



11. CURRENT WORDING WITH ADDITIONS (Underline additions):

No Commandery shall confer the Orders of Knighthood upon anyone who has not previously received, in a lawful manner, the degrees of Master Mason, Royal Arch Mason ~~and Council of Cryptic Mason~~ and Council of Cryptic Mason, nor upon anyone who is not at the time a member in good standing of a lawful Masonic Lodge, and Royal Arch Chapter ~~and Council of Cryptic Mason~~. The petitioner for Orders must have resided within the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery for at least one year, and within the jurisdiction of the Commandery for at least six months prior to the date of the petition, except as otherwise provided in Section 69 hereof.

13. ENTIRE PARAGRAPH AS INTENDED TO READ IN THE CODE OF LAWS:

(Not necessary if entire paragraph is new and has been stated in 11 above.)

No Commandery shall confer the Orders of Knighthood upon anyone who has not previously received, in a lawful manner, the degrees of Master Mason, Royal Arch Mason, nor upon anyone who is not at the time a member in good standing of a lawful Masonic Lodge, and Royal Arch Chapter. The petitioner for Orders must have resided within the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery for at least one year, and within the jurisdiction of the Commandery for at least six months prior to the date of the petition, except as otherwise provided in Section 69 hereof.

14. RATIONALE (Why the author thinks the proposed change is needed):

Previous legislation making Council degrees and membership in a Cryptic Council compulsory for petitioners seeking entrance into the Knights Templar has not exhibited the marked improvement to membership within the Cryptic Council of Minnesota that it intended to create, and has caused an impact to the membership numbers of the Knights Templar of Minnesota.

Statistical analysis of membership abstracts from the years 2011 to 2016 of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, AF&AM have shown a 17.41% decrease in membership during that six-year period from 14098 to 11644 total members (See attached report). The Royal Arch Masons of Minnesota had a net loss of 647 members or a 28.74% loss during the period of 2012 through 2017. The membership of Cryptic Masons of Minnesota had a net loss of 262 members or a 28.45% loss during the period of 2011 through 2018. The Knights Templar of Minnesota had a net loss of 612 members or a 36.17% loss during the period of 2011 through 2018, the same period as the Cryptic Masons. The author was not able to collect complete data for all bodies for the time periods shown – this can be updated later. The trends, however, are still evident in the numbers.

While Masonic membership continues to trend downward across all bodies, the attempt to influence improvement in Cryptic Council by way of Commandery legislation is not a proper use of Commandery law or rule; but more importantly it has not had the desired effect of leading to a mitigation of loss of members in Cryptic Council. To the contrary of the intent of the legislation, it has increased the negative impact of Masonic losses and magnified it with regard to membership in the Knights Templar of Minnesota. Hobbling one organization in the hopes of shoring up another organization is not a valid or successful organizational strategy. Other remedies are available to the Cryptic Masons which they can pursue – this one has failed. Statistical analysis cannot support the assertion that the previous legislation successfully improved the organizational health of the Cryptic Council in Minnesota; nor has advanced the overall health, interests, and goals of the Sir Knights and their Commanderies in Minnesota. Finally, this action has not shown to prove an increase in *active* members within Cryptic Council, and has led to many members of Minnesota Templary to take the title of Royal and Select Master with no intent of engaging with their respective Councils, and in many cases led to disgruntlement by Sir Knights in being compelled to join a body that they may not have wished to do so; thereby affecting the morale, attendance, and membership of both Councils and Commanderies.

Finally, in regard to prior legislation passed by the Grand Encampment regarding the implementation of Cryptic Council as a requisite to Templary, in a March 20, 2018 email received from the Chair of the Jurisprudence Committee of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar U.S.A., Right Eminent Sir Knight Jeffery G. Burcham, PDC, it was stated and clarified if such an action to remove a requirement to Cryptic Council could be undertaken by a Grand Commandery once enacted by the same. Right Eminent Sir Knight Burcham stated,

*“I have still not heard from the other members of the committee on Templar jurisprudence, but have spoken with the Grand Master and believe a Grand Commandery may eliminate the Cryptic degrees as a prerequisite to membership in the Commandery. I know the Grand Commandery of DC did this some years ago in order to expand the pool of potential members from which to draw, and I expect others might be so inclined.”*

And we are so inclined. Therefore it is the assertion of the members signed below that this action is both in the best interest of the Grand Council of Minnesota and the Grand Commandery of Minnesota; as well as being lawful and in due form with the laws of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar.