

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-D076
TITLE: Support for Immigration Equality for Same-Sex Couples
PROPOSER: The Very Rev. Bonnie A. Perry
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
2006-A095 Reaffirm Support of Gay and Lesbian Persons
2000-D039 Acknowledge Relationships Other Than Marriage and Existence of Disagreement on the Church's Teaching
1994-D132 Reject Racism Toward Immigrants and Request the Church to Respond

Indirectly Related:

1985-D113 Request Congress to Reform Immigration Legislation
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: 2006-A095
Title: Reaffirm Support of Gay and Lesbian Persons
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention reaffirm The Episcopal Church's historical support of gay and lesbian persons as children of God and entitled to full civil rights; and be it further
Resolved, That the 75th General Convention reaffirm the 71st General Convention's action calling upon "municipal council, state legislatures and the United States Congress to approve measures giving gay and lesbian couples protection[s] such as: bereavement and family leave policies; health benefits; pension benefits; real-estate transfer tax benefits; and commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples"; and be it further
Resolved, That the 75th General Convention oppose any state or federal constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex civil marriage or civil unions.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), p. 704.



Resolution Number: 2000-D039
Title: Acknowledge Relationships Other Than Marriage and Existence of Disagreement on the Church's Teaching
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the members of the 73rd General Convention intend for this Church to provide a safe and just structure in which all can utilize their gifts and creative energies for mission; and be it further Resolved, That we acknowledge that while the issues of human sexuality are not yet resolved, there are currently couples in the Body of Christ and in this Church who are living in marriage and couples in the Body of Christ and in this Church who are living in other life-long committed relationships; and be it further

Resolved, That we expect such relationships will be characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God; and be it further

Resolved, That we denounce promiscuity, exploitation, and abusiveness in the relationships of any of our members; and be it further

Resolved, That this Church intends to hold all its members accountable to these values, and will provide for them the prayerful support, encouragement, and pastoral care necessary to live faithfully by them; and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge that some, acting in good conscience, who disagree with the traditional teaching of the Church on human sexuality, will act in contradiction to that position; and be it further

Resolved, That in continuity with previous actions of the General Convention of this Church, and in response to the call for dialogue by the Lambeth Conference, we affirm that those on various sides of controversial issues have a place in the Church, and we reaffirm the imperative to promote conversation between persons of differing experiences and perspectives, while acknowledging the Church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 287f.



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.

TOPIC/TITLE: Immigration: Support for Immigration Equality for Same-Sex Couples

PROPOSER: The Very Rev. Bonnie A. Perry

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention of The
2 Episcopal Church support the passage by both Houses of Congress and its signing into
3 law by the President of the United States of a law that would provide immigration
4 equality for same-sex couples by permitting a citizen or permanent resident to sponsor an
5 immigrant partner for permanent residence in the United States.
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EXPLANATION:

Despite some progress on local and state levels for same-sex couples, Federal immigration law ignores committed long-term relationships, sundering bi-national couples when the non-citizen's temporary visa or work permit runs out, and denying them the rights heterosexual couples gain via civil marriage. Estimates from the 2000 census indicated that at least 35,000 same-sex couples in the U.S. were bi-national, i.e., one partner is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Under current law, these committed relationships are not recognized, and the citizen partner cannot sponsor his/her immigrant partner for residency. Immigrants in the U.S. under temporary visas have sworn that they will leave at the expiration of their current status. In an outrageous injustice, the immigrant partner of a same-sex couple who seek to make their relationship permanent via a civil union or marriage faces deportation or other legal consequences for violating the terms of his/her visa. Similarly situated heterosexual immigrants are free to marry at any time. Same-sex couples can face hard choices: move to the immigrant partner's home country (if sponsorship is allowed there), spend much of the year apart (if the immigrant partner can obtain multiple-entry visas), or separate permanently. Legislation introduced as the "Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA)" would amend U.S. immigration law to give same-sex couples the same rights as married heterosexual couples to sponsor an immigrant partner for permanent residence. The Episcopal Church makes "justice and peace among all people, and respect [for the] the dignity of every human being" a part of its Baptismal Covenant. Same-sex couples in which one partner is an immigrant can face insurmountable obstacles to creating a permanent relationship as a result of the discrimination inherent in current immigration law. By supporting this civil rights legislation, the Episcopal Church can add a Christian voice to those demanding that all citizens be treated equally under U.S. immigration laws.

Endorser(s): The Very Rev. Ernesto R. Medina, The Rev. Gerald W. Keucher