

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A097
TITLE: Amend Canons III.7.11(a)(3) and III.12.8(a)(3) regarding Return of Clergy After Release and Removal
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
TOPIC: Canons

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A120 Amend Canons III.7, III.9, and III.12 [Return to the Ordained Ministry]

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

None

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

(*Blue Book*) Report to General Convention, [Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons](#), see page 394.

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

A097 Amend Canons III.7.11(a)(3) and III.12.8(a)(3) regarding Return of Clergy After Release and Removal

Proposer	Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
Topic	Canons
Endorsed by	
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. 79,119
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Resolution Filed
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That Canon III.7.11(a)(3) is hereby amended to read as follows:
 - 2 (3) A statement from no less than two (2) members of the clergy *in good standing of this Church* known to the applicant in support of the application;
 - 3 And be it further
 - 4 *Resolved*, That Canon III.12.8(a)(3) is hereby amended to read as follows:
 - 5 (3) A statement from no less than two (2) Bishops *in good standing of this Church* known to the applicant in support of the application;

EXPLANATION

The amendment clarifies that statements in support of the return to Ministry of a Deacon, Priest or Bishop who had been released and removed must come from members of the clergy or Bishops who are in good standing of this Church.



Resolution Number: 2015-A120
Title: Amend Canons III.7, III.9, and III.12 [Return to the Ordained Ministry]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Canon III.7 be amended to add a new Canon III.7.11 to read as follows:

Sec. 11. Return to the Ordained Ministry of this Church after Release and Removal.

(a) When a Deacon who has been released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church under Canon III.7.8 desires to return to that Ministry, the person shall apply in writing to the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Deacon was last canonically resident, attaching the following:

- (1) Evidence of previous ordination in The Episcopal Church;*
- (2) Evidence of appropriate background checks, certifications and proof of completion of applicable trainings including abuse prevention and anti-racism trainings;*
- (3) A statement from no less than two members of the clergy known to the applicant in support of the application;*
- (4) A statement of the reasons for seeking to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church.*

(b) If the Bishop so chooses, the Bishop may give permission for the Deacon to continue the process toward reinstatement, which may include the following:

- (1) Active participation in a congregation for a period of time at the Bishop's discretion;*
- (2) Regular contact with the Bishop or the Bishop's designee during the course of the process;*
- (3) Evaluation by a licensed mental health professional of the Bishop's choosing for the purposes of evaluation and of determining fitness for resumption of ordained ministry in this church;*
- (4) Two references from those who are able to discuss the Deacon's former ministry;*
- (5) Meeting with the Standing Committee, who shall have the benefit of the materials above and who shall provide to the Bishop its recommendation regarding reinstatement;*

(c) Before the person may be permitted to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church, the Bishop shall require the Deacon seeking to return to the ministry to sign a written declaration as required in Article VIII of the Constitution, without recourse to any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction and execute such declaration in the presence of the Bishop and two or more members of the clergy of this Church.

(d) Thereafter the Bishop, taking into account the facts and circumstances surrounding the Deacon's removal and release, may permit, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, the return of the Deacon into the ordained Ministry of this Church.

(e) The provisions of this Canon III.7.11 shall not be applicable to any Deacon who has been removed, released, or deposed from their ministry as the result of any proceeding of Title IV of these Canons.

(f) Notice of the Deacon's return to the ordained Ministry of this Church shall be provided in writing to the same persons and entities receiving notice under Canon III.7.10.; and be it further Resolved, That Canon III.9 be amended to add a new Canon III.9.12 to read as follows, and renumbering the two subsequent sections to be Canon III.9.13 and III.9.14.

Sec. 12. Return to the Ordained Ministry of this Church after Release and Removal.

(a) When a Priest who has been released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church under Canon III.9.8 desires to return to that Ministry, the person shall apply in writing to the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Priest was last canonically resident, attaching the following:

- (1) Evidence of previous ordination in The Episcopal Church;*
- (2) Evidence of appropriate background checks, certifications and proof of completion of applicable trainings including abuse prevention and anti-racism trainings;*
- (3) A statement from no less than two members of the clergy known to the applicant in support of the application;*
- (4) A statement of the reasons for seeking to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church.*

(b) If the Bishop so chooses, Bishop may give permission for the Priest to continue the process toward reinstatement, which may include the following:

- (1) Active participation in a congregation for a period of time at the Bishop's discretion;*
- (2) Regular contact with the Bishop or the Bishop's designee during the course of the process;*
- (3) Evaluation by a licensed mental health professional of the Bishop's choosing for the purposes of evaluation and of determining fitness for resumption of ordained ministry in this church;*
- (4) Two references from those who are able to discuss the Priest's former ministry;*
- (5) Meeting with the Standing Committee, who shall have the benefit of the materials above and who shall provide to the Bishop its recommendation regarding reinstatement;*

(c) Before the Priest may be permitted to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church, the Bishop shall require the Priest seeking to return to the ministry to sign a written declaration as required in Article VIII of the Constitution, without recourse to any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction and execute such declaration in the presence of the Bishop and two or more members of the clergy of this Church.

(d) Thereafter the Bishop, taking into account the facts and circumstances surrounding the Priest's removal and release, may permit, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, the return of the person into the ordained Ministry of this Church.

(e) The provisions of this Canon III.9.11 shall not be applicable to any Priest who has been removed, released, or deposed from their ministry as the result of any proceeding of Title IV of these Canons.

(f) Notice of the Priest's return to the ordained Ministry of this Church shall be provided in writing to the same persons and entities receiving notice under Canon III.9.11.; and be it further Resolved, That Canon III.12 be amended to add a new Canon III.12.8, to read as follows, and renumbering the three subsequent sections to be Canon III.12.9, III.12.10, and III.12.11.
Sec. 8. Return to the Ordained Ministry of this Church after Release and Removal

(a) When a Bishop who has been released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church under Canon III.12.7 desires to return to that Ministry, the person shall apply in writing to the Presiding Bishop, attaching the following:

- (1) Evidence of previous ordination in The Episcopal Church;*
- (2) Evidence of appropriate background checks, certifications and proof of completion of applicable trainings including abuse prevention and anti-racism trainings;*
- (3) A statement from no less than two Bishops known to the applicant in support of the application;*
- (4) A statement of the reasons for seeking to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church.*

(b) If the Presiding Bishop so chooses, the Presiding Bishop may give permission for the Bishop to continue the process toward reinstatement, which may include the following:

- (1) Active participation in a congregation for a period of time at the Presiding Bishop's discretion;*
 - (2) Regular contact with the Presiding Bishop or the Presiding Bishop's designee during the course of the process;*
 - (3) Evaluation by a licensed mental health professional of the Presiding Bishop's choosing for the purposes of evaluation and of determining fitness for resumption of ordained ministry in this church;*
 - (4) Two references from those who are able to discuss the Bishop's former ministry;*
 - (5) Approval of the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice*
- (c) Before the Bishop may be permitted to return to the ordained Ministry of this Church, the Presiding Bishop shall require the Bishop seeking to return to the ministry to sign a written declaration as required in Article VIII of the Constitution, without recourse to any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction and execute such declaration in the presence of the Presiding Bishop and two or more Bishops of this Church.*
- (d) Thereafter the Presiding Bishop, taking into account the facts and circumstances surrounding the Bishop's removal and release, may permit, with the advice and consent of the Council of Advice to the Presiding Bishop, the return of the Bishop into the ordained Ministry of this Church.*
- (e) Notice of the Bishop's return to the ordained Ministry of this Church shall be provided in writing to the same persons and entities receiving notice under Canon III.12.7(c).*
- (f) The provisions of this Canon III.12.8 shall not be applicable to any Bishop who has been removed, released, or deposed from their ministry as the result of any proceeding of Title IV of these Canons.*

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 427-430.