

2015 RES. 4 COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

RESOLVED, that the 145th Convention of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania requests that the Bishop Diocesan recommend to the Council of Trustees the formation of a committee called The Committee on Social Justice and Equity, bringing together established groups and persons from our Diocese involved in anti-racism work, prison ministry, criminal justice system issues, *domestic violence ministries, human trafficking ministries, child abuse ministries*, and other social justice ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Committee be charged with gathering data and information for diocesan wide dissemination and providing leadership to the Diocese by assisting parishes and convocations in their work on these matters, helping to provide appropriate training, being a clearing house of information, helping to find and apply for grants, helping to coordinate efforts among parishes and/or convocations, developing, or assisting to develop, and overseeing appropriate training for our Diocese as necessary, discovering and collaborating with existing efforts both within our diocesan area and in adjacent areas, as appropriate, which share the values of the Episcopal Church on these matters, and initiating social action for criminal justice reform; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Social Justice and Equity shall report on its work to the Council of Trustees and issue an information report to the annual Diocesan Convention.

EXPLANATION

Resolution C019 (set forth in full below) of the 78th General Convention affirms as a top priority of The Episcopal Church in the upcoming triennium the challenging and difficult work of racial reconciliation through prayer, teaching, engagement, and action. The Church understands and affirms that the call to pray and act for racial reconciliation is integral to our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to our living into the demands of our Baptismal Covenant.

Resolution A011 (below) the 78th General Convention acknowledges that implicit racial bias and racial profiling result in a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates people of color damaging individuals, families, and communities. There is a deep and long standing connection between the sin of racism and the inequities in our criminal justice system. Domestic violence, human trafficking, and child abuse continue to plague our society. A011 challenges The Episcopal Church at every level to commit mindfully and intentionally to dismantling our current mass incarceration system.

C019 Establish Response to Systemic Racial Injustice

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church confesses that, despite repeated efforts at anti-racism training as well as racial justice and racial reconciliation initiatives including the passage of more than 30 General Convention resolutions dating back to 1952, the abomination and sin of racism continue to plague our society and our Church at great cost to human life and human dignity; we formally acknowledge our historic and contemporary participation in this evil and repent of it; and be it further

Resolved, That in the wake of the brutal, overtly racist murders of nine of our Christian brothers and sisters of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015; numerous inexcusable deaths of unarmed black men and youth at the hands of law enforcement personnel; and the moral atrocity of mass incarceration in which a hugely disproportionate number of persons of color have been unfairly caught in the net of an unjust criminal justice system, the 78th General Convention affirms as a top priority of The Episcopal Church in the upcoming triennium the challenging and difficult work of racial reconciliation through prayer, teaching, engagement, and action; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church understands and affirms that the call to pray and act for racial reconciliation is integral to our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to our living into the demands of our Baptismal Covenant; and be it further

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies, Vice President of the House of Bishops, and Vice President of the House of Deputies be charged to lead, direct, and be present to assure and account for the Church's work of racial justice and reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$1.2 million for the Triennium for the implementation of this resolution.

A011 Recommit to Criminal Justice Reform Study and Advocacy

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 78th General Convention acknowledges that implicit racial bias and racial profiling result in a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates people of color damaging individuals, families, and communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention challenges The Episcopal Church at every level to commit mindfully and intentionally to dismantling our current mass incarceration system; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention urges the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and the Office of Governmental Relations of The Episcopal Church to advocate publicly for changes in Federal policies that perpetuate the mass incarceration system; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention encourage each congregation and Diocese to undertake at least one specific initiative aimed at addressing the destructive consequences of the mass incarceration system. These initiatives include such possibilities as:

1. Advocating for alternatives to incarceration for those who are addicted, and increased funding for treatment programs;
2. Advocating for alternatives to incarceration for those who are mentally ill, and increased funding for treatment programs;
3. Advocating for protection of the civil rights and provision of appropriate support and accommodation for people with disabilities who are arrested and incarcerated;
4. Advocating for funding for job training and apprentice programs for those who are at risk of incarceration and those who are formerly released from prison;
5. Working with local businesses to create pathways to living wage jobs for formerly incarcerated people;
6. Establishing mentoring and accompaniment programs for those leaving prison;
7. Advocating for the repeal of mandatory-minimum sentences for nonviolent offenses;
8. Calling for the abolition of the sentencing disparity between crack-cocaine and powder-cocaine offenses and, as an intermediate step, urging the U.S. Congress, in accordance with the recommendation of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, to make retroactive the 2010 Fair Sentencing Act, which reduces the disparity in sentencing from previous levels;
9. Advocating to eliminate “three strikes” sentencing protocols;
10. Joining local “Ban the Box” campaigns to remove questions about arrest records in on-line and written job application forms;
11. Opposing the creation of “for profit” prisons and immigration detention centers, and, where they exist, organizing against guaranteed nightly numbers of prisoners and detainees, and advocating for access to education and rehabilitation programs for those being incarcerated or detained;
12. Reforming monetary bail bond systems, which rely upon often-unlicensed and unregulated bail bond agents and on conditioning release from pre-trial incarceration solely on the ability to pay;

13. Advocating for immediate return of the right to vote for those who have served their sentences and left prison; and

14. Calling for the exploration and creation of restorative justice programs to transform juvenile justice systems.

Be it further Resolved, That the 78th General Convention request that each Diocese report back to the 79th General Convention on the initiatives engaged at congregational and Diocesan levels.

Submitted by

The Rev. Canon Kate Harrigan, Chair and on behalf of Deputation of the Diocese of Pennsylvania to the 78th General Convention