

## **SO YOU WANT TO WRITE A RESOLUTION?**

If you have an issue you feel should be taken up by the entire membership of CSFA, then you will want to write a resolution and present it (or have it presented for you) at conference to the membership. The three "secrets" to getting a resolution through the Resolutions Committee and to the conference delegates are:

1. To focus on a single subject matter as much as possible
2. Write a concisely worded resolution (maximum of 4 "whereas")
3. Have the facts, surveys, code sections and/or all necessary background research done before the resolution is heard in the Resolutions Committee.

If you think that sounds like work, you're right! While the rest of conference attendees will be enjoying the pleasures of conference and their fellow attendees, the Resolutions Committee will be pounding away at these requests. The sooner we can get done and have a package acceptable to present to the membership, the sooner we can join you!

### **FOCUS**

What do you want to accomplish? Do you want to change a statute or enact a new law? Do you want to change a CSFA by-law? Do you want CSFA to expand (or shrink) its member services? Be sure to focus on your goal first; otherwise, the entire world's most wonderful "Whereas" won't be worth anything -- because they don't accomplish anything -- only the "Therefore's" are important if you really want to change it. Narrow down your subject matter as much as possible, too. An example of narrowing is the interest to "promote fire service unity." While this is a noble goal, you will want to make sure that a jobs clearinghouse is the goal of the resolution, and that the notion of fire service unity is in the "Whereas's" section.

### **WRITE A CONCISE RESOLUTION**

The most difficult task of the Resolutions Committee is the taking of badly written resolutions and fixing them so they can be presented to the delegates at conference. In years past, we have always followed the rule that no more than four (4) "whereas's" were necessary for a good resolution. We're not saying that they have to be perfectly written, but if you know a person who has some skills in editing or a better command of spelling, grammar, or the English language than you do, please let them help you write a resolution that all of us can understand. The phrase out a frustrated author's mouth at the Resolutions Committee is usually "that's what I meant to say!" Please think long and hard about what you really want to say before you turn in your resolution. Perhaps you or a knowledgeable friend can go over a draft of your resolution, and ask yourselves the following questions after each sentence: What am I trying to say here? Am I saying it the best way possible? If you go through the document in this manner prior to its submission to the committee, it will save a lot of time and perhaps hard feelings, too.

### **DO YOUR HOMEWORK!**

Every year or so, someone will bring a resolution to accomplish something that has already been accomplished. Please research your subject as carefully as possible before your resolution is submitted. Talk to the experts in the area, if you know any; run your idea by someone that you can trust to tell you exactly what they think about your idea; look up the relevant statutes and/or regulations; and perhaps most importantly, listen to the people whose ideas and opinions you have requested. By "kicking around" ideas with others, you can understand your own idea in a conceivably different way, and focus in on what it is that you really want to do. Finally, make copies of the relevant research that you have done, so that the committee can see your research efforts as well. We're going to ask you about the background of your request at the conference and the Resolutions Committee; so the more you do prior to conference, the better off you are.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

If you are now thinking that the Resolutions Committee is composed of ogres and meanies waiting to pounce upon a poorly written resolution, you are mistaken. The committee will work with you in framing the resolution to do what you want it to do. We believe that we are all on the same side, and the more work you do prior to conference on your resolution, the easier it will be on us all.