

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D006
TITLE: Just Transition: Automation and New Technology
PROPOSER: Ms. Sarah Lawton
TOPIC: Technology

Directly Related: (Attached)

1997-C004 Request a Study of the Theology of Work
1982-A058 Recommend Criteria for Re-industrialization Plans

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

2015-A170 Advocate for Safe Food Production and Farm Labor Policies
2012-B023 Seek Environmental Justice
2012-D028 Support the Labor Movement
2012-D087 Urge Job-Creation Legislation
2009-D039 Reform Labor Laws to Protect Collective Bargaining Rights
1988-A116 Support Improvement of Public School Education

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.

D006 Just Transition: Automation and New Technology

Proposer	Ms. Sarah Lawton
Endorsed by	Baldwin, Ms. Beth; Jackson, The Rev. Paula
Sponsored by	
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HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
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RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize the profound economic opportunities and threats that new technologies pose for people and societies around the world, and urge a balanced policy approach to adoption and regulation of new technologies in order to encourage investment in opportunities and growth while also preparing and investing in people so that society as a whole, including workers and local communities, are ready for the economic transition; and be it further
 - 2 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support public investment in education and skills necessary to help individuals, families, and communities transition to new industries as some sectors experience contraction while opportunities that require specialized skills grow in other fields; and be it further
 - 3 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support a transition to a clean-energy economy that meets goals for climate change mitigation and also includes support for good jobs (*i.e.*, jobs with living wages and benefits that can support a family) in new clean-energy industries as well as strong implementation of new technologies to meet new energy standards, recognizing that carbon-based jobs have often been union jobs; and be it further
 - 4 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support the principle and goal of public funding for universal access to community college programs that are preparing students with skills to meet the workforce needs of the present and future, understanding that cities, states, and federal government may experiment with different and/or incremental models to reach universal access, as has been true for expanding universal access to kindergarten and high school over the years; and that the Church also support adoption of apprenticeship programs, or similar models, that are well articulated with community college programs, labor unions and other worker organizations, and employer workforce development programs, to provide sustainable wages and educational experience on the job so that aspiring workers do not have to choose between a low-skill, low-pay job or education and debt; and be it further
 - 5 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support public policies such as community benefit
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agreements and local-hire agreements in public works projects and publicly supported industrial development in order to encourage democratic and local control over development and pathways to jobs for underserved local residents; and be it further

- 6 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support the rights of workers everywhere to organize, whether in traditional labor unions or new forms of worker organization, in order to have a voice in their workplaces and in sectoral policy development and national industrial policies as technological change continues to create deep and fast changes within the labor market both within the United States and globally.

EXPLANATION

New technologies on the horizon will have a profound effect on the labor market that will rival the impact we have already seen with globalization, automation, and the digital revolution. For example, the advent of driverless vehicles could result in a drop in the number of deadly motor vehicle accidents; however, it could also result in significant losses for auto mechanics and job losses within the insurance industry. As well, the millions of people who support themselves and their families by driving trucks, buses, and cars face great uncertainty as their expertise and careers are threatened.

Academic studies are just now underway to examine the potential labor market impact of new technologies on the transportation, logistics, health care, food industry, and other sectors; we don't know yet whether the effects will include massive job loss, or simply new erosions in job quality for certain sectors and communities. With automation and digital technologies we may see new off-shoring of jobs that until recently were seen as impervious to being moved abroad, such as in the medical diagnostics and legal fields. And we may also see production facilities relocating back to the United States as automation reduces the investment needed in labor, which would mean change coming at the expense of overseas communities that have benefited from manufacturing in recent decades. What we can count on is that there will be disruptions to the labor market both domestically and globally, and therefore to workers and the communities and regions they live in.

This resolution seeks to establish a baseline policy for The Episcopal Church, in line with past resolutions on jobs, to support public policies that take into account and address the human benefits and costs of new technology development and implementation, including for workers and communities that rely heavily on certain industries, as well as overall economic growth and benefits to consumers.

In particular, this resolution recognizes that the necessary transition to clean energy technologies will entail disruptions for workers, especially since jobs in the fossil fuel industries (coal, gas, oil) have often been union jobs with good pay and benefits, whereas new, clean-energy jobs such as rooftop solar installation are not mostly union jobs at this point; thus there is a potential issue both of retraining workers and of a drop-off in job quality in this transition, absent public policy regulation or worker organizing to address the issue.

This resolution endorses public funding for universal access to community college programs to

educate workers for the evolving job market, as some cities and states are already doing , and apprenticeship programs that can provide paid on-the-job training, recognizing that previous generations had access to high school vocational programs that are now defunct, and that some kind of post-high-school education or training is now required for most jobs, especially those that pay a family wage. Apprenticeship programs are especially important for those who need to get a paycheck while getting trained—for example, parents of all ages who need to support a family while getting training, or getting retrained in the case of workers in transitional industries.

Finally, this resolution affirms the Church's support for local communities having a voice in industrial policy through community benefits agreements, and for workers having a voice not only in a specific jobsite or company but also in sectoral policies and national industrial policies, whether through traditional trade unions as laid out in current labor laws, or through new vehicles that may emerge for worker participation and voice.



Resolution Number: 1997-C004
Title: Request a Study of the Theology of Work
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention request an appropriate Interim Body to initiate a wide-ranging study relating to the theology of work, in the light of the impacts of re-engineering, downsizing, automation, and changing governmental policies and corporate practices; and be it further

Resolved, That the Interim Body present to the 73rd General Convention the results of such study and a plan through which the Episcopal Church could participate with other religious, educational, governmental, and business communities in the development of a new theological understanding of work and its implications for the economic and governmental policies of our nation and the world.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), pp. 525-526.



Resolution Number: 1982-A058
Title: Recommend Criteria for Re-industrialization Plans
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recommends to government, private corporations, and unions the following criteria for economic decisions and laws involving re-industrialization plans:

1. That, in addition to economic and competitive factors, such decisions take into consideration the common good of the community measured by whether the decisions:

- a. Serve the goal of optimal employment for people;
- b. Maintain wage and salary standards for all employees;
- c. Support principles of collective bargaining;
- d. Contribute to the stability of affected communities; and

2. That such decisions take into consideration long-range as well as short-range consequences, including whether the decisions:

- a. Strengthen the existing industrial base or replace it with a substantial and equivalent alternative;
- b. Contribute to the rational use of the industrial potential of workers in the affected community;
- c. Make efficient use of increasingly scarce resources such as air, water, land, ores, minerals--particularly the non-renewable resources; and

3. That such decisions avoid increasing the concentration of power and wealth as is consistent with both biblical teachings about justice and American democratic traditions; and be it further

Resolved, **1. That each congregation of this Church be encouraged to undertake serious discussion of economic decisions by government, private corporations, and unions with respect to the above criteria, drawing upon the theological resources of Christian faith and the integrity of biblical teachings about justice; and**

2. That the Secretary of this Convention is instructed to send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States and to appropriate members of the Administration; including the Secretaries of Commerce and Labor; to the President of the AFL/CIO and other appropriate labor officials; and to the Presidents of the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers; and

3. That the Bishops of the several Dioceses be requested to send copies of this resolution to selected company presidents and labor leaders residing in their jurisdictions; and

4. That the Standing Commission on Health and Human Affairs, working in cooperation with the Church Center staff, make a fact-finding inquiry among Dioceses and their

congregations concerning the issues and perceptions which arise from discussion about the reindustrialization process, with the aim of presenting the results to the next Convention of this Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-150.