



Paragraph 4, Article IV Key talking points

At the 2020/2024 General Conference an important amendment to The United Methodist Constitution was passed. The amendment is called Paragraph 4, Article IV and it reads:

*In the United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ability or economic condition, nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, **gender**, national origin, **ability**, status, or economic condition.*

1. Inclusive Constitutional Amendment:

This amendment prohibits exclusion from church membership or participation based on race, color, national origin, ability, economic condition, and gender.

2. New Protections:

This amendment adds "**ability**" and "**gender**" to existing protected categories in the UMC Constitution. It explicitly prevents pastors from denying membership in a church regardless of disability, and gender, (**because they have a disability, are female or male**).

3. Voting for Ratification:

To make this amendment permanent, it needs to be ratified through a two-thirds majority vote across all annual conferences. Every voting lay and clergy member of each annual conference will vote, with the aggregate (overall) total determining ratification. In other words, ratification is based upon the popular vote. Also, a certain percentage of votes does not have to come from each annual conference. The percentage of yes votes is based upon the overall number of individual voting members.

4. Background and Progress:

A similar amendment in 2016 aimed to add "gender" to Paragraph 4, Article 4 but was not ratified, missing the required two-thirds majority by 5%. Since then, shifts in church polity and membership offer renewed hope for achieving the necessary votes.

5. Voting Process:

Voting will occur via paper ballot, and no additional amendments are permitted. Ballots will be counted by the Council of Bishops to finalize the vote and determine if the amendment passes.



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6. Take Action:

GCSRW encourages members to spread awareness by sharing resources with their churches, districts, and conferences. Supporting this amendment will help build a more inclusive church by legally affirming membership rights across a diverse population.

7. The Opportunity to Make History:

Ratifying this amendment is an opportunity to protect principles of equality and inclusion, ensuring no one is excluded based on their **gender** or **ability**. This moment allows The United Methodist Church to lead by example in building a truly inclusive Christian community.

8. Encouragement to Vote Yes:

This season offers an opportunity to affirm the church's commitment to inclusion. Members are encouraged to vote yes on Paragraph 4, Article IV, helping ensure that all individuals have an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of The United Methodist Church.