

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D032
TITLE: Equal Access to Health Care Regardless of Gender
PROPOSER: Ms. Laura Russell
TOPIC: Health Care

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A049 Prioritize Gender Equality Concerns in Foreign and Church Aid
1994-A054 Reaffirm General Convention Statement on Childbirth and Abortion

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

2012-A140 Advocate for Maternal and Infant Health
2009-C071 Urge Advocacy for Comprehensive Healthcare Coverage
1994-A057 Adopt Church Principles on Access to Health Care

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.

D032 Equal Access to Health Care Regardless of Gender

Proposer	Ms. Laura Russell
Endorsed by	Moore, Mr. Gary; Allen, Ms. Jennifer
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HB / 08 - Social Justice and United States Policy
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 acknowledge the need for universal and equitable access to good quality health care that allows for equal utilization for those with equal need; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That this Convention acknowledge that the United States must acknowledge that equitable access to women’s health care, including women’s reproductive health care, is an integral part of a woman’s struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church recognize that women’s reproductive health and reproductive health procedures should be treated as all other medical procedures, and not singled out by gender; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That The Episcopal Church support health care that takes into account the specific health care needs of all persons, including women and transgendered persons; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That this Convention direct the Office of Government Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy Network to urge all Episcopalians to advocate for our government to work to address the specific needs of health care for everyone, especially women and girl’s health care, by:
 - Supporting legislation that creates equal utilization of health care for those in equal need, regardless of ability to pay and reject reasons for unequal use;
 - Advocating for everyone to have the right to make decisions about their bodies and those decisions should be between themselves and their provider;
 - Ensuring equal access to every health care service regardless of gender;
 - Ensuring health care is equal in coverage and cost regardless of gender.

EXPLANATION

The United States lags behind most developed nations in providing health care. The U.S. life expectancies have dropped for the last two years in a row, with the life expectancy of women regressing at a faster pace. The U.S. child mortality rates are the worst among the top twenty wealthiest countries. The United States is worse for maternal health than we were twenty-five years

ago, with 50,000 preventable deaths or near-deaths occurring annually. The U. S has seen a 70% increase in maternal mortality in the past twenty years. (Center for Disease Control)

And these facts, many of which show the regression of women's health care, are only compounded when you add poverty and race to the mix. Poverty tends to yield higher burdens on women and girls' health. And race, also exacerbates the problems. African-American women are three to four times more likely to die in child birth than Caucasian women. Even education does not equalize these results. African-American women with advanced degrees are more likely to lose their baby than Caucasian women with less than an eighth grade education.

Recent policies in health care have continued to cause a burden on people of color and people in poverty. Health care is not accessible to all who need it regardless of ability to pay. Health care access does not take create equitable outcomes for all who access it. For example, before the Affordable Care Act, women were charged up to eighty percent more for health care, and certain plans did not cover reproductive or maternal services.

The United States seems to be creating barriers to health care more than creating equal access. Health care access for the low income, women and especially women of color, continues to be chipped away at and even denied.

In Resolution 1994-A054, The Episcopal Church stated, " the responsibility of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter is acknowledged and honored as the position of this Church; and be it further Resolved, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church express its unequivocal opposition to any legislative, executive or judicial action on the part of local, state or national governments that abridges the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision.

The Episcopal Church needs to continue its support of the rights of women and to support equal access to all health care, health care that is not discriminatory to gender, gender identity, income or color. Health care that recognizes equitable health outcomes should be the priority of health care, regardless of ability to pay, gender or race.



Resolution Number: 2015-A049
Title: Prioritize Gender Equality Concerns in Foreign and Church Aid
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention commend giving priority to the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women, including transgender individuals, by using the following principles as appropriate standards for distribution of foreign aid by the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That 78th General Convention recommends that any proposed economic aid will increase economic capacity, using methods such as global trade and financial and investment agreements, and will include the direct involvement of and capacity building for women; and be it further

Resolved, That 78th General Convention recommends that any proposed aid for health care will require a goal of universal coverage, ensuring access without discrimination for women, girls and transgender individuals to all types of services offered, without imposing financial hardship on the patient; and be it further

Resolved, That 78th General Convention recommends that any proposed aid for agriculture or aquaculture will facilitate the participation of women in these programs; and be it further

Resolved, That 78th General Convention recommends that any proposed aid responding to financial or economic crises or natural disasters and their aftermaths will include steps to minimize negative impacts on gender equality and empowerment of women, providing opportunities for women's employment, and access to essential services and social protection systems for women's and girls' and other vulnerable and disadvantaged persons' human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That 78th General Convention recommends that any proposed aid for environmental and climate-change issues will promote full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision making regarding the use of such aid; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention commend the same principles of achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women, including transgender individuals, to dioceses and congregations throughout the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society as a criterion for engagement in domestic and international projects, whether through direct aid or involvement of personnel.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 301-302.



Resolution Number: 1994-A054
Title: Reaffirm General Convention Statement on Childbirth and Abortion
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirms resolution C047 from the 69th General Convention, which states:

All human life is sacred from its inception until death. The Church takes seriously its obligation to help form the consciences of its members concerning this sacredness. Human life, therefore, should be initiated only advisedly and in full accord with this understanding of the power to conceive and give birth which is bestowed by God. It is the responsibility of our congregations to assist their members in becoming informed concerning the spiritual and physiological aspects of sex and sexuality.

The Book of Common Prayer affirms that "the birth of a child is a joyous and solemn occasion in the life of a family. It is also an occasion for rejoicing in the Christian community" (p. 440). As Christians we also affirm responsible family planning.

We regard all abortion as having a tragic dimension, calling for the concern and compassion of all the Christian community.

While we acknowledge that in this country it is the legal right of every woman to have a medically safe abortion, as Christians we believe strongly that if this right is exercised, it should be used only in extreme situations. We emphatically oppose abortion as a means of birth control, family planning, sex selection, or any reason of mere convenience.

In those cases where an abortion is being considered, members of this Church are urged to seek the dictates of their conscience in prayer, to seek the advice and counsel of members of the Christian community and where appropriate, the sacramental life of this Church.

Whenever members of this Church are consulted with regard to a problem pregnancy, they are to explore, with grave seriousness, with the person or persons seeking advice and counsel, as alternatives to abortion, other positive courses of action, including, but not limited to, the following possibilities: the parents raising the child; another family member raising the child; making the child available for adoption.

It is the responsibility of members of this Church, especially the clergy, to become aware of local agencies and resources which will assist those faced with problem pregnancies.

We believe that legislation concerning abortions will not address the root of the problem. We therefore express our deep conviction that any proposed legislation on the part of national or state governments regarding abortions must take special care to see that the individual conscience is respected, and that the responsibility of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter is acknowledged and honored as the position of this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church express its unequivocal opposition to any legislative, executive or judicial action on the part of local, state or national governments that abridges the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), pp. 323-25.