

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-A080
TITLE: Ministry Discernment for Disabled Persons
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Health
COMMITTEE: Ministry

Directly Related: (attached)

2003-C006 Welcome the Church's Diverse "New Majority"
1994-D007 Amend Canon III.4.1 [Equal Access to Ordination Process]
1991-A090 Reduce Discrimination in Clergy Deployment
1985-A087 Encourage Opportunities Within the Church for Persons with Disabilities
1985-C007 On the Topic of the Canons on Rights of Laity and Access to the Ordination Process (Rejected)

Indirectly Related:

2006-D070 On the Topic of Programs for Persons with Disabilities
1994-D104 Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility
1991-D084 Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility
1988-D004 Commend the Task Force on Accessibility and Encourage Sensitivity to Persons With Disabilities
1988-D008 On the Topic of the Canon on General Provisions Respecting Ordination (Rejected)
1982-B019 Oppose Discrimination on the Basis of Age in Calling Clergy
1982-D120 Establish a Task Force on Disabled and Handicapped Persons

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: 2003-C006
Title: Welcome the Church's Diverse "New Majority"
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That in implementing the 20/20 goal of focusing The Episcopal Church on domestic mission and evangelism, this church reach out to groups not traditionally within the scope of these efforts, which include persons who have felt unwelcome or alienated by the church, particularly, though not limited to, those who identify themselves as the "new majority" characterized by diversity of race, ethnicity, language, disability, and sexual orientation; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention affirm the work of the Congregational Development Unit of the Church Center, already begun in these efforts, and urge them to continue to include and expand, as components of their ongoing and future programs, elements of diversity, including but not limited to the groups listed above.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 210.



Resolution Number: 1994-D007
Title: Amend Canon III.4.1 [Equal Access to Ordination Process]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Title III, Canon 4 be amended by adding a new sentence to Section 1 as follows:

No one shall be denied access to the selection process for ordination in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons. No right to ordination is hereby established.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), pp. 811-12.



Resolution Number: 1991-A090
Title: Reduce Discrimination in Clergy Deployment
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That the Council for the Development of Ministry facilitate the development of educational materials and training programs, in consultation with the ethnic desks of the Presiding Bishop's staff and other appropriate groups, for diocesan deployment officers, commissions on ministry, search committees and congregations, to help eliminate discrimination in deployment throughout the church against clergywomen, clergy of color, ethnic clergy, and clergy with disabilities.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 278.



Resolution Number: 1985-A087
Title: Encourage Opportunities Within the Church for Persons with Disabilities
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That the Task Force on Accessibility of this Church be commended and authorized to continue its work and ministry of providing leadership, training and education throughout this Church;** and be it further

Resolved, **That this Convention again calls on the dioceses which have not yet done so to convene committees on disability concerns;** and be it further

Resolved, **That local vestries be encouraged to conduct accessibility surveys of their buildings with the assistance of people trained in this field and to designate a person or persons to be particularly responsible for disability concerns;** and be it further

Resolved, **That all Episcopal Church properties and all Episcopal Church meeting places be made (so far as possible) accessible to persons with disabilities and barrier-free;** and be it further

Resolved, **That this Church promote the hiring of qualified persons with disabilities within its own structures and within society at large; and that each parish seek as a first step for one person with a disability;** and be it further

Resolved, **That qualified persons with disabilities not be disqualified for postulancy, for Holy Orders, for ordination or for further employment in the Church solely on the basis of their handicaps;** and be it further

Resolved, **That persons in leadership roles of this Church be encouraged to participate at community, state and national levels in advocating legislation that will assist persons with disabilities;** and be it further

Resolved, **That the liturgies, Christian education programs and other forms of meetings throughout this Church be designed for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, using such means as captioning and interpreters for the deaf;** and be it further

Resolved, **That each church seek to focus on awareness/educational issues related to persons with disabilities including informing themselves about architectural and attitudinal barriers which prevent full participation of persons with disabilities in congregational life;** and be it further

Resolved, **That this Church at national, diocesan and local places encourage and support the assumption of leadership roles in both church and community by qualified persons who have disabilities.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 274.



Resolution Number: 1985-C007
Title: On the Topic of the Canons on Rights of Laity and Access to the Ordination Process
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Title I, Canon 16, Section 5 be amended as follows:

No one shall be denied rights or status in this church because of race, color, ethnic origin, *gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or age except as otherwise specified by canon*; and be it further

Resolved, That Title III, Canon 9 be amended by adding a new Section 2 as follows (and renumbering subsequent Sections):

No one shall be denied access to the ordination process in this church because of race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or age, except as otherwise specified by canon.

TOPIC/TITLE: Disabled Persons: Ministry Discernment for Disabled Persons
 PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Health
 C&C PAGE:
 BB PAGE: 175

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That all Dioceses encourage qualified people
- 2 with disabilities to begin ministry discernment as described in Title III of the Constitution and
- 3 Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further
- 4
- 5 *Resolved*, That the discernment process for people with disabilities be the same as the
- 6 discernment process for persons who are temporarily able-bodied; and be it further
- 7
- 8 *Resolved*, the Commissions on Ministry and Standing Committees apply the same standards to
- 9 persons with disabilities as they apply to persons who are temporarily able-bodied.
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EXPLANATION:
 Although people with disabilities comprise the largest minority in the country, there are no more than a handful of clergy with disabilities who are active in The Episcopal Church. Furthermore, only 30% of people with disabilities attend churches of any kind. We are an aging church-50% of all Episcopalians are over 50 years of age. If one lives long enough, one will acquire one or more disabilities. Clergy with disabilities are especially qualified to minister with and to parishioners with disabilities. Clergy with disabilities are particularly equipped to demonstrate that TEC is open to and welcomes all members. Clergy with disabilities have innate skills for ministering to families with members who are chronically ill or disabled.