

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

**RESOLUTION NO.:** 2018-D066  
**TITLE:** D065 Canons  
**PROPOSER:** Canons  
**TOPIC:** Amend Canon IV.14.12(a) and IV.14.12(b)

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**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2015-D004     Appoint a Task Force on the Episcopacy  
2003-D007     On the Topic of Episcopal Election Reform

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

None

*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.*

# D066 Discerning a Call to the Episcopate

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<b>Proposer</b>	The Rev. Nora Smith
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Alexander, The Rev. Sharon; Sherrod, Ms. Katie
<b>Sponsored by</b>	
<b>Page numbers</b>	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
<b>HiA / Leg. Cttee</b>	/
<b>Current Status</b>	Pre-Filed Resolution
<b>Version</b>	Original (as filed)
<b>Review Status</b>	Not yet reviewed

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## RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the issue of how the Church can better aid in the discernment of a call to the episcopate be addressed by providing access to a confidential process of information and mentoring through the Office of Pastoral Development; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Pilot Board for Episcopal Transitions create an informational website, accessible to all, with interviews and information that would aid in demystifying the process of discerning a call to the episcopate; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the Pilot Board for Episcopal Transitions recruit a roster of bishops, former candidates in episcopal elections, and other appropriate pastoral support people as may be appropriate for providing information and to confidentially answer questions of seekers prior to that person deciding whether to enter a diocesan search process for a call to the episcopate; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$95,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

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## EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church takes discernment to Holy Orders seriously. However, there is no formal process in place for a person to test a sense of call to the episcopate that is similar to the work done in discerning for the diaconate or the priesthood. While the accepted process for the ultimate affirmation of the call is a public election (and we are making no call to change that), it is absent the prolonged, informed, prayerful process that we employ in the case of a call to the diaconate or priesthood. This resolution addresses that absence.

The perception that articulating a possible call to the episcopate is a display of ambition is unfortunate. We believe this negative reaction is also why people are reluctant to ask questions about their own vocation except in a limited fashion. We propose a mechanism to change that perception, so that exploring a call to any form of service to the church would be seen as the faithfulness it is.

The Task Force proposes the establishment of a voluntary process by which people may ask questions about a possible call to the episcopate before entering into dialogue with a particular diocese. A

process of vocational discernment that takes place before ones name goes forward in an episcopal search process would permit more people throughout the church to safely and confidentially seek clarity for themselves. We believe that better access to information for all who are sensing a call could increase the diversity of people who are prepared to respond to God's call in this way.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-D004  
**Title:** Appoint a Task Force on the Episcopacy  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That a Task Force on the Episcopacy be appointed by the Presiding Officers composed of three bishops, three presbyters or deacons, and six lay persons; and be it further Resolved, That at least one member of the Task Force will have been a finalist in an Episcopal search who did not receive enough votes for election in the last three years; at least one member of the Task Force will have served as a Transition Consultant in an Episcopal search over the past three years; and at least two members of the Task Force will have served on an Episcopal Search and/or Transition Committee in an Episcopal search process over the past three years; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will study the election, appointment, roles, and responsibilities of the Episcopate, including the use of Bishops Diocesan, Bishops Coadjutor, Bishops Suffragan, Provisional Bishops, Missionary Bishops, and Assistant Bishops in this Church; looking specifically at the particular gifts, life experience, and expertise required for episcopal office; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will pay particular attention to the recent trend away from a diverse House of Bishops, and seek ways to encourage diversity in the Episcopate; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will propose to the 79th General Convention a new process for discernment, nomination, formation, search, election, and transition of bishops in The Episcopal Church including, but not limited to: the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Pastoral Development; the selection of, roles and responsibilities of Transition Consultants; how adjoining dioceses may aid and inform the discernment of a diocese in transition; and any required Constitutional and Canonical changes necessary; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Task Force will work with the Office of Pastoral Development to develop best practices and educational materials to be published electronically and made publicly available, and may use some of its budget to retain consultants who will help with this task; 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 \$150,000 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. 457-458.

# The Acts of Convention

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Year

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**Resolution Number:** 2003-D007  
**Title:** On the Topic of Episcopal Election Reform  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Rejected  
**Final Text:**

Resolution died with adjournment. See Legislative History for original text of resolution.

## Legislative History

**Author:** Dr. Louie Crew (Newark)  
**Originating House:** House of Deputies  
**Originating Committee:** Committee on Consecration of Bishops

### House of Deputies

The House of Deputies Committee on Consecration of Bishops presented its Report #7 on Resolution D007 (Episcopal Election Reform) and moved adoption with amendment.

### Original Text of Resolution:

(D007)

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That an appropriate existing committee, commission, agency, or board (CCAB) be charged with the task of reviewing all aspects of nominating, electing, and consecrating a bishop, and report to the 75th General Convention recommending ways for these processes to model ministry for this millennium, with the bishop seen less as prince and more as servant; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the group identify some of the conflicting and impossible expectations of nominees and of the one elected, and offer guidance regarding ways dioceses can be as clear and reasonable as possible in nominating, electing, consecrating, and holding those elected accountable; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the group imagine and identify ways local and diocesan communities can identify clergy who potentially have the gifts for episcopal ministry, and assist them in discerning whether or not they are being called to it; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the report include data on the costs of all episcopal elections over the

two most recent triennia, reported within the context of the diocesan budgets to encourage good stewardship; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the report provide examples of ways that some have used these processes to model servanthood and celebrate diversity.

**Committee Amendment:**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That ~~an appropriate existing committee, commission, agency or board (CCAB)~~ *the Standing Commission on Ministry Development* be charged with the task of *gathering data and reviewing* all aspects of nominating, electing, and consecrating a bishop, and *present a report* to the 75th General Convention recommending ways for these processes to model ministry for *this present time millennium with the bishop seen less as prince and more as servant*; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the *Standing Commission on Ministry Development* group identify some of the ~~conflicting and impossible~~ expectations of nominees and of the one elected, and offer guidance regarding ways dioceses can be as clear and reasonable as possible in nominating, electing, *and consecrating, and holding those elected accountable*; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the group ~~imagine and identify ways local and diocesan communities can identify clergy who potentially have the gifts for episcopal ministry and assist them in discerning whether or not they are being called to it~~; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the report include data on the costs of all episcopal elections over the two most recent triennia, ~~reported within the context of the diocesan budgets to encourage good stewardship~~; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the report provide examples of ways that some have used these processes to ~~model servanthood~~ *facilitate understanding of the ministry of all the baptized, model simplicity*, and celebrate diversity.

**Motion carried**

**Resolution adopted with amendment**

(Communicated to the House of Bishops in HD Message #36)

Resolution died with adjournment.

**Abstract:** The 74th General Convention rejects a resolution to review the process for the election of bishops.

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