

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D069
Title: Advocating for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Proposer: Murray, Mr. Alan
Topic: Disabled Persons

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-D097 Establish a Task Force on Accessibility and ADA Compliance
2015-A077 Publicize Formation Resources for People with Disabilities
2015-D043 Ensure Accessibility for Disabled Persons at All Church Events
2012-D068 Address Education and Pastoral Care of Developmentally Disabled
2009-A080 Address Access of Disabled Persons to Ministry Discernment
2009-A081 Make Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities at Church Meetings
2003-C027 Make the Church's Audio-visual Materials Accessible to All People
1994-C020 Amend Canon I.17.5 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]
1994-D104 Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility
1988-D004 Encourage Sensitivity to Persons With Disabilities

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

2018-D048 Review Use of Disability Language in Governance Documents
1997-C046 Re-establish a Resource Center on the Disabled

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](#).

D069 - Advocating for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Murray, Mr. Alan

Endorsed by: Russell, Ms. Laura, 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: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 17 - Accessibility & Inclusion

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents:

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring,

That the Episcopal Church recognize those with intellectual and developmental disabilities including neurodivergence are multifaceted individuals who should be included in all aspects of church life; and be it further

Resolved, That intellectual and developmental disabilities, and neurodivergence encompasses a large spectrum of diverse chronic conditions, with the only common factor that the impairment arose before adulthood; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention direct the Episcopal Church, through its website, to publish best practices, trainings and other resources for use in support of full inclusion of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and neurodivergence; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church advocate for full inclusion of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and neurodivergence, by understanding the

specific condition one may have, stop using ableist language, and support legislation that respects the rights and dignity of all with these disabilities and conditions.

Explanation

Language matters. The language to describe someone with intellectual disability and developmental disabilities has dramatically changed. Now it includes the use of neurodivergent. In the past, we used other language. As the language has changed, so must the language of the Church. This issue was last addressed in 2012, when the language for those with certain developmental disabilities was different. Even today, we no longer use words like “insane asylum” or “retarded”. The Church should update its language also.

Furthermore, the Church needs to advocate for legislation that respects the rights of all with developmental disabilities.



Resolution Number: 2018-D097
Title: Establish a Task Force on Accessibility and ADA Compliance
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention reaffirm and renew its previous commitments to Resolutions 2003-D051 and 2015-D043, which require the Church to provide persons with disabilities and Deaf people with full independent accessibility to all official and ancillary events of the Church, including worship; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention establish a Task Force to review progress made toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other relevant statutes; consult with Church staff to ensure that materials, policies, and procedures for accessibility and reasonable accommodations are developed and implemented for each General Convention and ancillary Church events; and develop a means of reconciliation with people who have been excluded from Church events due to lack of accessibility or failure to provide reasonable accommodations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall consist of between five and nine members, to be appointed jointly by the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop, and a majority of the members shall be people with disabilities and deaf people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force include such progress in their report to the 80th General Convention on their work; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$5,000 to allow for the work of this Task Force.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 1109.



Resolution Number: 2015-A077
Title: Publicize Formation Resources for People with Disabilities
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize that all people are children of God and that those with developmental disabilities may require different approaches to education and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention direct the Episcopal Church Center to publicize, through the Episcopal Church website and by other appropriate means, to dioceses, congregations, and Christian Formation leaders, compilations of resources that will help educators and clergy in the formation of persons with developmental disabilities.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 422-423.



Resolution Number: 2015-D043
Title: Ensure Accessibility for Disabled Persons at All Church Events
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew the Church's commitment to the spiritual and physical welcome of all people, including hospitality to and accommodation of people with disabilities, encouraging people with disabilities to become more active church members, to take leadership roles, and to increase awareness of people throughout the Church of the gifts that people with disabilities contribute; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew the call to leadership of the Episcopal Disability Network and Episcopal Conference of the Deaf in helping to challenge and guide our Church's work in this area; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church, in solidarity with the civil and human rights of all persons with disabilities, renew its commitment to voluntary compliance with the disability rights protections that apply in different countries of The Episcopal Church, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, among others; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirm and renew its commitment to Resolution 2003-D051, which requires the Church to provide full independent accessibility to all official and ancillary events of the Church for people with disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church develop and make readily available information on the process for requesting disability accommodations needed to fully participate in meetings, conventions, and other activities of the Church, including placing this information in event materials, on the Church website and relevant social media platforms; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize the need for reconciliation with persons with disabilities who have been denied accommodations needed to participate in Church events or who have been otherwise excluded from the activities of the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention request that the General Convention Office, along with leaders from the Episcopal Disability Network and the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, compile a Best Practices Guide for providing disability accommodations at all official and ancillary Church events that will include resources and policies that would otherwise comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and UN CRPD, to be reviewed and updated at least once every triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$80,000 (\$40,000 to fulfill accommodation requests at the 79th General Convention and \$40,000 to fulfill accommodations requests at ancillary meetings and events) 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), p. 946.



Resolution Number: 2012-D068
Title: Address Education and Pastoral Care of Developmentally Disabled
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Church recognizes that all people are children of God, regardless of mental abilities; and be it further

Resolved, That those with developmental disabilities, including but not limited to persons with Asperger's syndrome, persons on the autism spectrum, persons with Down syndrome, and persons with ADHD, require different approaches to education and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention create a Task Force to study what resources are currently available, and to create resources that can be used to help educators and clergy to tend to this population, and to foster the unique talents found in this population that should be embraced and encouraged.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 711.



Resolution Number: 2009-A080
Title: Address Access of Disabled Persons to Ministry Discernment
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention direct provincial Commissions on Ministry networks in the next triennium to address the access and welcome of qualified persons with disabilities to begin ministry discernment as described in Title III of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further
Resolved, That their findings be shared with bishops diocesan and diocesan Commissions on Ministry in order to encourage persons with disabilities to begin ministry discernment and to educate them about the process.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 716.



Resolution Number: 2009-A081
Title: Make Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities
at Church Meetings
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church dioceses or congregations make those reasonable accommodations necessary for the full participation of staff members or volunteers with disabilities who attend conferences or meetings on behalf of the Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 630.



Resolution Number: 2003-C027

Title: Make the Church's Audio-visual Materials Accessible to All People

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention require all audio-visual materials produced by and for the General Convention, and programs of the Executive Council and staff, be made accessible to all people:

- **by providing closed captioning in English for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, as well as subtitling or dubbing in Spanish and other languages where appropriate, and**
- **by urging all producers of religious audio–visual materials to do the same.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 181.



Resolution Number: 1994-C020
Title: Amend Canon I.17.5 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Title I, Canon 17, Section 5 be amended as follows:

No person shall be denied rights, status [in], or [access to] an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, [or] ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by [this] Canon.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 356.



Resolution Number: 1994-D104
Title: Authorize Continuation of the Task Force on Accessibility
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Accessibility be authorized to continue its work and ministry for the next triennium in providing leadership, training, and education to the Episcopal Church at large for the full participation of all disabled persons in the ongoing life of this Church; and be it further
Resolved, That a program reserve account be budgeted at \$18,000 annually for the work of this Task Force for the next triennium, subject to funding in the budget.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 699.



Resolution Number: 1988-D004
Title: Encourage Sensitivity to Persons With Disabilities
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Accessibility of this Church be commended and authorized to continue its work and ministry of providing leadership, training and education throughout this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That all Episcopal seminaries and schools of theological education identified with this Church be encouraged to confront the issue of architectural accessibility within their facilities; and be it further

Resolved, That said seminaries and schools of theological education be urged to incorporate into their curricula material relating to the ministry of persons having disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That the administrators, staff and students of said seminaries and schools of theological education be encouraged to become knowledgeable of and sensitive to the pastoral and prophetic issues related to disabilities and persons who are disabled.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 194.