



THE POWER OF IDEAS: The MLP Policy Process



Prepared for the Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Committee

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1. OVERVIEW

The Manitoba Liberal Party (MLP) policy process is designed to gather and promote innovative ideas from MLP members interested in making Manitoba a better place to live.

As described in the preamble of the MLP constitution, all MLP party members have a right to participate, and are encouraged to engage in the MLP policy process, sharing with the MLP as a whole, their opinions and beliefs on issues of importance impacting all Manitobans.

To this end, all MLP members are invited to attend meetings or other activities held by the MLP and any representative body¹ described in the constitution to discuss and formulate effective public policy. MLP policy discussions are ongoing, can occur anywhere, and are vital to the continued health, stability and growth of the MLP.

2. THE MLP POLICY PROCESS

The following is a description of the MLP policy process in action.

- Good policy starts with an Idea from an MLP member at a venue, meeting or any other gathering of MLP members.
- After discussion, research and debate, the policy idea is crafted into a draft MLP policy resolution. (see Section 4 Mechanics of a Policy Resolution)
- This Draft MLP Policy Resolution gains the sponsorship of the MLP policy committee, MLP Caucus or other representative body described in the constitution of the MLP.²
- The Draft MLP Policy Resolution receives approval from the MLP policy Committee to be presented to the MLP delegates at the next AGM.
- If passed by a majority at the MLP AGM delegates, the draft policy resolution is adopted as an MLP Policy Statement.

¹ Representative bodies which may sponsor Resolutions are: All Constituency Associations, the Manitoba Liberal Women's, Senior's, Multicultural, Aboriginal Associations and the Young Manitoba Liberals. The 11 Regions may also submit Resolutions from their Annual Meetings.

² The Manitoba Liberal Party may limit the number of resolutions that each club or association can move forward. Local clubs and associations should review the process with their provincial policy representative to determine local limits and timelines.

THE POWER OF IDEAS: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Process

3. THE MLP POLICY COMMITTEE

The MLP Policy Committee is solely responsible for organizing events, policy discussions and all other activities that concern the development of MLP policy resolutions. In this capacity, the MLP Policy committee will:

- Act as a liaison between MLP members and the MLP;
- Engage the MLP membership on issues of concern;
- Promote Manitoba Liberal values and policies;
- Keeps the MLP Leader and all elected MLP MLA's informed about policy, developments and resolutions; and
- Monitor local issues to ensure Liberal candidates secure election.

4. THE MECHANICS OF POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Draft MLP Policy Resolutions are the end-product of the policy process. They are statements, or sets of statements, that clearly express a belief or a judgment on public policy. Policy Resolutions call upon the MLP to take a position or press for a specific action. They should be concise, clear, based on accurate facts, and written to achieve a specific purpose. Resolutions should be no more than about 250 words.

Resolutions have four distinct sections: Title, Preamble, Direction and Authorship.

Title

- The title of a resolution must accurately convey the subject of the resolution.

Preamble

- The resolution must begin with a preamble.
- A preamble begins with "Whereas". The preamble describes the situation, issue or context that gives rise to the resolution. As well, it lists facts necessary for the reader to understand the essence of the resolution. The preamble may state the reason the resolution is important.
- Finally, it offers arguments or attempts to anticipate counterarguments, in order to command support.
- Preambles must be limited to six per resolution. The combined number of preambles and operatives (see below) cannot exceed eight. A preamble can reference an internet link providing more information on research or rationale.

Direction (or "Operative")

- The "Be it Resolved," (or "operative") section is the core of any resolution. It communicates the action the authors want the Party to undertake.
- There may be several statements in the operative, depending on the complexity

THE POWER OF IDEAS: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Process

of the resolution.

- The operative section should not repeat information already in the preamble.
- There cannot be any numbers or letters used as subsections in this part of the resolution and operatives that follow the first one must be preceded by the phrase “Be it further resolved”.
- Operatives must be limited to a maximum of six per resolution.
- The combined number of preambles and operatives cannot exceed eight.

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. Is the goal of your resolution to:
 - express support for a government action or stance;
 - suggest alternatives to current practices; or
 - ask the Party to press the government to achieve a specific goal?
- If your intention is the last, you should bear in mind:
 - What is the actual goal: what do you really want to achieve?
 - What are the ways to get there?
 - Is the goal realistic?
 - Does it fall under the authority of the provincial government?
 - How would you measure achievement of the goals?
 - What is the timeframe to reach the goal?
 - Do costs and benefits of the goal need to be assessed to strengthen support of the resolution?

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

Here are some common problems that weaken resolutions:

- The resolution lacks meaning, and it do not result in measurable action.
- The resolution is too long, unwieldy, and hard to understand.
- Lack of factual accuracy.
- Inflammatory language.
- It does not fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Finally, keep in mind that because time will pass between the drafting of the resolution and the AGM, resolutions should be current and relevant throughout the process.

THE POWER OF IDEAS: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Process

5. AT THE AGM

After sponsorship at the local level, and approval by the MLP Policy Committee resolutions proceed to AGM. There similar resolutions may be condensed into a single resolution. Being presented to the AGM however does not guarantee presentation to the AGM as there is only limited time for debate. Popular resolutions will make their way into one of the ten spaces with little help from their authors. Usually, however, the association or club that creates a resolution will have to work creatively to persuade other MLP members to support their resolution instead of the many other resolutions up for debate.

To maximize chance a Draft Policy Resolution finds support at the MLP AGM:

- Ensure constituency associations or sponsoring bodies turn out in force to support a draft resolution;
- Anticipate criticisms of the resolution and prepare counter-arguments;
- Ensure strong public speakers move the resolution and respond to challenges from the floor;
- Contact other sponsoring bodies before the AGM to building support for your resolution;
- Share sponsorship of resolutions with other sponsoring bodies
- Promote your draft resolution on social media and by other means.

Strong support for your resolution by MLP members will contribute to its success at the AGM. Even the best resolutions need to be promoted effectively to be noticed and gain support in advance.

Our objective is to establish the MLP policy process, but also stimulate debate and reflection among MLP members. If you want your draft resolution to be passed, you must roll up your sleeves, negotiate, lobby, and sell it to other MLP members.

6. AFTER THE AGM

AGM resolutions will help shape the Party's next election platform. MLP policies come from MLP members, are passed at the AGM, are strong ideas that will resonated with all Manitobans. The next step for MLP members is to campaign in support of these policies and transform our ideas into action, forming the next government.

THE POWER OF IDEAS: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Process

APPENDIX 1: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Resolution Style Guide

The following style guide is provided to ensure all draft policy resolutions adhere to the same standards for length and organization. Powerful ideas are often the simplest.

BASIC ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE:

- Length: Maximum 250 words
- Adhere to standard principles of grammar.
- All resolutions must have a Title, Preamble, Operative, and Authorship.
- Title: All First Letters of any Main words in the Title must be Capitalized.
Example: Tax Credit for Text Books
- Preamble: Must begin with WHEREAS. Maximum number of Preambles to be used is six.
- Operative: First operative must begin with BE IT RESOLVED. Further operatives must begin with BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED. Maximum number of operatives is six.
- Preambles and Operatives combined cannot exceed eight.
- Authorship: The sponsoring body (association, club, commission, PTA, or committee) must be listed at the end of any resolution.
- The resolution may include footnotes with website links for additional information.
- Supporting documents to accompany the resolution.

THE POWER OF IDEAS: Manitoba Liberal Party Policy Process

APPENDIX 2: Manitoba Liberal Party Sample Policy Resolution

FRAMEWORK FOR MENTAL HEALTH

WHEREAS mental illness affects one in five Manitobans;

WHEREAS mental illness is the largest single contributor to the burden of disease, leads to significant morbidity and early mortality (through suicide and impact on other medical illnesses) and substantively contributes to negative social, civic and economic outcomes for Manitobans;

WHEREAS most mental illness is preventable and treatable;

WHEREAS only 5.5% of Manitoba's health care budget is allocated to mental health services, despite the recommendations of the World Health Organization to allocate 10%;

WHEREAS the current Progressive Conservative government has announced plans to cut the rate of increases to health care spending;

BE IT RESOLVED that a new Manitoba Liberal government will implement and fund the Mental Health Commission of Manitoba's report: "Changing Directions, Changing Lives: A Mental Health Strategy for Manitoba"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a new Manitoba Liberal government will increase funding for mental health services to 8-10% of the provincial healthcare budget

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a new Manitoba Liberal government will create an office of a mental health ombudsperson who will issue an annual report for Manitoba Legislature on the status of mental health and mental health care in Manitoba

Sponsored by the **Provincial MLP Policy Committee**

Supporting Document: Attention: Only Positive Attitudes Allowed in this Area
Optimum Brain Health for all Manitobans Liberal Caucus Report 2016

<http://www.jongerrardmla.ca/file/2016/11/BrainHealthReport.pdf>