This has no author, but modesty aside, it came mostly from Kyle Walls.

The resolutions process of the National Federation of the Blind is frequently one of the most exciting and engaging parts of our annual national convention. It is also where we set our priorities for the coming year. That being said, it is no surprise that we take our national resolutions extremely seriously. We want them to be perfect when they reach the convention floor. That effort starts with you as you write and submit them. Below are a few quick guidelines to keep in mind when you begin the process of writing a National Federation of the Blind National Convention Resolution.

First, before you even begin writing the resolution, you may want to ask yourself: “Is a national resolution the most efficient or effective way to address this topic?” If the resolution is about a recently-encountered access barrier, might it be addressed by calling or writing to the offending party before we condemn and deplore them at a national event? Conversely, if an individual or organization has done something truly spectacular for blind Americans, is there an award we could nominate them for? If we keep these questions in mind, then we can save condemning resolutions for repeat inaccessibility offenders, or commending resolutions for those who have corrected their mistakes of the past.

Once you have made the decision that a resolution is absolutely the right course of action, you need to consider the purpose of your resolution. For this, you can ask the following questions:

Who will it be addressing? – Think of the specific individual or organization we will send the resolution to.

Why is a national resolution necessary? – Think of the problem that instigated the resolution in the first place.

What is the ultimate goal of the resolution? – Think of how that problem can be fixed and whether collaboration with the National Federation of the Blind is appropriate, if the reason for the problem should be publicly condemned, or if the accomplishment warrants a public commendation.

Now that you have determined a resolution is necessary and you have identified the purpose of your resolution, it’s time to actually get to the task of writing it. National Federation of the Blind resolutions follow a specific format. First, we start with a series of “whereas” clauses that typically start broad and become more specific with each successive clause. Below is a very generic example of the concept:

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind is the transformative organization of blind Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Jernigan Institute, the headquarters of the National Federation of the Blind frequently hosts events where participants will travel from all across the country to attend; and

WHEREAS, a highlight of these events is the cookie break that features many flavors of delicious cookies; and

WHEREAS, occasionally there is not enough of each flavor of cookie to satisfy all attendees; Now, therefore

The Whereas clauses will continue until the problem is identified. Ideally, this should take approximately six to ten clauses, but on occasion some more complex issues may require more. There is no perfect number, but as a general rule you should aim to state the problem clearly in the smallest number of whereas clauses as possible. Including an excessive amount of whereas clauses in your resolution only serves to make the resolution unnecessarily long, less focused, and more difficult to follow.

Once you have identified the problem in the final whereas clause, it’s time to write the “resolve” clauses, wherein you will identify a course of action to resolve the problem. It doesn’t need to be incredibly specific, it just needs to identify who should take charge in solving the problem. Continuing from the example above:

BE IT RESOLVED that this organization will strive to ensure that there are enough cookies for all attendees of future events at the Jernigan Institute to receive at least two servings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization will ensure that each flavor of cookie will be plentiful.

As with the whereas clauses, only use the resolve clauses sparingly. Two to three resolves should be sufficient, and any more than that can become cumbersome and unwieldy.

Proposed resolutions should be submitted to the chair of the Resolutions Committee, Sharon Maneki, at nfbmdsm@gmail.com by no later than [DATE].