

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D057
Title: Advocate for Housing Solutions
Proposer: Russell, Ms. Laura
Topic: Housing, Human Rights, Poverty

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-C041	Advocate for Policies Supporting Nutrition, Healthcare, and Housing as Human Rights
2009-C049	Develop a Plan and Activities to Address Domestic Poverty
2003-D040	Reaffirm Commitment to Provide Affordable Housing for the Poor
1991-B007	Authorize the Establishment of a National Episcopal Housing Corporation
1991-D078	Affirm Commitment to Housing for Low and Moderate Income Residents
1991-D088	Encourage Understanding of Mental Illness and the Needs of the Mentally Ill
1988-D166	Urge Concern for Various Housing Issues

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 1973 through 2022, 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 through the [Research Request Form](#).

D057 - Advocate for Housing Solutions

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Russell, Ms. Laura

Endorsed by: Murray, Mr. Alan, Lawton, Ms. Sarah

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Directs an Interim Body: No

Directs Dfms Staff: Yes

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents:

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the Episcopal Church reaffirm our call for Housing as a Human Right (2018-C041) by advocating for expansive solutions for the rising cost of housing in the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church, with the help of the Office of Government Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy Network, support policies at the local, state and national levels to decrease the unhoused population and increase affordable housing by:

- Transforming voucher programs into federal entitlements, so that every household that qualifies would receive them;
- Provide government funding for fair and affordable housing investments;
- Create pathways for unhoused veterans, those returning from incarceration or those with mental health or substance use problems to obtain affordable housing;
- Support, through funding and legislation, short term and transitional housing;
- Eliminate housing discrimination on the basis of source of income;
- Create a right to shelter, guaranteeing the unhoused the right to a shelter bed, if needed;

And be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church encourage Dioceses and congregations to review their unused land and property as a potential pathway to more affordable housing units; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage congregations to assess the housing needs in their communities, collaborate with local organizations on the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity and advocate for affordable housing.

Explanation

Housing should be a basic human right. Just as food and clothing are needed to survive, so is a roof over your head. Unfortunately, housing is not seen as a basic human right. Many people in the United States are one paycheck away from being evicted. Studies have found that a median rent increase of \$100 per month could increase homelessness in a city by 32%. It is cheaper to pay the rent for someone than to house them in a shelter. Once housed, someone has a community support system. That is not available in shelter, and is difficult, at best, when you are living on the streets or in a car.

Housing vouchers work. They have lifted more than one million people out of homelessness. A voucher will pay a percentage of the rent. The voucher is paid by government funds. The person takes the voucher, finds an apartment, and pays a small percentage of their rent themselves, allowing them to focus on food, clothing and staying housed. One of our largest voucher programs is Section 8. Most people seeking Section 8 vouchers have been on waiting lists for years, sometimes decades. Some areas have closed their lists, and the lists have been closed for over ten years.

To combat homelessness, we need many strategies. First, we need the right for everyone to be able to have a shelter bed to sleep. No one should have to sleep outdoors and battle the elements or be arrested because they have no where to go. Then, we need more supportive housing, and more fair and affordable housing. We need to end the ability of landlords to reject rental applicants because their source of income is not what a landlord wants-such as income through public benefits or VA benefits. Finally, we need vouchers for those who can be housed to get housing, affordable housing.



Resolution Number: 2018-C041
Title: Advocate for Policies Supporting Nutrition, Healthcare, and Housing as Human Rights
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct The Office of Government Relations to advocate unflinchingly for the federal government of the United States to close gaps in the safety net which cause millions of Americans to suffer eviction, homelessness, inability to access health care, medical debt, and hunger; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians, Dioceses and The Episcopal Church advocate at the federal, state, and local level for adequate nutrition, healthcare, and housing as human rights which should be provided to all residents of this country, and for which eligibility is determined only by the applicants' current financial need, and all eligible people receive the aid for which they qualify; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians, dioceses, and The Episcopal Church oppose federal cuts in tax credits that benefit low-income families including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Child Care Credit, and advocate for similar tax credits at the state level; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians, dioceses, and The Episcopal Church oppose health care proposals 1) to limit public benefit funding to block grants, or 2) to cut off new enrollment of income-eligible people at a future date irrespective of their needs, or 3) to stipulate that people who lose eligibility when their income rises cannot re-enroll if their income falls again in the future due to loss of income; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians and dioceses in the 19 states that did not accept the Affordable Care Act Medicaid Expansion advocate with their state legislators and governors to accept this benefit and federal funding for their constituents; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians, dioceses and The Episcopal Church call on Congress to make the cost-sharing provisions of the Affordable Care Act an entitlement; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopalians, dioceses and The Episcopal Church call on Congress to cap the mortgage interest deduction for wealthy taxpayers and direct the increased revenue to low-income housing assistance programs; 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 \$83,750 for 1/4 FTE staff person at the Office of Government Relations to track federal and state legislative proposals on public benefit funding and eligibility, and to provide timely action alerts to dioceses, and Episcopal Public Policy Network; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Dioceses and congregations provide networking relationship for housing and employment to refer homeless people to assist in getting employment and housing.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 421-422.



Resolution Number: 2009-C049
Title: Develop a Plan and Activities to Address Domestic Poverty
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention direct the Executive Council to develop a strategic plan with clear designation of authority and accountability to address issues of domestic economic justice and report back to the 77th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge each Episcopal Congregation to build relationships with and among the marginalized of their community as well as form local partnerships with agencies that work with low-income people; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge each Episcopal Congregation to begin or continue to engage in the traditional acts of mercy in which many congregations and Jubilee Centers participate: food pantries, clothing closets, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other programs; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention continue and deepen its advocacy and shall urge dioceses and congregations (often in concert with the Episcopal Public Policy Network) to advocate for legislation that provides adequate levels of support and opportunities for low-income people; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge dioceses and congregations to promote and participate in church-based community organizing whereby people of the local community exercise the power of numbers and conviction to bring their needs to the attention of and promote effective action by elected officials and governmental bodies; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention support and participate and shall urge dioceses and congregations to support and participate in various models through which low-income people and their co-workers can take control of their own lives and meet their own needs: models such as community development corporations, housing corporations and co-ops, small business development and land trusts; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage at every level loans and deposits to community development financial institutions (community loan funds, community development banks and credit unions, and micro-loan business funds) to support local community development.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 622-623.



Resolution Number: 2003-D040
Title: Reaffirm Commitment to Provide Affordable Housing for the Poor
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention reaffirm its commitment to providing rental and owner-occupied housing that is safe, accessible, and affordable for low-income and moderate-income persons and their families including persons with disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of Governmental Relations urge the executive and legislative branches of the federal government and the dioceses to encourage state and local units of government to ensure that housing assistance programs are adequately funded to address the growing gap between the number of affordable housing units available and the number of renter households in the bottom quartile of income in this nation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention strongly encourage the local parish and interfaith community partnerships to address the lack of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families including persons with disabilities throughout this nation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention urge the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice to identify existing and new opportunities for involvement in the creation and investment in affordable housing and to report through the Jubilee Ministries Advisory Committee on the status of this work to the 75th General Convention and on the opportunities for The Episcopal Church to become involved in the creation of affordable housing.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 332f.



Resolution Number: 1991-B007
Title: Authorize the Establishment of a National Episcopal Housing Corporation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church continue its commitment to the mission and ministry of providing decent and affordable housing to low and moderate income persons by authorizing the establishment of a National Episcopal Housing Corporation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council Housing Organizing Committee be authorized to prepare articles of incorporation for such a corporation and such other documents as may be needed, for the consideration of, and approval by, the Executive Council, as would,

A. Provide for the full range of powers needed to function as a developer of affordable housing;

B. Provide for the financial and legal independence of said corporation from the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council Housing Organizing Committee be authorized to appoint the initial membership of such a corporation, subject to the prior approval of the Presiding Bishop; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council Housing Organizing Committee report back on the status of the implementation of this Resolution to the 71st General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 310.



Resolution Number: 1991-D078
Title: Affirm Commitment to Housing for Low and Moderate Income Residents
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church express its concern to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development over the deteriorating housing conditions facing low and moderate income residents of this nation; and be it further Resolved, That we continue in this Church, to address these problems by:

Affirming the strong support and commitment of the Episcopal Church to the mission and ministry of helping to provide decent and affordable housing to those of low and moderate income and to combatting homelessness;

Supporting the work of the Executive Council Housing Organizing Committee through the continuance of an adequate and highly trained staff as a resource to the Church at all levels;

Supporting the Economic Justice Implementation Committee's efforts to provide housing alternatives as part of their mandate for justice;

Encouraging the development of local parish and diocesan housing groups;

and be it further

Resolved, That this Church continue its support of, and work with, the Interreligious Coalition on Housing (ICH), the National Low Income Housing Coalition, (NLIHC), and other national housing advocacy groups in affirming this pastoral imperative; and be it further

Resolved, That the Housing Officer of the Episcopal Church Center staff continue to be a principal force in implementing the housing ministry of the Church and be directed to acquaint all dioceses of the Church with the technical assistance available to them in the areas of housing project initiation and development; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on the Church in Metropolitan Areas monitor the action and progress in all of the dioceses of the Church during the coming triennium, reporting back on the status of the implementation of this Resolution to the 71st General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 823.



Resolution Number: 1991-D088
Title: Encourage Understanding of Mental Illness and the Needs of the Mentally Ill
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That members of the Episcopal Church are encouraged to become knowledgeable about mental illness in order to reduce stigma and stereotypes which are prevalent within the Church body and the Community-at-large; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church and all its units and organizations, be encouraged to reach out, welcome, include and support persons with a mental illness, particularly those who have a prolonged, serious mental illness, and the families of those persons, and recognize the abilities and celebrate the gifts of those who have a mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That the church encourage the development of specific programs to equip the clergy and laity for ministry to the mentally ill and their families and that clergy and lay ministers seek out training and opportunities to minister to the spiritual needs of those who are affected by a mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses and congregations work with existing agencies and organizations to assist with and initiate programs, such as support groups, drop-in centers, housing and employment opportunities, which lead to an improved quality of life for people who have a mental illness, with specific attention to those who have become homeless; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses, congregations and individual parishioners become advocates for public policy and adequate funding to provide comprehensive community-based services, hospital care and research into the causes and treatment of mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses, congregations and individuals utilize the resources and support services offered by the Episcopal Mental Illness Network (EMIN) of the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Accessibility.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 822.



Resolution Number: 1988-D166
Title: Urge Concern for Various Housing Issues
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 69th General Convention urge each diocese to incorporate a concern for housing issues into diocesan structures (e.g., departments, divisions, committees, commissions) to encourage the development of housing programs for low and moderate income persons and families; and be it further.

Resolved, That new initiatives for increased low and moderate income housing be established in the public and private sectors, those initiatives to include, but not be limited to, maintaining and expanding the role of state and federal governments and non-profit institutions, including the Church, in Section #8 rent subsidy programs, rehabilitation of existent sub-standard housing, and the construction of new rental and owner-occupied housing for low and moderate income people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and any other federally financed housing be maintained for low and moderate income persons and families, for whom this housing was built; and be it further

Resolved, That the Housing Officer of the Episcopal Church Center staff be requested to acquaint all dioceses of the Church with the technical assistance available to them in areas of housing project initiation and development; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on the Church in Metropolitan Areas monitor the action and progress in all of the dioceses of the Church during the coming triennium, reporting back on the status of implementation of this resolution to the 70th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 294.