

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-D003
TITLE: Amend Canons III.6.5(j) and III.8.5(j)
PROPOSER: The Rev. Cn. Margaret A. Babcock
COMMITTEE: Ministry

Directly Related: (attached)

2006-A082 Amend Canons in Title III.[Ministry]

Indirectly Related:

2003-A111 Revise Title III Canons
1997-A087 On the Topic of the Canons on Ordination of Deacons and Priests (Rejected)
1988-A125 Amend and Renumber Canons III.5-10 as follows:
Canon III.5 [Of Postulants for Holy Orders]
Canon III.6 [Of Candidates for Holy Orders]
Canon III.8 [Of General Provisions Respecting Ordination]
Canon III.9 [Of the Ordination of Deacons]
Canon III.10 [Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood]
Canon III.7 [Delete Canon 7: Of Standards of Learning]

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-A082
Title: Amend Canons in Title III.[Ministry]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

[*Resolved, That Canon III.6.5(j) is amended to read as follows.*]

CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

- (j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished
- (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
 - (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

[*Resolved, That Canon III.8.5(k) is amended to read as follows.*]

CANON 8: Of the Ordination of Priests

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

- (k) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon under this Canon, the following must be accomplished
- (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
 - (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

Citation: Canon III.6.5(j) and Canon III.8.5(k) are excerpted from the Final Text of the revision to Canons Title III. See General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 583-630.

TOPIC/TITLE: Canons: Amend Canons III.6.5(j) and III.8.5(j)

PROPOSER: The Rev. Cn. Margaret A. Babcock

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BB PAGE:

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That Canon III.6.5(j) be amended as
- 2 follows:
- 3 (j) Within ~~thirty-six~~ *sixty* months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be
- 4 accomplished
- 5 (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing
- 6 Committee.
- 7 (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using
- 8 forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary,
- 9 psychiatric referral; and be it further
- 10
- 11 *Resolved*, That Canon III.8.5(k) be amended as follows:
- 12 (k) Within ~~thirty-six~~ *sixty* months prior to ordination as a Deacon under this Canon, the
- 13 following must be accomplished
- 14 (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing
- 15 Committee.
- 16 (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using
- 17 forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary,
- 18 psychiatric referral
- 19
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EXPLANATION:

The current time frame or "window" for the medical examination, psychological evaluation and background check for persons in the ordination process is limited to 36 months. It is often desired that these evaluations take place early in the process so that if it is discovered that there are significant issues that would affect the suitability for ordination of any person, action could be taken immediately to address them. This avoids "surprises" later in the process which create difficulties and not unexpectedly, hard feelings. However, as the process for preparation for ordination can exceed the 3 year "window" in some, if not many cases, the proposal is to increase that time to 5 years, or 60 months, to make the process more manageable, and more fair to both persons in the process and those who have the responsibility for oversight for preparation for ordination. This increase would also relieve the financial burden created by an arbitrarily mandated second round of evaluations, as the cost of these evaluations is significant.

Endorser(s): The Rev. Tammy Jones, The Rev. Canon Linton H. Studdiford

Review Status: Not Yet Reviewed for Canonical Form