

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D014
TITLE: Addressing Maternal Mortality
PROPOSER: Ms. Yvonne O'Neal
TOPIC: Health Care

Directly Related: (Attached)

2012-A140 Advocate for Maternal and Infant Health
2006-D022 Establish the Millennium Development Goals as a Mission Priority

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

2006-D031 Endorse Triennial Budget Mission Priorities Statement
2003-D006 Endorse UN Millennium Development Goals

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.

D014 Addressing Maternal Mortality

Proposer	Ms. Yvonne O'Neal
Endorsed by	Brooks, The Rev. Theodora; Burns, Ms. Carla
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 support the advocacy efforts of our dioceses for all women to have the right to safe and available pre- and post-natal health care that enables healthy pregnancies, births, post-partum recovery, and mental health care; and overall maternal wellbeing; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Office of Government Relations articulates our vision that safe and respectful maternal health care is a recognized human right throughout the U.S., and urges state governments to adopt a human-rights based approach to ensuring safe pregnancy and childbirth; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That as we live out our commitment to be the Beloved Community, we acknowledge the tragic disparity through discrimination in pre- and post-natal maternal health care for women in poor communities and communities of color.

EXPLANATION

An April 11, 2018 article in the New York Times Magazine titled, “Why America’s Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis”, highlighted this tragic and unfair disparity. One letter to the editor stated:

“This is a touching human story. But it is also a story of race, class and hypocrisy. The human elements are obvious and well told. But the statistics on maternal death and infant mortality tell a story of a nation that refuses to provide adequate medical services for its citizens.”

Black women in the U.S. suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications twice as often as White women, and they die from pregnancy-related complications four times as often as White women. When mothers die, it breaks down families and can lead to negative health consequences for their children.

This is a crisis about human rights.

Human rights standards surrounding safe pregnancy, childbirth, and respectful maternal care are rooted in the human rights to life, health, equality, and non-discrimination. Governments must ensure these rights by creating enabling conditions that support healthy women, healthy pregnancies, and healthy births. Fundamental human rights are violated when pregnant and birthing women endure preventable suffering, including death, illness, injury, mistreatment, abuse, discrimination, and denials of information and bodily autonomy. A human rights based approach to maternal health

in the United States requires the government to directly confront racial discrimination in the context of maternal health and to specifically address the harms and inequalities faced by Black women during pregnancy and childbirth.

Preventable maternal mortality is a human rights crisis in the United States. The U.S. is one of only 13 countries in the world, and the only country with an advanced economy, where pregnancy-related deaths are on the rise. Women in the U.S. are more likely to die from pregnancy complications than those in 45 other countries.

The incidence of poor maternal health outcomes is worsening. Both the likelihood of experiencing a severe pregnancy complication and dying from it are on the rise in the United States. Although the U.S. spends more on health care per capita than any other country, maternal health outcomes are deteriorating overall and racial disparities are as wide as they were in the 1930's.

The risk of dying from a pregnancy complication should not depend on one's race or zip code. But the reality is that women in the South are at a much higher risk than women in other areas of the country. A Black woman in Mississippi is almost twice as likely to die from complications of pregnancy and child birth compared to a White woman in Mississippi or a Black woman in California.

Maternal mortality affects Black women of all socio-economic backgrounds. Racial disparities in pregnancy-related deaths show that across all income and education levels, Black women in the U.S. are at higher risk for poorer outcomes than White women.

To tackle the problem of maternal mortality, we need to address racial discrimination and structural racism. Poor maternal health outcomes expose inequalities in U.S. society that go beyond the health system. Improving those outcomes will require more equitable access to health care and the social determinants of health.

To improve U.S. maternal health outcomes, we must prioritize Black women's health and lives and commit to taking meaningful action. Every state at all levels of governance must take steps to ensure safe and respectful maternal care for all women. Our churches can work in our communities to help make this happen.

(Thanks to the Center for Reproductive Rights for its assistance.)



Resolution Number: 2012-A140
Title: Advocate for Maternal and Infant Health
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations to partner with international and domestic efforts to encourage and advocate for legislation, programs, services and advocacy related to improving maternal mental and physical health and infant development; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations and dioceses of The Episcopal Church take action in their own contexts to support and foster maternal and infant health and development, which addresses the mission priority of Alleviating Poverty and Injustice established at the 76th General Convention, and also the Millennium Development Goals; and be it further

Resolved, That healthcare institutions and providers in The Episcopal Church whose ministries are associated with maternal health and infant development be urged to support advocacy and to make themselves available as resources to congregations and dioceses for this work.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 224-225.



Resolution Number: 2006-D022
Title: Establish the Millennium Development Goals as a Mission Priority
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church commend the leaders and members of The Episcopal Church, including Episcopal Relief and Development and program ministries of The Episcopal Church, for their leadership on behalf of the Millennium Development Goals, both through public advocacy and implementation of MDG programs in the developing world; and commend parishes, missions, congregations, and dioceses, and others, like Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation and the Micah Challenge, for their support of the implementation of the MDGs in fulfillment of our Baptismal Covenant and as an expression of the hunger of this Church for far deeper communion with all of God's beloved; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention establish the work toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as a mission priority for the coming triennium, and that each diocese, congregation, and parishioner be urged to commit to 0.7% giving toward these goals by July 7, 2007 (07/07/07); and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget line item of no less than an additional 0.7% (circa \$900,000) of the non-government revenue of The Episcopal Church for work that supports the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals:

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
2. **Achieve universal primary education**
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women**
4. **Reduce child mortality**
5. **Improve maternal health**
6. **Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability, and**
8. **Create a global partnership for development with a focus on debt, aid, and trade.**

And be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage parishes, missions, congregations, and dioceses to designate the Last Sunday after Pentecost, or such days as may be designated ecumenically for commendation of the MDGs, as special days of prayer, fasting, and giving in The Episcopal Church toward global reconciliation and the Millennium Development Goals; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that all dioceses establish a global reconciliation commission or similar body dedicated to mobilizing Episcopalians toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns report to the 76th General Convention on the progress that has been achieved in implementing this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention endorse "The ONE Campaign," the U.S. movement for the MDGs, through The Episcopal Church's "ONE Episcopalian" campaign; call on all

parishes, missions, congregations, dioceses, and individuals to join the ONE Episcopalian campaign; and publicly endorse The ONE Campaign's call for the United States government to annually spend an additional one percent of its budget to combat global poverty, and to be active advocates for the achievement of this work.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 522-524.