

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A144
Title: Review the Application of Canons I.17.5 and III.1.2
Proposer: Task Force to Study Household & Relationship Diversity
Topic: Diversity

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-D091 Define an "Equal Place" in the Life of the Church
2022-D093 Ensure Broad Representation in All Areas of Discernment
2018-A284 Amend Canons I.17.5 and III.1.2 [Rights of Laity, Access to Discernment Process]
2012-D002 Amend Canon III.1.2 [Access to Discernment Process for Ministry]
2012-D019 Amend Canon I.17.5 [Rights of Laity]
2009-C055 On the Topic of Same Gender Committed Relationships (Rejected)
1994-A061 On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity (Rejected)
1994-C020 Amend Canon I.17.5 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]
1991-D025 On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity (Rejected)
1988-D007 On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity (Rejected)

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

2018-D092 Amend Canon III.1.2 [Access to Discernment Process]

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](#).

A144 - Review the Application of Canons I.17.5 and III.1.2

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force to Study Household & Relationship Diversity

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: Yes

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 17 - Accessibility & Inclusion

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the General Convention direct the Task Force to Study Household and Relationship Diversity to review the application of Canons I.17.5 and III.1.2 across the Episcopal Church, particularly regarding marital status and family status, and additionally to study all churchwide and diocesan disciplinary canons and procedures affecting clergy and laity who disclose how they are forming family and household structures that seek to be holy, faithful and lifegiving.

Explanation

The 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church established a Task Force to Study Household and Relationship Diversity, asking the Task Force to make recommendations to the 82nd General Convention with resources for supporting all families and households in patterning themselves in accordance with the teachings of Christ as members of the household of God. This charge is based on the conviction of our Baptismal Covenant that Episcopalians and all Christians are “[received] into the household of God”(BCP 308) and that all are called to reflect that household in the patterning of our own families. Likewise, the Task Force’s mandate stems from our church’s call in the ordination vows of clergy to

“pattern [their] life [and...household...] in accordance with the teachings of Christ so that [they] may be a wholesome example to all people” (BCP 544).

Canon I.17.5 directs that “No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, governance, or employment of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital or family status (including pregnancy or child care plans), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.” Additionally, Canon III.1.2 states “No person shall be denied access to the discernment process or to any process for the employment, licensing, calling, or deployment for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, immigration status, national origin, sex, marital or family status (including pregnancy and child care plans), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons. No right to employment, licensing, ordination, call, deployment, or election is hereby established.

In its work since the 80th General Convention, the Task Force has discovered that some clergy and laity have faced Title IV proceedings, pastoral directives, or other negative ecclesiastical consequences after disclosing their household or familial status. This resolution explicitly authorizes the Task Force to study the occurrence of similar situations and provide recommendations to the Episcopal Church to ensure our continued commitment to equality and nondiscrimination throughout the church.



Resolution Number: 2022-D091
Title: Define an "Equal Place" in the Life of the Church
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirms that an "equal place" protects the rights of all in the life, worship, governance, and employment of the church, including the rights of laity to participate fully in church-wide and diocesan bodies as provided by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of individual dioceses; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are directed to conduct an internal review that they are in full compliance with Canon I.17.5; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses shall ensure that the rights of the laity are affirmed and respected in all diocesan bodies; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to ensure that all lay appointments and assignments (non-elected) to diocesan-wide bodies represent the diocese's racial and ethnic diversity; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to promote the participation of underrepresented lay groups in elections to diocesan-wide bodies; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to ensure that accommodations are granted on equal terms to lay and clerical members of diocesan-wide bodies; and be it further

Resolved, That church-wide bodies are encouraged to ensure that laity has an equal voice in church-wide leadership, except as otherwise specified by Canons; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to ensure that diocesan-wide bodies ensure that equal voice is given to the laity, except as otherwise specified by Canons; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to proactively address barriers or other inequalities that discourage or prevent lay participation in the diocesan-wide elections; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses are encouraged to ensure that resources are granted on equal terms to lay and clerical members of diocesan-wide bodies.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 554.



Resolution Number: 2022-D093
Title: Ensure Broad Representation in All Areas of Discernment
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention acknowledges the hurt, pain, and unequal treatment of any historically marginalized persons in The Episcopal Church in past and current discernment processes leading to ordination and in episcopal election processes; and be it further

Resolved, That in the process of discernment for ordination as Deacon or Priest, dioceses are expected to ensure that persons nominated have access to companions who are competent in the race, ethnicity, culture, and background of the person nominated, and who are knowledgeable concerning the discernment process and the applicable canons regarding formation and ordination; and be it further

Resolved, That in the discernment of the vocation of a Bishop through election in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Convention of the Diocese, dioceses are expected to ensure that equal accommodation is made for the participation of all persons entitled to vote in the election.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 488.



Resolution Number: 2018-A284
Title: Amend Canons I.17.5 and III.1.2 [Rights of Laity, Access to Discernment Process]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That Canon I.17.5 be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 5. No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance, or *employment* of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital or family status (*including pregnancy or child care plans*), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.

And be it further

Resolved, That Canon III.1.2 be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2. No person shall be denied access to the discernment process or to any process for the employment, licensing, calling, or deployment for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital or family status (*including pregnancy and child care plans*), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons. No right to *employment, licensing, ordination, call, deployment, or election* is hereby established.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 674.



Resolution Number: 2012-D002
Title: Amend Canon III.1.2 [Access to Discernment Process for Ministry]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That Title III, Canon 1, Sec. 2 of the Canons of The Episcopal Church be hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2. No person shall be denied access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons. No right to licensing, ordination, or election is hereby established.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 512.



Resolution Number: 2012-D019
Title: Amend Canon I.17.5 [Rights of Laity]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Title I, Canon 17, Sec. 5 of the Canons of The Episcopal Church be hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 5. No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, *gender identity and expression*, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 505-506.



Resolution Number: 2009-C055
Title: On the Topic of Same Gender Committed Relationships
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 76th General Convention support and uphold persons in same-gender committed relationships of enduring love, mutuality and fidelity; and be it further

Resolved, That the term “sexual orientation” in Title III, Canon 1, Section 2, shall protect all persons from denial of access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church solely on the basis of being in such a relationship.



Resolution Number: 1994-A061
Title: On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Canon I.17.5 be amended to read as follows: No one shall be denied rights or status in this Church because of race, color, or ethnic origin a place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church except as otherwise specified by Canon.
The Committee on Ministry recommended that the resolution be re-referred to the Committee on Social and Urban Affairs.



Resolution Number: 1994-C020
Title: Amend Canon I.17.5 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Title I, Canon 17, Section 5 be amended as follows:

No person shall be denied rights, status [in], or [access to] an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, [or] ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by [this] Canon.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 356.



Resolution Number: 1991-D025
Title: On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Title I, Canon 17, Section 5 be amended as follows:

No one shall be denied [rights or status in] *a place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color [or], ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canon.*



Resolution Number: 1988-D007
Title: On the Topic of the Canon on Regulations Respecting the Laity
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Title I, Canon 17, Section 5 be amended as follows:

No one shall be denied rights or status in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, *sex, sexual orientation, physical disability or age, except as otherwise specified by Canon.*