

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2022-C073  
**Title:** Opposition to Detention and Surveillance of Immigrants and Asylum-Seekers  
**Proposer:** Province I  
**Topic:** Immigration

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### Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-A178 Denounce Inhumane Immigration Policies and Advocate on Behalf of Migrants  
2018-C009 Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants  
2018-C033 Denounce Racism Against Immigrants and Advocate for Immigration Reform  
2018-D009 Set Forth Christian Principles to Guide Responses to Human Migration  
2018-D009 Set Forth Christian Principles to Guide Responses to Human Migration  
2012-D059 Halt Unjust Immigration Enforcement  
2009-B006 Advocate for Immigration Reform  
2006-A017 Adopt the Principles of “The Alien Among You” as the Church Policy  
1994-D132 Reject Racism Toward Immigrants and Request the Church to Respond

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

2015-A011 Urge Advocacy for Policy Changes to End Mass Incarceration Practices

*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.*

# C073 - Opposition to Detention and Surveillance of Immigrants and Asylum-Seekers

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Province IV

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**HiA:** HD

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 08 - Social Justice & United States Policy

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** No

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church advocate for an end to detention and other unjust immigration policies, envisioning a just society in which everyone, regardless of national origin, has basic human rights including livelihood, family unity, self-determination, and physical and emotional safety; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention of The Episcopal Church deplore and specifically oppose and specifically call for an end to the U.S. government's policy of immigration detention, which is clearly at odds with human welfare and dignity and is also expensive, ineffective, and unnecessary; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention also oppose and call for the U.S. government to cease using electronic monitoring and surveillance of immigrants as an "alternative" to detention, including ankle monitors and mobile-phone-based surveillance technologies, which unjustly deprive them of liberty and privacy and threaten the human rights of all people; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention direct the Office of Government Relations and urge all Episcopalians to advocate for our government to address these serious shortcomings in our treatment of the "strangers in our midst" by advocating for elimination of detention and surveillance in favor of proven policies that:

- Provide true community-based and community-supported alternatives to detention
- Fund non-governmental non-profit organizations to deliver case management support based on individualized needs assessments, including the provision of clear information regarding participants' rights and obligations with regard to immigration processing and the consequences of non-compliance
- Include referrals to community-supported services, including legal services, social services, and medical and mental health support
- Treat asylum seekers and migrants with dignity, humanity, and respect, assuring that any restrictions and compliance obligations placed on participants are the least onerous possible

## Explanation

The vast majority of non-detained immigrants appear voluntarily for their immigration court hearings: From 2008 to 2018, 83% of non-detained immigrants attended all of their hearings, and 96% of non-detained immigrants represented by a lawyer attended all of their hearings. Nevertheless, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) holds tens of thousands of people daily in the equivalent of pretrial detention, without appointed counsel and often without access to bond hearings. Each year, ICE uses several billion taxpayer dollars to jail and deport people who have lived in the United States for decades, including parents of U.S. citizens, and people who arrived recently seeking safety or a better life. They are held in one of more than 200 prisons, jails, and prison-like complexes rife with systemic racism and abuse. These facilities are largely operated by private companies and are remote and isolated.

ICE has also excessively deployed electronic surveillance of immigrants who would not otherwise be detained. Originally proposed in 2004 as a more “humane” alternative to detention, supposedly with the goal of reducing the number of detained immigrants, the electronic surveillance program now monitors more than 180,000 immigrants at any given time. The government is seeking to expand the program to 400,000 by the end of 2022.

Moreover, electronic surveillance has not been used as an alternative or substitute for physical detention. Instead, the two programs have grown side-by-side. Between 2006 and 2021, the budget for detention expanded from \$1 billion to \$2.8 billion while the budget for electronic surveillance grew from \$28 million to \$475 million.

Fortunately, effective and humane alternatives to detention and electronic surveillance do exist. In 2015, a collaborative of more than 400 civil society organizations known as the International Detention Coalition (IDC) completed a wide-ranging analysis of more than 250 examples of alternative programming in 60 different countries. Their report found that successful models engage individuals in the immigration process through informative and community-supported programming, contributing to “positive compliance, case resolution, cost, and health and wellbeing outcomes.”

A fact sheet published by Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Office of Government Relations states that: “The Episcopal Church has longstanding General Convention policy advocating for humane and dignified alternatives to detaining immigrants, acknowledging that the current system of immigrant detention denies asylum seekers and other immigrants

due process and holds them for months in often unsafe, unsanitary, and inhumane conditions.” However, recent immigration-and incarceration-related General Convention resolutions (2009-B006; 2012-D059; 2015-A011; 2018-A178; 2018-D009; 2018D029) do not explicitly oppose the continued existence of the immigrant detention system. They also do not make it clear that electronic surveillance is a growing societal problem rather than an acceptable “alternative” to physical detention.

Therefore, the proposed resolution is needed to update and clarify TEC’s position on these important human rights issues. We must add our church’s voice to the growing chorus of faith-based and social justice organizations that are calling for the US government to end its unjust detention and surveillance policies and replace them with proven, community-based alternatives that are more effective, less expensive, and far more humane than the existing approaches.

## **Supporting Documents**

1. 11 Years of Government Data Reveal That Immigrants Do Show Up for Court. Report published by the American Immigration Council, based on analysis of 11 years of government data on the rate at which immigrants appear for hearings in U.S. immigration court.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/news/11-years-government-data-reveal-immigrants-doshow-court>

2. A Better Way: Community-based Programming as an Alternative to Immigrant Incarceration. Report published by the National Immigrant Justice Center showing that community-based case management programs have proven successful and describing three specific real-world examples.

<https://immigrantjustice.org/research-items/report-better-way-community-based-programming-alternative-immigrant-incarceration>





**Resolution Number:** 2018-A178  
**Title:** Denounce Inhumane Immigration Policies and Advocate on Behalf of Migrants  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities and needs of immigrant women, parents and children in the current immigration crisis, both in the United States and globally; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention acknowledge that the U.S. government's intensification of and implementation of punitive immigration policies and practices, such as the detention and separation of children from parents and the practice of housing children in military bases, is inhumane and unjust, and only serves to traumatize the vulnerable, especially women and children; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church decry and call for a halt to the implementation and intensification of inhumane and unjust immigration policies and practices such as detaining and separating children from parents; ignoring the reproductive health needs of women and girls in detention centers and converting military bases to immigration detention centers for children; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention direct the Office of Government Relations and urge all Episcopalians to advocate for our governments to address the specific needs of women and children migrants and others with special vulnerabilities, by:*

- Keeping babies and children together with their parents and other responsible family members, and releasing families from immigration detention as a priority policy;
- Providing access to physical and mental health care to all in immigration detention, including to the full range of reproductive health care and sanitary products for women and girls;
- Ensuring the safety of all immigrants from sexual harassment, exploitation, and sex and labor trafficking, including women, children, youth, and elders; people with disabilities; and lesbian, gay, transgender and gender non-conforming persons;
- Deprioritizing immigration enforcement when deportation would mean parental separation from children and loss of needed family income, with exceptions for those with violent felony convictions;
- Preventing the release of immigration information from local law enforcement to ICE, except in cases of violent crime, so that people, including women, are not afraid to call local police to report domestic violence and other criminal activity, for fear of themselves or other family members being deported

*And be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention urge Episcopalians and Episcopal Church-related agencies and organizations to support ministries in states that provide vulnerable migrants with basic needs, legal support, and advocacy.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 611-612.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-C009  
**Title:** Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in obedience to the many biblical injunctions imploring us not to wrong or oppress the alien in our midst and Jesus' own mandate to extend care for the stranger, and in accordance with our Baptismal Covenant, reaffirms resolution 2015-D057 supporting the New Sanctuary Movement; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church urge its members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to "not wrong or oppress a resident alien" (Exodus 22:21); and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recommend that its institutions and congregations become places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted for deportation due to immigration status or some perceived status of difference, and that we work alongside our friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage its members to connect with local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, faith-based coalitions, and immigrant rights groups and coalitions, and engage in educating, organizing, advocacy, and direct action, and other methods as deemed appropriate in each context, to ensure the safety, security, and due process for immigrants, with a focus on keeping families together of the undocumented community, and to assist in equipping congregations, clergy and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church affirm our church's support for U.S. executive policies that deemphasize immigrant enforcement action against those who have not committed felony crimes, and reaffirm our church's support for congressional action for comprehensive and just reform of the broken U.S. immigration system as called for in General Convention resolution 2009-B006: "to allow undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States."*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 612.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-C033  
**Title:** Denounce Racism Against Immigrants and Advocate for Immigration Reform  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church reject and deplore racist and unjust treatment of immigrants of any residential status; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Church reaffirm GC2009-B006 which advocates for comprehensive immigration reform; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church direct the Episcopal Office of Government Relations to advocate on this Church's behalf all elements of this resolution; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church advocate through education, communication, and representation before legislative authorities the continuation of Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for all persons fleeing to or currently resident in the US seeking refuge from violence, environmental disaster, economic devastation, or cultural abuse, domestic abuse, or other forms of abuse; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church advocate for congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform which will allow millions of undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a realistic pathway to citizenship and to full social and economic integration into the United States; and be it further*

*Resolved, That we affirm comprehensive immigration reform to include:*

- **Keeping families together**
- **Respecting the United States Bill of Rights**
- **Honoring Human and Worker Rights**
- **Providing a Pathway to Citizenship**

*And be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention 79 support the goals of expanded immigration relief for youth as outlined in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) as stated in GC2015-D048; and support the passing of federal legislation that presents a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth and young adults known as DREAMers, as stated in GC2012-D067; and be it further*

*Resolved, That we urge dioceses, congregations, and individual Episcopalians to commit to long term advocacy, prayer, and study around immigration and partner with the Office of Government Relations to contact their elected officials on the need for compassionate and humane immigration reform through the Episcopal Public Policy Network.*

*Resolved, That The 79th General Convention commends the ongoing work of Episcopal Migration Ministries in resettling refugees to the United States on behalf of the Episcopal Church and encourages dioceses, parishes, and communities to engage the work of Episcopal Migration Ministries through its Partners in Welcome ministry network and other welcoming and advocacy programs.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 613.





**Resolution Number:** 2018-D009  
**Title:** Set Forth Christian Principles to Guide Responses to Human Migration  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize that human migration has always been part of the human condition, and that human migration will continue in future, and will likely increase due to any number of variables including the effects of climate change on human habitat, economic instability, or ongoing war and conflict, and remembering the call in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to welcome the stranger, building stronger and more diverse community: “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; .... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25: 35, 40); and be it further

*Resolved*, That this General Convention set forth these principles to guide our church’s response to human migration, including internal migration, in the future:

1. We recognize the fundamental human rights of all people as expressed in our Baptismal Covenant and we reaffirm that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to all refugees and both regular and irregular migrants;
2. We remember that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were refugees, as they were forced to flee into a foreign land to escape violence;
3. We call on all governments to keep their commitments and legal obligations to respect the rights and dignity of all people, including access to justice and social services, while recognizing the complexity of developing just immigration policies in any country, and the legitimate need to protect borders and address security threats to sovereign nations;
4. We commit the church to learning and engaging migration issues as part of the Jesus Movement, sacredly holding the voices and leadership of migrants themselves and honoring their leadership in this process;
5. We will endeavor to learn and address root causes of migration and advocate for just solutions with Anglican/Episcopal, ecumenical, and interfaith partners;
6. We acknowledge the connection between U.S. policies, and the policies of other states, and the root drivers of migration, including climate change, armed conflict, and disruption of local economies through global trade policies;
7. We stress the importance of demonstrating hospitality and welcome as Christian values at the local level, preaching hospitality and positive storytelling to overcome xenophobia;
8. We insist that the United States of America and other powerful, wealthy nations, and all nations to the best of their ability, contribute to resettlement, establish and maintain safe and orderly humanitarian protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other migrants seeking long-term solutions and safety;
9. We call on all nations to maintain family unity and safety during migration;
10. We insist that economic and foreign relationships among governments should not increase the need of migration due to economic hardships, persecution, and violence;
11. We insist that governments strive to maintain conditions which are conducive to internal stability and employment opportunity;

12. **In the event that people are forced to migrate, we insist that our governments address the drivers holistically, without racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, health status, or religious prejudice;**
13. **We insist that our governments adhere to the internationally accepted principle known as non-refoulement, that stipulates that countries should not return migrants and refugees to unsafe conditions in their home countries or other countries;**
14. **We recognize the links between migrants in vulnerable transit situations and human trafficking and other dangers, and will seek to establish and maintain robust, safe, and orderly routes for refugees;**
15. **We urge governments to expand refugee resettlement as a humanitarian response that offers individuals safety and opportunity;**
16. **We recognize that displacement due to climate change already happens and will increase, and we insist that our governments and the international community must commit to development of long-term protection solutions for persons displaced by climate change; and be it further**

*Resolved, That this General Convention recognize the process underway at the United Nations to establish a Global Compact on Refugees,[i] and a Global Compact on Migration, processes that have included advocacy by The Episcopal Church Representative to the UN and by the Office of Government Relations Refugee and Immigration Policy Advisor; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this General Convention urge the Office of the Presiding Bishop to ensure continued representation of The Episcopal Church at the United Nations and other multinational consultations with faith communities on refugee and migrant issues, alongside the Anglican Communion Office, Lutheran World Federation, and other ecumenical and interfaith partners in responding to the global refugee crisis; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this General Convention encourage all congregations and dioceses to learn about the intricacies of migration, including root causes through the resources provided by Episcopal Migration Ministries and its Partners in Welcome network and engage in aiding migrants to the best of their ability.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1065-1067.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-D059  
**Title:** Halt Unjust Immigration Enforcement  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention call for a halt to the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement's Secure Communities program (in which local jurisdictions send fingerprints of detainees suspected of immigration violations to federal authorities), which in practice leads to lengthy detention at the public expense of unrepresented immigrants who have no serious charges pending against them, and effectively discourages victims of various crimes, such as domestic violence, from reporting those crimes; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church decry the use of racial profiling or the use of race as a reason to question one's immigration status; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church oppose the use of identity checks for the purpose of determining immigration status.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 321.



**Resolution Number:** 2009-B006  
**Title:** Advocate for Immigration Reform  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention recognize that all people living in the United States are entitled to protection provided by due process of law and that all immigrants and their families are entitled to receive protection granted by our laws and Constitution; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention call for a moratorium on roadside checkpoints and raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at work sites, transportation systems, community gatherings, places of worship, lawful assemblies and private residences leaving families torn apart and children parentless and negatively affecting businesses, workers and communities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention advocate for a return of congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform which will allow millions of undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention deplore conditions found in immigration detention centers and the over-reliance on a costly prison-like detention system for immigrants, and urge the uses of alternatives to detention, and calls for accountability and oversight to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care and sanitary conditions; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention call for termination of any program which allows or funds local enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law, and return that enforcement to Federal Immigration Agents, leaving local law enforcement agencies the work of keeping communities safe and dedicating their resources to that end, and provide for a sense of safety for immigrant victims of crimes to come forward and report without fear of detention and deportation; and be it further*

*Resolved, That in as much as youth are a priority of The Episcopal Church, the 76th General Convention support the provision of conditional legal status for undocumented youth who arrived as infants and/or children and have grown up as members of our communities and schools, providing for them the opportunity to pursue higher education and/or serve the United States so they can become full contributing members of our communities and could eventually become U.S. Citizens.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 142.



**Resolution Number:** 2006-A017  
**Title:** Adopt the Principles of “The Alien Among You” as the Church Policy  
**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:** 1994-D132  
**Title:** Reject Racism Toward Immigrants and Request the Church to Respond  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Substituted and Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, 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.