

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-A068
Title: Amend Canon 1.17 – Safe Church Training
Proposer: Task Force to Develop Model Sexual Harassment Policies & Safe Church Training
Topic: Sexual Misconduct

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-A048	Create a Task Force to Update Safe Church Training
2018-A108	Amend Canon III.6.5(g) and III.8.5(g) [Sexual Misconduct Prevention]
2018-A109	Establish Task Force on Sexual Harassment
2018-A115	Adopt the Anglican Communion Charter for Safety
2015-A074	Update the Safe Church Training Materials
2009-D062	Continue Developing Policies and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct Prevention
2006-A086	Create and Disseminate Training Materials to Recognize and Respond to Abuse
2006-A156	Adopt Policies for Protection from Sexual Misconduct

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

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A068 - Amend Canon 1.17 – Safe Church Training

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force to Develop Model Sexual Harassment Policies & Safe Church Training

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: Yes

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 15 - Ministry

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That Canon 1.17 be amended by adding a new Sec. 9:

Sec. 9. All members of this Church shall take and complete the course of Safe Church Training provided by the Church and the Church Pension Group so that all members can participate fully in creating and maintaining safe environments for all people throughout the Church.

Explanation

The General Convention has been working to address issues of sexual abuse and exploitation within the Church since at least 1985, and has committed itself on multiple occasions to being and becoming a place where children, youth and adults are safe, especially from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This was the primary driver for and the purpose of Safe Church training. However, actual implementation and tracking of training and compliance with the requirements remains inconsistent across the Church. Thus, the time has come to put teeth into the Church's commitment through a canonical provision.

Existing General Convention resolutions do not require all members of the Church to complete the training, although all are strongly encouraged to do so. Continuing evidence demonstrates that the perpetrators of harassment and other forms of misconduct that compromise the Church's ability to witness to the dignity of all humans include lay leaders

and other lay members of the church and its affiliates. Best practices research from the secular world confirm that the Bystander Intervention approach of training is most successful in actually reducing incidents of abuse and misconduct. Therefore, it is appropriate that all members of the Church, as defined by the canons, and not just active ministry leaders, be required to complete the training. Although the current training requires adaptation for members under the age of 21, the revised training specifically addresses the needs of the Church's younger members.

Although Resolution 2018-A051 directs that a safe church audit be included in the Diocesan Parochial Report, the report disseminated for reporting in January 2021 did not include this provision. Therefore, a canonical provision is necessary to assure that the whole church is committed to the process to live into the vision of the Church as a place where children, youth, and adults are safe, especially from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.