

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D077
TITLE: Reduce Death Penalty Sentence
PROPOSER: The Rev. Bob Davidson
TOPIC: Criminal Justice

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-D025 Abolish the Death Penalty
2000-A082 Reaffirm Opposition to the Death Penalty and Call for a Moratorium

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

2000-A083 Urge Study of the Death Penalty and Explore Reasons for Opposition
1991-D056 Reaffirm Opposition to Capital Punishment
1979-D004 Reaffirm Opposition to Capital Punishment

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.

D077 Reduce Death Penalty Sentence

Proposer	The Rev. Bob Davidson
Endorsed by	Turner, The Rev. Scott; Garrett, The Rev. Paul
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	Resolution Filed
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 reaffirms the longstanding principle espoused by The Episcopal Church that the Death Penalty in the United States of America should be repealed; and be it further

- 2 *Resolved*, That all persons who have been sentenced to Death in the United States of America have their Death Sentences reduced to a lesser Sentence or, if innocent, granted exoneration; and be it further

- 3 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of this 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church transmit, forward or send this Resolution to the Governors in all States where the Death Penalty is legal and to the President of the United States of America, encouraging them to reduce the Death Sentence to a lesser Sentence for all persons who are on Death Row in each of their jurisdictions and to submit and support legislation to repeal and abolish the Death Penalty; and be it further

- 4 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of this 79th Convention of The Episcopal Church transmit, forward or send this Resolution to all Bishops in States and Federal Jurisdictions where the Death Penalty is legal, encouraging them to appoint task forces of clergy and lay persons within each of their jurisdictions to develop a plan to repeal the Death Penalty, to be witnesses in the name of Jesus Christ, and to request that these Bishops report on their actions to the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church annually prior to the 80th General Convention, on or before June 30, 2019, June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021, all of which reports shall be available to lay communicants and clergy of The Episcopal Church.

EXPLANATION

The Death Penalty remains legal in thirty-one (31) States and in Federal Jurisdictions, with more than 3,000 persons awaiting execution. Some Governors have ordered moratoria in regard to the Death Penalty. The Death Penalty is disproportionately applied to the poor and to minorities. The Death Penalty is arbitrarily imposed in many States. Many innocent persons have been sentenced to Death. The Death Penalty is in direct opposition to the witness of Jesus Christ.

Many persons who have been sentenced to Death have demonstrated redemption, rehabilitation and/or habilitation. For example, in one State a Death Row Inmate has this year been ordained as a

Minister in a Christian Church and serves as a Chaplain to other Inmates. Also, in one State several Death Row Inmates have completed a course of study which is required of Attorneys at Law to be certified as Mediators. The Death Row Inmates who have completed the course of study have formed a Mediation Team and mediate conflicts among the Inmates who are on Death Row in that State. One Inmate who completed the course of study was found by a Judge to have been rehabilitated, and his Death Sentence was reduced to a Life Sentence.

Explanation: The mother Church of the Anglican Communion is the Church of England. There is no Death Penalty in England or in any nation of the European Union.

This Resolution can save lives now in the name of Jesus Christ and can support the ongoing efforts of many Bishops, Chaplains, and Laypersons working to repeal the Death Penalty in the United States of America until the day when a Death Sentence becomes a sin of the past.



Resolution Number: 2015-D025
Title: Abolish the Death Penalty
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirm its longstanding call to put an end to the death penalty in recognition that the death penalty remains legal in thirty-one states and in federal jurisdictions with over 3,000 persons awaiting execution; and that the death penalty is disproportionately applied to the poor and to minorities and is in direct opposition to the witness of Jesus; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be forwarded to governors in all states where the death penalty is legal, encouraging them to submit and support legislation in their respective states to abolish the death penalty; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be forwarded to the bishops in all states where the death penalty is legal, encouraging them to appoint task forces of clergy and lay persons to develop a witness to eliminate the death penalty, and requesting that these bishops report back on their actions to the Standing Commission on Justice and Public Policy prior to the 79th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 304.



Resolution Number: 2000-A082
Title: Reaffirm Opposition to the Death Penalty and Call for a Moratorium
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirm its opposition to capital punishment and call on the dioceses and members of this church to work actively to abolish the death penalty in their states; and be it further
Resolved, That this Convention join those who are calling for an imposition of an immediate moratorium on the use of capital punishment; and be it further
Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention instruct the Secretary of General Convention to notify the governors of the states of our action.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 162.