by the resolving clause.

Here are a couple of sample resolutions. Their focus is on party administration, rather than party platform:

[Eliminating Proxy Voting for State Executive Committee](#)

[Requiring State Executive Committee to use 2/3’s vote of make Rules changes](#)



SO THAT YOU CAN KNOW THE ORDER OF A PRECINCT CONVENTION:

[Here is a sample agenda](#) provided by the Republican Party of Texas, and, though I do not have a Democratic Party sample at this writing, I'm confident it's about the same.

PRESENTING YOUR RESOLUTION

You must be a delegate in the convention at which you offer your resolution (or petition or proposal). At a Precinct Convention, you must have voted in your party's primary election of that day. If your proposal is approved by majority vote of your Precinct Convention, it is forwarded to the County or Senatorial Convention for consideration.

For a County or Senatorial District Convention, you must be present as a delegate who was elected at your Precinct Convention to one of those representing your Precinct at the County or Senatorial Convention. You may originate a proposal or you may advocate on behalf of a proposal sent by a Precinct Convention.

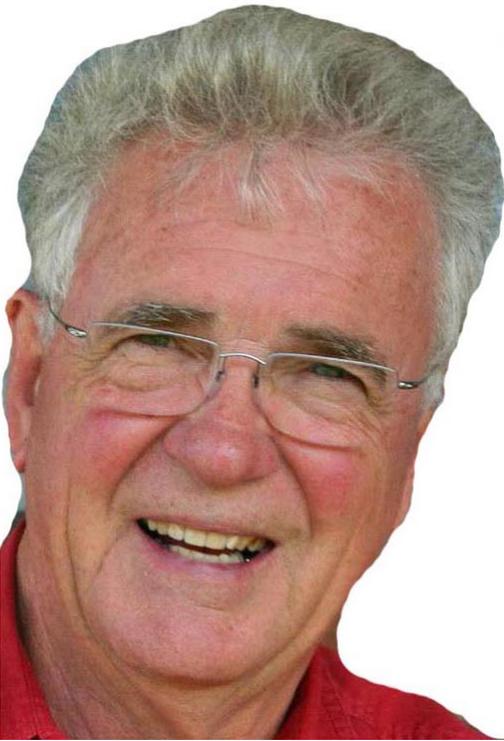
The County or Senatorial Convention debates, and approves any proposals before it, voting either to forward it to the State Convention or to vote not to send it. Any resolution forwarded to the State Convention may have been amended in the debate (or discussion).

The State Convention has its process for considering all petitions or resolutions or proposals for inclusion in its party's platform.

Even though this document is concerned primarily about relating to the political party platform, these resolutions possibly can have other subjects not applicable to a party platform, such as in what

city to meet for the next State Convention or how food vendors may be approved to sell at State Conventions, etc.

My hope is that this document can be educational and instructive for any registered voter who wants to participate in the political process in a meaningful way, regardless of with which political party one identifies.



Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. A. Sharpe'.

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