

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-D015
Title: A Resolution to Adopt the Emmett Till Antilynching Act
Proposer: The Hon. Rose H. Sconiers
Topic: Racism

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-C019 Work for Racial Justice and Reconciliation
1979-D066 Condemn Ku Klux Klan and Similar Groups

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

2015-A182 Address Systemic Racial Injustice
2012-A125 Recommit to Anti-Racism Work
2012-A127 Recommit to Anti-Racism Work
2006-C011 Support Legislation for Reparations for Slavery
1997-D040 Support the National Commission to Combat Racism

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.

D015 - A Resolution to Adopt the Emmett Till Antilynching Act

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: The Hon. Rose H. Sconiers

Endorsed by: Ms. Minnie Steele, Mr. Louis Glosson

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

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That this 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church hereby direct and encourage that the United States Senate in the strongest possible terms to promptly pass The Emmett Till Antilynching Act in substantially the form passed by the House of Representatives; and be it further

Resolved, that this 80th General Convention direct, consistent with established policies and procedures, that the Executive Council refer this Resolution to the Office of Government Relations, so that it may take all actions necessary to accomplish the intentions and purposes of this Resolution.

Explanation

And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

We are all inheritors of multi-generational trauma. We are all inheritors of the great chasm of racial divide. The time for action is now. We are all inheritors, but we who believe that every human being is created in the image of God are choosing to no longer be spectators. We refuse to participate through silence and inaction. We are called upon to use our voices, to build relationships and to unify.

In the famous words of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote The Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Sadly, not only historically but presently, most in the Black population have not started life in conditions that promote these ideals. One of the conditions that suppresses, traumatizes, and continuously re-traumatizes African Americans is the chronic and real threat to personal safety. While the definition of lynching was once relegated to the end-result of executioner-style hanging, the actual act of lynching is a series of brutal acts committed against the body involving beatings, torture, maiming, dismemberment, burning, murder, and desecration, including using parts of the body as souvenirs or as trophies. These cruel and brutal acts have produced an atmosphere of terror in the hearts of African Americans, limit the physical movements of African Americans and continue to subjugate African Americans to white American interests. Unfortunately, African Americans and white Americans, though they may reside in the same neighborhoods, often live in two different worlds, having different sets of rules, treatment, and quality of life.

Terrorism through vigilantism sends a message to all Americans that Black and Brown people have reduced roles, reduced economic opportunities, and reduced resources. Now is the time to stand with all people regardless of skin color to uphold the American values that we consider to be "self-evident" by boldly acknowledging lynching as an everyday occurrence and by standing as a Church with one unified voice in favor of The Emmett Till Antilynching Act.

Within the last 100 years, there have been almost 200 attempts to pass an antilynching act in Congress, and yet each attempt has been blocked by either the House of Representatives or the Senate. On February 26, 2020, The Emmett Till Antilynching Act passed the House by a vote of 410-4. On the day of George Floyd's funeral, the Senate had the opportunity to make the passing of the first antilynching act a symbol and legislative contradiction to the heart wrenching institutional murder of Mr. Floyd, but the Senate failed to act yet again.

We Episcopalians have the moral responsibility and Christian duty to take concrete action to ensure that atonement, reconciliation, and creating a sustainable transformational atmosphere of safety is an ongoing priority. Of the 4,743 lynchings that have taken place between 1882- 1968, 72.7% have been attacks against African Americans, mostly males. Many additional lynchings have been recorded as "suicides." The impact upon Black bodies is not just reserved for lynched victims, but upon their families, their friends, and the Black community at large, including clergy. Trauma is built into our bodies through this domestic terrorism. The traumatization affects people of every "color."

We are all inheritors of racial trauma. Let us embody Thomas Jefferson's words that all are created equal, let us as The Body of Christ come together to unify, to bridge, and to heal this racial divide. We are reminded of the words of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said, "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it, is really cooperating with it."



Resolution Number: 2015-C019
Title: Work for Racial Justice and Reconciliation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church confesses that, despite repeated efforts at anti-racism training as well as racial justice and racial reconciliation initiatives including the passage of more than 30 General Convention resolutions dating back to 1952, the abomination and sin of racism continue to plague our society and our Church at great cost to human life and human dignity; we formally acknowledge our historic and contemporary participation in this evil and repent of it; and be it further

Resolved, That in the wake of the brutal, overtly racist murders of nine of our Christian brothers and sisters of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015; numerous inexcusable deaths of unarmed black men and youth at the hands of law enforcement personnel; and the moral atrocity of mass incarceration in which a hugely disproportionate number of persons of color have been unfairly caught in the net of an unjust criminal justice system, the 78th General Convention affirms as a top priority of The Episcopal Church in the upcoming triennium the challenging and difficult work of racial reconciliation through prayer, teaching, engagement, and action; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church understands and affirms that the call to pray and act for racial reconciliation is integral to our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to our living into the demands of our Baptismal Covenant; and be it further

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies, Vice President of the House of Bishops, and Vice President of the House of Deputies be charged to lead, direct, and be present to assure and account for the Church's work of racial justice and reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$1.2 million for the Triennium for the implementation of this resolution.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 310-311.



Resolution Number: 1979-D066
Title: Condemn Ku Klux Klan and Similar Groups
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 66th General Convention condemns any resurgence of membership or activity of the Ku Klux Klan, and all similar racist hatred groups, and urges the people of this Church, lay and clerical, to be alert to the threats to democracy and to Christ's kingdom on earth presented by such groups and to make their opposition to them as obvious and as effective as possible.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-129.