

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-B024
TITLE: Police Killings and Mental Illness
PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. Andrew Dietsche
TOPIC: Security

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-D032 Reaffirm Disabled Persons' Rights in the Criminal Justice System

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

2015-D034 Support the Civil Rights of Disabled Persons
2015-D071 Ratify UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
2009-C073 Refer a Resolution on Treatment for the Mentally Ill (Referred)
1991-D088 Encourage Understanding of Mental Illness and the Needs of the Mentally Ill

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.

B024 Police Killings Mental Illness

Proposer	The Rt. Rev. Andrew Dietsche
Endorsed by	Rice, The Rt. Rev. David; Fitzpatrick, The Rt. Rev. Robert
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Pre-Filed Resolution
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, mindful of a growing body of statistics regarding the response of the police to situations involving person suffering from mental illness, and

- 2 Further mindful of the Gospel imperative that Christ’s body the Church seek and serve him in the care and protection of those most vulnerable persons in our midst (Mt.25:35-40),
 1. Denounces police killings of unarmed people in mental health crisis and distress;
 2. Urges elected officials and other relevant policymakers to implement reforms which mandate that police departments provide compulsory mental health crisis intervention and de-escalation training for all officers who may be called to respond to such situations; and
 3. Urges its members at the local, diocesan, and church-wide levels, to advocate for these policies in their various capacities.

EXPLANATION

Approximately one-quarter of people shot by the police in the U.S. in 2017 were reportedly suffering from situations of mental illness and distress . These statistics run in continuity with studies from the previous three decades, which indicate that perhaps even “half of the people shot and killed by police each year in this country have mental health problems” .

The reality of this excessive use of force is that lives are destroyed, families and communities devastated. Situations which call for crisis intervention instead turn to episodes of violence These episodes are preventable, however, if systemic changes are made in how police officers understand their role as they respond to people in mental illness.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings-2017>

[http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/home-page/71-featured-articles/2846-people-with-mental-illness-four-times-more-likely-to-be-shot-and-killed-by-police.](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/home-page/71-featured-articles/2846-people-with-mental-illness-four-times-more-likely-to-be-shot-and-killed-by-police)



Resolution Number: 2015-D032
Title: Reaffirm Disabled Persons' Rights in the Criminal Justice System
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew the Church's commitment to people with disabilities in society, and recognize mission and leadership of the Episcopal Disability Network in helping to challenge and guide our Church's work in this area; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church affirm our Church's many ministries with those who are suspects, defendants, incarcerated, or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system, following the call of Jesus to attend to those who are in prison as if they are Christ himself; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize and acknowledge that roughly half of adult criminal defendants in the United States have a physical, mental, learning, or other disability and two-thirds of juvenile defendants have a disability qualifying them for special education services and instruction; and that we further acknowledge persistent race-based disparities in the treatment of people with mental health conditions in our criminal justice system, and that in particular Black people with mental health conditions are more likely to be incarcerated than people of other races with similar conditions; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize that people with disabilities are often denied significant civil rights and even the liberty of life through encounters with law enforcement officials and throughout the criminal justice system, and that many are denied proper treatment and accommodations while in the system; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church condemn unreasonable use of force by law enforcement against people with disabilities and urge law enforcement officials to consider the possibility of disability when engaging with criminal suspects, and urge law enforcement leaders to provide extensive training to frontline officers on how to identify and engage effectively with people with disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church advocate for the civil rights and proper treatment of and accommodations for people with disabilities throughout the criminal justice system and ask the Episcopal Public Policy Network to help the Church advocate on this issue; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize that all who minister in the criminal justice system, whether with law enforcement officials, defendants, or prisoners, need to understand disability issues in order to do their work effectively; and therefore urge all in the Church who are involved with these ministries to seek training and education on mental and physical disabilities and the legal rights of people with disabilities, by partnering with disability organizations and networks in our communities that provide this training; and be it further

Resolved, That the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget of \$25,000 to support the work of an ad-hoc triennial committee consisting of leaders active in disability rights, racial justice, prison ministries, and criminal justice advocacy from around the Church to discuss these disparities in the criminal justice system and to develop a blueprint for best practices, resources for training, advocacy, and future networking to provide support our Church's work in the area of criminal justice, and to report to the

79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church on its work and with recommendations for future steps.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 408-409.