



Resolution Number: 2015-A011
Title: Urge Advocacy for Policy Changes to End Mass Incarceration Practices
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, 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 advocate 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; and 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.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 300-301.