

R-2 Resolution Commending Study of 2015 General Convention Resolution D-069 Regarding Birthright Citizenship and Supporting Scripture

Resolved by the 231st Convention of the Diocese of Virginia, that Convention

Remind our congregations, clergy, and people that Resolution D-069 adopted by General Convention in 2015 states that The Episcopal Church supports permanent birthright citizenship in the countries where our Dioceses are located, including the United States of America, and opposes efforts to repeal that automatic grant of citizenship, especially retroactive efforts to strip such citizenship from people, and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention

Commend to our congregations, clergy, and people the careful study of D-069 and the related Scripture, including Matthew 25:31-46, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 10:19, Exodus 22:21, 23:9, and Numbers 15:15, commanding us to treat foreigners and strangers among us as if they are Jesus himself.

Required Statements:

This resolution has no financial impact on the Diocesan Budget.

This resolution does not conflict with the Constitution or Canons of The Episcopal Church or The Diocese.

Submitted by

Mr. Russ Randle, St. Mary's, Arlington

Rationale: When General Convention adopts a resolution stating our church's policy on a matter, particularly on a matter of human rights spoken to repeatedly by Scripture, that is the policy of the Episcopal Church on the issue, a policy that reflects careful consideration of these issues after full debate by the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. D-069 is such a resolution, adopted in 2015, supported by repeated statements in Scripture about protecting the alien and welcoming the stranger. Jesus is quite clear in Matthew 25 that we must treat the alien – the stranger – among us as if they are Jesus.

In the United States, the 14th Amendment to our Constitution makes all persons born here, other than the children of foreign diplomats and members of Native American tribal nations, citizens of the United States upon birth. (Native Americans were made U.S. citizens by legislation early in the 20th Century.) The Amendment did so to reverse the shameful *Dred Scott v Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857), which held that African Americans were not citizens and had no

rights that white people were bound to respect. Our country adopted birthright citizenship in the 14th Amendment to prevent oppression of people born here, regardless of their race or the national origin of their parents.

Over many decades, the church has learned from its long ministry to refugees and displaced people that people without a nationality are routinely targeted for oppression. Estimates before General Convention in 2015 reported that millions of people are stateless, and many were subject to exploitation and oppression. The U.S. State Department has estimated that the number exceeds ten million, but that reliable figures are lacking because many countries do not report such information. This information and testimony before the General Convention Committee made clear that oppression of stateless people is continuing. Consequently, General Convention adopted resolution D069 declaring that birthright citizenship is a human right.

A copy of the General Convention Resolution is below.

Resolution Number:	2015-D069
Title:	Support Permanent Birth Right Citizenship
Legislative Action Taken:	Concurred as Amended
Final Text:	

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, mindful of the suffering which statelessness imposes upon thousands of people, strongly support the automatic grant of citizenship by the country in which a person is born (“birthright citizenship”), particularly by the countries in which our member dioceses are located; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church oppose legal changes which would repeal such birthright citizenship, particularly any such repeal which is retroactive; and be it further

Resolved, That this Resolution be communicated to the appropriate authorities in all of the nations in which our member dioceses are located.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 947-948.