

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2009
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-B028
TITLE: Immigration Reform
PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes
COMMITTEE: National and International Concerns

Directly Related: (attached)

2006-A017 Adopt the Fundamental Principles Included in "The Alien Among You" as the Policy of the Episcopal Church
2003-C033 Urge Legislation to Expand Temporary Workers' Programs
1994-D132 Reject Racism Toward Immigrants and Request the Church to Respond
1985-D113 Request Congress to Reform Immigration Legislation
1982-A063 Encourage Relief for Refugees

Indirectly Related:

2003-C028 Support the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride
1988-B034 Commend Participation in the Legalization Program for Refugees

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions of General Convention for the period 1976 through 2006, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. Committee members who are interested in obtaining copies of "indirectly related" resolutions, legislative history before 1976, or who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.



Resolution Number: 2006-A017
Title: Adopt the Fundamental Principles Included in “The Alien Among You” as the Policy of the Episcopal Church
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive “The Alien Among You” in the Blue Book Report of the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns; and, while recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders, adopt the following fundamental principles included in “The Alien Among You” as the policy of The Episcopal Church.

1. **Undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency.**
2. **Legal workers should be allowed to enter the United States to respond to recognized labor force needs.**
3. **Close family members should be allowed to reunite without undue delay with individuals lawfully present in the United States.**
4. **Fundamental U.S. principles of legal due process should be granted all persons.**
5. **Enforcement of national borders and immigration policies should be proportional and humane; and be it further**

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church undertake a campaign to educate Episcopalians as to the plight of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, which will include information about the root causes of migration; and be it further

Resolved, That this campaign call the Church to commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their well being and protection and to urge its members to resist legislation and actions which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 532-533.



Resolution Number: 2003-C033
Title: Urge Legislation to Expand Temporary Workers' Programs
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention urge that the Congress of the United States enact legislation to expand the temporary workers' programs to include all persons currently residing in the United States engaged in meaningful labor, as well as overseas workers offered employment in the United States through formal contractual arrangements in response to the labor needs of specific sectors of the economy; and be it further

Resolved, That such temporary workers receive such compensation and benefits for themselves and their dependents living with them that parallel those available to other legal residents such as the federally mandated minimum hourly wage, Social Security, driver's license, medical care and education; and be it further

Resolved, That based upon a specified period of residence in the United States, such workers have the option of adjusting to permanent resident status, which could lead to naturalization; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be sent to concerned members of Congress and state legislatures as an expression of The Episcopal Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 319.



Resolution Number: 1994-D132
Title: Reject Racism Toward Immigrants and Request the Church to Respond
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 1994 General Convention of the Episcopal Church declare reprehensible the widespread racist and unjust treatment of immigrants that has become a convenient theme of current political discourse; and be it further Resolved, That provinces and dioceses develop programs of literacy, citizenship, voter registration and advocacy to counteract violations of civil rights.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 355.



Resolution Number: 1985-D113
Title: Request Congress to Reform Immigration Legislation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That this 68th General Convention, as it has in the past, call upon Congress to enact immigration legislation of a positive nature that will recognize human realities of the millions of undocumented people in the country, provide for appropriate asylum and safe haven for those fleeing political repression from abroad, and will eliminate the many repressive features contained in the present Senate bill, S. 1200; and be it further**

Resolved, **That copies of this Resolution be transmitted to all members of the United States Senate, and to the members of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives; and be it further**

Resolved, **That all deputies to this Convention, as individuals and through the appropriate social concerns committees of their churches, write to their respective United States Senators.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 257.



Resolution Number: 1982-A063
Title: Encourage Relief for Refugees
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church commend the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief and Church World Service for their leadership in facilitating the resettlement of refugees and for promoting a United States refugee and immigration policy which in principle and implementation opposes any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, geography, nationality, sexual orientation or language; and be it further**

Resolved, **That this Convention call upon the Clergy and Lay Persons in our provinces, dioceses and local congregations to encourage in their several communities a freer acceptance of refugees and immigrants, especially in areas of high employment potential or other feasible places; and be it further**

Resolved, **That this Convention urge the President of the United States and the Congress to welcome by a uniform federal code to our shores refugees and immigrants in proportion as our nation is able to provide shelter, training, education and sustenance on a continuing basis, without discrimination as to race, geographic origin, nationality, sexual orientation or language, and in particular to cease the inhuman treatment accorded in recent years to refugees from Haiti and El Salvador; and be it further**

Resolved, **That this Convention further urge the President of the United States and the Congress to enact refugee and immigrant related legislation, rules and procedures after seeking consultation, coordination and cooperation with other nations which would be impacted by such legislation, rules and procedures; and be it further**

Resolved, **That this Convention recognize that future refugee and immigrant problems cannot disappear without active work for the improvement of the quality of life in developing countries, and therefore, urge enlarged support for long-term developmental programs within Third World countries; and be it further**

Resolved, **That this Convention urge the President and the Congress to adopt policies that will grant permanent resident status to overstayed/undocumented persons who have resided in the United States for a definite and reasonable period of time and have come here because of political economic stress.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-131.

TOPIC/TITLE: Immigration: Immigration Reform

PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention recognize
2 that our immigration system is broken and marred by the sin of racism; and be it further

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4 *Resolved*, That the 76th General Convention call on the President and Congress to work
5 toward a systemic change in United States immigration policy which would, at a
6 minimum, do the following: impose a moratorium on new physical and virtual fence-
7 building, pending demonstration of its cost-effectiveness; emphasize workplace
8 enforcement over border enforcement; audit employers' hiring records rather than carry
9 out worksite raids that only punish workers and their families while employers escape
10 penalties; legalize most undocumented immigrants already here with few restrictions on
11 eligibility (e.g. a criminal record would be a reasonable restriction); fix the legal
12 immigration system; provide more legal entry opportunities for new immigrants through
13 temporary visas with an assured path to permanency and increases in permanent resident
14 visas; exempt Mexican nationals from some visa ceilings to reduce backlogs and
15 strengthen incentives for legal immigration; create alternatives to emigration through
16 targeted development projects in migrant-sending areas; and be it further

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18 *Resolved*, That all Episcopalians be encouraged to promote legislation to affect these
19 changes.
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EXPLANATION:

Extensive research suggests that it is time to take a hard, searching look at what the United States is accomplishing with its costly border enforcement build-up since 1993. This policy has failed to keep would-be unauthorized migrants out of the country. The probability of being apprehended on any given trip across the border has been rising, but nearly all migrants succeed in entering on their second or third try. Do border controls discourage potential migrants from trying their luck at crossing the border? Yes, for some, but only in tandem with the current economic crisis in the United States. Lack of work in the United States is causing potential migrants to postpone their border-crossing, not border enforcement, nor interior enforcement. This means that as soon as there is a sustained United States economic recovery, the flow of unauthorized migrants will quickly rebound, as it has after every recession in recent decades. Migrants will come illegally if the United States does not make it possible for them to come legally. Current United States immigration policy has serious consequences including: sharply increased migrant deaths at the border

Endorser(s): The Rt. Rev. Kirk Stevan Smith, The Rt. Rev. Gary R. Lillibridge

(more than 5,000 fatalities detected since 1995); prosperous people-smugglers, who are often immoral; forced permanent relocation of entire families to the United States as the only way to avoid lengthy separation. Interviews with thousands of Mexican migrants and potential migrants to the United States since 2005 suggest that a reallocation of immigration enforcement resources from border enforcement to employer investigation and sanctioning would be more cost-effective as well as more humane, but creating alternatives to migration in migrant-exporting communities in Mexico would have the strongest and most abiding impact on unauthorized flow. At present, there is no realistic alternative to migration for many Mexicans, especially rural dwellers who want to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Endorser(s): The Rt. Rev. Kirk Stevan Smith, The Rt. Rev. Gary R. Lillibridge