

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A089
Title: Address Violence Against Women and Girls
Proposer: Standing Commission on World Mission
Topic: Violence, Women

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-C063 Encourage Participation in "Thursdays in Black"
2022-C064 Designate the Observance of "Break the Silence Sunday"
2018-D016 Create a Task Force for Women, Truth, and Reconciliation
2015-D054 Refer a Resolution on Violence Against Women (Referred)
2012-A139 Endorse Efforts Against Gender Violence
1994-A049 Encourage Ministries That Respond to Violence Against Women
1988-D064 Urge Training to Respond to Family Violence

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

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, 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](#).

A089 - Address Violence Against Women and Girls

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Standing Commission on World Mission

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: Yes

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention affirm and uplift ongoing efforts to educate and empower advocacy among all the baptized in accordance with our scriptural, theological and moral understanding for gender equity, mutual respect and human dignity; and be it further

Resolved, That all the baptized use resources available to them, including [God's Justice: Theology and Gender Based Violence](#), a resource produced by the Office of Gender Justice in the Anglican Communion, as a means of ongoing formation that fuels transformation; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopal institutions and individuals participate in opportunities for activism and advocacy, including but not limited to, 16 Days of Activism sponsored by United Nations Convention on the Status of Women and Episcopal Relief and Development's [16 Days of Activism Toolkit](#).

Explanation

The plague of gender-based violence is well documented but little attention and research has been committed to understanding its underlying causes, and the work of raising

awareness remains critical. In seeking to know more about the complexities undergirding violence against women and girls, it is imperative that such information be shared with the wider Church, partnering with organizations who care for the rights of women and girls with a global scope. Increased understanding regarding the needs of women and girls can fuel motivation to participate in advocacy, therefore both must be encouraged in tandem.

The Standing Commission on World Mission uplifts The 16 Days of Activism and particularly the use of Episcopal Relief and Development's [16 Days of Activism Toolkit](#), as a tool for the development of new understandings as well as ongoing commitment to the work. Ongoing advocacy keeps the urgent need for women and girls in the forefront of hearts and minds, and uniting all across the breadth of humanity as beloved of God.

Note: this resolution and/or its explanation contains external references, such as URLs of websites, that may not be in the required languages of General Convention. Because of copyright restrictions, the General Convention cannot provide translations. However, your web browser may be able to provide a machine translation into another language. If you need assistance with this, please contact gc.support@episcopalchurch.org.



Resolution Number: 2022-C063
Title: Encourage Participation in "Thursdays in Black"
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church encourage members of Provinces, Dioceses, Congregations and all other institutions of The Episcopal Church to participate in the Thursdays In Black Campaign of the World Council of Churches, a global movement for a world without rape and violence; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church commit to work toward increasing awareness, accountability, and action across the church about the alarming degree of gender-based violence in church and society; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church commit to work toward education about and elimination of gender-based violence.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 859.



Resolution Number: 2022-C064
Title: Designate the Observance of "Break the Silence Sunday"
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church designate as Break The Silence Sunday the Sunday closest to November 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; and be it further

Resolved, That the common objective is to halt the epidemic of violence against women and to affirm as Christians that violence has no place within our families, our Church, and our communities; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage the education of its clergy and laity on how to support survivors of rape and sexual violence, including trauma-informed care, and advocate on behalf of those not yet ready to speak openly so that the voices of survivors do not speak alone; and be it further

Resolved, That we add our voices and prayers with those around the world seeking the elimination of gender-based violence.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 859.



Resolution Number: 2018-D016
Title: Create a Task Force for Women, Truth, and Reconciliation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention as members of the Body of Christ, confess our sins of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms as we understand these sins, which include, but are not limited to, sexual and gender harassment, sexual assault, physically, spiritually, and emotionally abusive behavior, and oppression based on gender, particularly as these sins have denigrated and devalued women and their ministries; acknowledge that within our patriarchal culture, the misuse of power and authority is primarily exercised by men with the vast majority of victims being women; acknowledge that we have created a culture of excuses, justifications, enabling, and dishonesty around gender-based discrimination and violence; have not heard the experiences of women with the goal of justice through acts of contrition, restoration, and reconciliation; declare that we as the Church seek to turn from the systems of oppression, patriarchy, ableism, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and our colonial legacy, among others, and seek to engage in restoration of the dignity of women and reconciliation from past acts, beginning with confessing to God and to one another the truth that we have not loved God with our whole heart, and mind, and strength, and that we have not loved, respected, and honored the presence, gifts, equality, and ministry of women, seeing in them the presence of Christ; confess that we have embraced patriarchal power, and in doing so, have exploited women and been blind to injustice and prejudice; and declare that we seek to repent and be restored to God and to each other, with the Church and each diocese declaring a period of fasting and repentance for this sin; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention authorize the establishment of a Task Force for Women, Truth, and Reconciliation for the purpose of helping the Church engage in truth-telling, confession, and reconciliation regarding gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms by those in power in the Church, making an accounting of things done and left undone in thought, word, and deed, intending amendment of life, and seeking counsel, direction, and absolution as we are restored in love, grace, and trust with each other through Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That this Task Force be appointed jointly by the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop, with 15 members - 6 lay people (at least 4 of whom identify as women), 6 priests or deacons members (at least 4 of whom identify as women), and 3 bishops members (at least 2 of whom identify as women). The overall composition of this task force shall include members of the LGBTQ community, people of color, and reflect regional diversity. The overall composition of this task force shall include at least 5 members who have experienced gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls and at least 3 members who have personal and recent (within the last 5 years) experience working with complaints within the general Church and/or secular community on matters of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls. This Task Force shall report its progress to Executive Council, present a public timeline, summary of ongoing work easily accessible by members of the Episcopal Church, and report back to the 80th General Convention on the following tasks:

-To develop a survey on gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms as we understand these sins, which include, but are not limited to, sexual and gender harassment, sexual assault, physical, spiritual, and emotionally abusive behavior, and oppression based on gender. This survey shall be modeled on the survey used to gather information and compile the 2017 report “Sexual Misconduct in the United Methodist Church: US Update,” and the task force shall create said survey no later than December of 2019 and shall work with appropriate general Church organizations, dioceses, and church leadership, both lay and clergy, to distribute widely in the Episcopal Church for access by both laity and clergy no later than spring of 2020, said survey being available primarily on-line, and with adaptations made as determined by the task force to enable responses by those members of the general Church who may not have ready and easy access to the internet;

-To conduct a review of survey responses and data regarding gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violent behavior that has been experienced by those who identify as women in our church; and present this information in accessible, public, and informative ways as a truthful reality of the treatment of women; and the impact of this treatment on lay and ordained women and girls, their ministries, and the ministry of the Church to the following members and organizations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: The House of Bishops, The Executive Council, The National Association of Episcopal Schools; all Episcopal Seminaries (including diocesan formation programs for ordination); Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers; Diocesan Youth Directors; all Canons to the Ordinary; all Transition Officers; all diocesan Chancellors; and any other bodies, organizations, or committees that the President of the House of Deputies or the Presiding Bishop deem necessary;

-To coordinate and receive reports from the aforementioned persons and organizations no later than six months after the publication of the survey response report with the following written responses to the report, a copy of the same responses shared with the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies: How their body and/or institution has contributed to a church culture of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms, when appropriate detailing specific examples of this culture that has approved of this behavior, ignored and/or excused this behavior, and how this culture has damaged the body and/or institution; The body and/or institution’s plan of action within their body or institution that can bring about a culture of truth telling, repentance, reconciliation, and justice in our church; including a timeline of said plan of action; and any other questions the task force, in consultation with the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, deem helpful and necessary for the general Church to confess the truth of the impact of the sin of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms and to engage the process of restoration and reconciliation;

-To create a Truth and Reconciliation process to guide churches, dioceses, provinces, and the general Church as they develop their own paths for reconciliation and restoration, with emphasis given to discerning the *qualities* of methods churches, dioceses, provinces, and the general Church may implement to witness the truth and to seek justice, restoration, and reconciliation; recognizing a one-size-fits-all process will not be helpful given the diversity of our Church, and that identifying qualities for a process invites churches, dioceses, provinces, and general Church to map their ways forward to justice, restoration, and reconciliation with guidance;

-To conduct a comprehensive audit and analysis of the internal church-wide structures that exist, or are needed, to educate and inform the church about realities and consequences of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms; to develop programs to proactively reduce incidences of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence within the church; as well as to develop resources that build the capacity of our church to provide trauma informed pastoral care for victims;

-To oversee an audit done by an outside auditor of the culture within church-wide structures to identify systemic expressions of power and leadership that create and continue gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms, particularly the impact of this system as it manifests in access to leadership, pay inequity, imbalances in power, inequality in leadership, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, and the enabling of gender-based violence by those in positions of power throughout the church that diminishes, excuses, and discounts discrimination, abuse, and harassment, contrary to the Gospel of Christ.

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 \$320,000 for the implementation of this resolution which will provide funding for regular meetings, including bi-annual in-person meetings throughout the triennium (\$150,000); costs associated with creating and distributing the survey and subsequent reports (\$40,000) contract with external firm to conduct a culture audit (\$65,000); website, communications, and staff support (\$50,000); and expenses associated with in-person presentations of findings to strategic groups, including Executive Council, the House of Bishops, and other groups as determined by the Task Force, the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies (\$15,000).**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 937-939.



Resolution Number: 2015-D054
Title: Refer a Resolution on Violence Against Women
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the General Convention deeply regret the lack of progress in stemming the global pandemic of violence against women, in spite of the call of the 76th Convention #2009-D096 for bishops, clergy, and lay leadership to educate themselves on the problem; and be it further

Resolved, That a task force be appointed to prepare and distribute educational materials electronically, in the next triennium, encouraging Episcopal clergy and congregations to speak out, according to the 4th Mark of Mission, to transform the unjust silence of society in the face of this widespread practice of violence; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$30,000.00 (\$10,000 per year) 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), p. 427.



Resolution Number: 2012-A139
Title: Endorse Efforts Against Gender Violence
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention affirm the Letter to the Churches of the Anglican Communion from the Primates of the Anglican Communion following their Primates Meeting in Dublin, Ireland, January 24–30, 2011, concerning gender-based violence, including endorsing and implementing the actions put forth in the statement; and be it further
Resolved, That parishes and dioceses be encouraged to participate in annual awareness campaigns about gender violence; and be it further
Resolved, That the Department of Global Partnership identify and disseminate resources about gender violence and promote their use by dioceses and parishes.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 184.



Resolution Number: 1994-A049
Title: Encourage Ministries That Respond to Violence Against Women
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention condemn violence against women in all its forms, and resolves that each deputy and bishop will work toward making the Episcopal Church a truly safe place for all God's people, by encouraging every parish to develop appropriate ministries to this end; and be it further

Resolved, That the Committee on the Status of Women continue to raise awareness about the Church's role in responding to violence against women by supporting extension of the consultation process in every province and diocese, providing resource people and educational materials for use in regional and local programs, and securing outside funds to support training local planners and presenters.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 146.



Resolution Number: 1988-D064
Title: Urge Training to Respond to Family Violence
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 69th General Convention urge every bishop to direct an appropriate body within the diocese to:

establish and conduct training workshops for clergy and laity to identify the signs of battering and sexual abuse of women and children;
produce a register for the clergy and laity of available resources within their communities, such as support services, shelters and entitlement programs; and
encourage clergy and laity to consult with and refer victims to professionally trained counselors and support groups;

and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention urge the seminaries of the church to include in their curricula appropriate education and training in the area of family violence.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 277.