

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A108
TITLE: Amend Canon III.6.5(g) Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
TOPIC: Canons

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A050 Refer a Resolution on the ACC Charter for Safety (Referred)
2009-D062 Continue Developing Policies and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct Prevention
2006-A156 Adopt Policies for Protection from Sexual Misconduct
2003-A023 Establish a Task Force for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

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

1991-B052 Establish a Committee on Sexual Exploitation

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

(Blue Book) Report to General Convention, [Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons](#), see pages 413-414.

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.

A108 Amend Canon III.6.5(g) Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

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. 74, 83, 93, 115
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Resolution Filed
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Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention amend Canon III.6.5(g) as follows:
 - 2 (g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding
 1. prevention of sexual misconduct *of both children and adults.*
 2. civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
 3. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
 4. the Church's teaching on racism.
 - 3 And be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That Canon III.8.5(h) shall be amended as follows:
 - 5 (h) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding
 1. prevention of sexual misconduct *of both children and adults.*
 2. civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
 3. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
 4. the Church's teaching on racism.
 - 6 And be it further
- 7 *Resolved* that Canon III.9.6 shall be amended by adding a subsection (d) as follows:
 - 8 *(d) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure that a policy regarding harassment and sexual misconduct is promulgated and enforced in the local Parish, and that such a policy is publicly posted or made available within the congregation upon request.*
 - 9 And be it further
- 10 *Resolved*, That Canon III.12.3 shall be amended by adding a subsection (f) to read as follows:
 - 11 *(f) The Bishop Diocesan shall ensure that a diocesan policy regarding harassment and sexual*

misconduct, and the process of reporting it, is promulgated by the appropriate body and enforced throughout the diocese, and that a written copy thereof is kept on file at the diocesan office, is posted on the diocesan website and is made available upon request. In the absence of a Bishop Diocesan, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall assume this responsibility.

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EXPLANATION

Sexual Harassment became a highly publicized issue in 2017. Although the issue has been addressed by General Convention in the past (1991-B052; 2003-A023; 2006-A156;), it became apparent during this triennium that there is considerable variation in the existence and substance of policies on the sexual harassment of adults across the Episcopal Church. While the Canons require prevention of sexual misconduct training of all ordinands and nearly all dioceses have policies requiring all lay leaders and employees and volunteers who interact with children to be trained in preventing the sexual abuse of children, often referred to as “safe church” training, fewer dioceses have policies or have fully implemented policies requiring training of employees and volunteers to prevent sexual harassment of adults even though the Church Insurance companies have made curriculum and model policies available. One of the challenges of sexual harassment policies and training is to make sure they comply with state and local laws on the subject.

The lack of universal policies and training on the sexual harassment of adults has very real effects for those who work, whether paid or volunteer, in the Church. Harassment is prevalent in our culture. According to studies by The United Methodist Church in 2005 and 2007, over three-fourths of United Methodist Church female clergy have experienced harassment within the United Methodist Church (see “Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church 2005” and the “Quadrennial Local Church Survey 2007” by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Chicago, Illinois, Gail Murphy-Geiss, Principal Investigator). An informal survey taken of a group of female Episcopal clergy under age forty-five (45) revealed that of the seventy-six (76) women who responded to the question, all of them reported harassment of some kind. Several also reported that male clergy of their acquaintance had also experienced harassment within the church. This sort of widespread problem contributes to the problem of retaining female clergy. Moreover, it undermines our hopes for a more equal and diverse church.

To address this problem, we propose adding provisions to Title III of the Canons that clarify that the canonically required training for ordinands to prevent sexual misconduct must include training on preventing sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of adults and children. A canonical requirement is also proposed to require such training for all clergy in charge of congregations. In addition, we propose that Bishops Diocesan (or the Ecclesiastical Authority in the absence of a Bishop Diocesan) be responsible for assuring that the diocese adopts and enforces a policy to prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of adults and children.



Resolution Number: 2015-A050
Title: Refer a Resolution on the ACC Charter for Safety
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention join the 2012 Anglican Consultative Council in adopting the following "Charter for Safety of People Within the Churches of the Anglican Communion" as a summary of The Episcopal Church's policy regarding maintaining the safety of all who come to or work for our churches:

"1. Pastoral support where there is abuse — We will provide pastoral support for the abused, their families, and affected parishes and church organizations by listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns; offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care.

2. Effective responses to abuse — We will have and implement policies and procedures to respond properly to allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel that include: making known within churches the procedure for making complaints; arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse; the impartial determination of allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry; providing support for affected parishes and church organizations.

3. Practice of pastoral ministry — We will adopt and promote, through education and training, standards for the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and other church personnel.

4. Suitability for ministry — We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church, including checking their background.

5. Culture of safety — We will promote a culture of safety in parishes and church organizations by education and training to help clergy, other church personnel, and participants prevent the occurrence of abuse;" and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council collect current data from all member dioceses regarding their "safe church" policies and practices, including identification of reasons for not implementing the recommended policies and practices; and publish that information to The Episcopal Church through its most widely accessible media; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of Global Relations collaborate with Province IX to develop and disseminate culturally appropriate materials for use in the Spanish-speaking dioceses of TEC that are consistent with the principles of the ACC "Charter of Safety" and the standards previously set out by General Convention, including a process for training of local trainers; 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 \$ 40,000 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. 452-453.



Resolution Number: 2009-D062
Title: Continue Developing Policies and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct Prevention
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention direct the Center for Evangelism and Congregational Life to continue the work of developing clear and firm policies and procedures for the well-being of all, and commit this church to being and becoming a place where children, youth and adults are safe, especially from abuse, neglect and exploitation, particularly in dioceses that have been unable to implement the call to provide sexual misconduct prevention training; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$20,000 for the implementation of the resolution during the 2010-2012 triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention request the Center for Evangelism and Congregational Life report to the Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation and Education before the 77th General Convention on the status of diocesan training and implementation.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 286-287.



Resolution Number: 2006-A156
Title: Adopt Policies for Protection from Sexual Misconduct
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the work already occurring in many dioceses and at the same time recommit itself to the positions taken by previous General Conventions that sexual misconduct (encompassing both sexual harassment and sexual exploitation) of adults by clergy, church employees, and volunteer workers has been and continues to be of deep concern to this Church, is an abuse of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian character and is, therefore, wrong; and be it further

Resolved, That each diocese adopt policies for the protection from sexual misconduct of those served by diocesan programs, those who volunteer in the work of the diocese or are employed by the diocese, and that dioceses assist congregations in the development of such procedures and policies, including using the many resources that already exist, that address the following:

1. **the articulation of behavioral standards for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who work with adults or who provide pastoral counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or the sacraments;**
2. **a screening process for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who provide pastoral counseling and care, spiritual direction, or the sacraments and who supervise clergy or lay volunteers;**
3. **education and training for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers as listed above, with particular attention paid to what legally constitutes sexual harassment and to appropriate behavior and inappropriate sexual or sexualized behaviors towards adults, and with periodic refresher training encouraged;**
4. **guidelines for responding to concerns of sexual misconduct; and be it further**

Resolved, That each diocese shall report to the House of Bishops Committee on Pastoral Development prior to the Spring 2009 House of Bishops meeting with a copy of its adopted and implemented policy and an evaluation of the history of its use. A summary report shall be made to the House of Bishops Spring 2009 meeting and a full report made to the 76th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), p. 667.



Resolution Number: 2003-A023
Title: Establish a Task Force for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the General Convention establish, pursuant to Joint Rule 23, a Task Force of not less than ten nor more than fifteen persons. These persons should be laity, bishops, priests, and deacons with experience and expertise in dealing with sexual misconduct in church settings. Membership should include, but not be limited to representatives from the Standing Commission on Ministry Development, the Council of Seminary Deans, the Nathan Network, the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations, the Task Force on Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, and the National Network of Lay Professionals; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall study and gather information concerning matters of institutional wellness for the prevention of sexual misconduct. Its study shall include such concerns as screening, selection and training of clergy, lay employees and volunteers; monitoring and supervision; behavior management; incident investigation; and the articulation of pastoral standards and codes of ethical behavior; and be it further

Resolved, That each body named shall recommend Task Force members from its own membership, and the appointments shall be overseen by the Bishop of the Office of Pastoral Development. Additional members shall then be appointed by the Bishop of the Office of Pastoral Development, and the entire Task Force shall include at least two bishops, two clergy, and two laity. The Task Force shall have the services of the Office of Pastoral Development and a Church Pension staff person; and be it further

Resolved, That a report be made to the Standing Commission on Ministry Development, as well as to the 2006 General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider the allocation of \$50,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 216f.