**Resolutions to the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan (2018)**

**Resolution #1**

**SUBJECT: Opioid Crisis**

RESOLVED that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and worshipping communities thereof to study all parts of C037 Call to Respond to Opioid Epidemic, <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C307?house=hd&lang=en>, adopted in July by the 79th General Convention detailing our nation’s opioid public health crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges each participant to contact legislators in support of legislation that strengthens and funds the fight against opioid addiction, specifically HB 5085 and/or any other act designed to eliminate or lessen the harm caused by this public health crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges people to visit websites with resources helping in the battle against opioid addiction such as Bryan’s HOPE (Heroin & Opiate Prevention & Education), [www.bryanshope.org](http://www.bryanshope.org).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges deaneries and congregations to explore opportunities to work together with Bryan's HOPE and other organizations to eliminate or lessen this public health crisis.

EXPLANATION/RATIONALE: The opioid overdose crisis in our nation is the deadliest in history. Overdoses constitute the leading cause of death for Americans under 50-years-old, killing more people than guns or auto accidents, and doing so at a rate faster than the HIV epidemic at its peak. Michigan deaths have more than tripled during the last decade, reaching 1,762 deaths in 2016 (almost five deaths per day). These facts and statistics were cited by Ms. Emily Pasman, a master of social work student at Michigan State University and guest columnist for the Lansing State Journal (Viewpoints – Your Turn) on August 19, 2018. An advocate for drug policy and criminal justice reform, she is also the source for the next paragraph.

“Michigan House Bill 5085 offers a practical solution to the addiction epidemic by providing sustainable, dedicated funding for substance abuse services. Every dollar invested in addiction treatment programs yields a return of between four to seven dollars in reduced drug-related crime and criminal justice costs. Thus, the level of investment could yield over $170 million in criminal justice savings and healthcare costs. HB 5085 will also reduce the human and social costs of addiction by expanding evidence-based prevention programs, increasing access to treatment, and supporting long-term recovery.

Bryan’s HOPE (Heroin & Opiate Prevention & Education) is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization located in Oakland County and named after one of Jeannie Richard’s sons, who died from addiction.  Bryan's HOPE is "a concerned group of citizens coming together to provide awareness and education in the battle against heroin and opiate addiction," Ms. Richards herself is a Certified Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) Responder Trainer. She and Ms. Francine Zysk presented “Project Opiate” at the 2018 Ministry Fair. Contact Ms. Zysk at fzysk@livgov.com to learn more about Project Opiate and its operation in Livingston County.

Hopefully, HB 5085 will have become law by October 27th, but it is incumbent on each of us to add our voices if necessary legislation has not passed. We need to remain active as this is not a partisan issue and everyone is vulnerable. It is, also, important to have specific representatives from our churches that will be active in helping to eliminate this public health crisis.

**RESOLUTION #2**

**SUBJECT: One Person One Vote**

**RESOLVED,** that this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to follow the lead of the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in reaffirming that one person one vote means that the votes of all citizens of all races and ethnicities are fairly represented, counted and accounted for, and

**RESOLVED,** that this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michiganlifts up the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, Resolution D003 Addressing the issue of Voter Suppression, and opposes any form of partisan gerrymandering which has the same effect of racial gerrymandering; <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003?house=hd&lang=en>

and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and congregations of the Diocese of Michigan learn about, educate others and support the Voters Not Politicians Ballot Initiative on the November 2018 ballot that offers an amendment to the State Constitution that addresses gerrymandering and offers a fair process to protect one person one vote and to end the partisan gerrymandering process in Michigan.

**Rationale/explanation:** One person, one vote means more than that each person gets only one vote in any given election. It also means that the electoral process is designed fairly so that each person's vote has an equal impact on the outcome. In other words, no individual's vote carries greater weight than anyone else's. (Source: www.law.cornell.edu/wex/one-person\_one-vote\_rule). This is "a principle of political democracy that underpins universal suffrage and political equality." (Source: en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\_man,\_one\_vote).

As with most principles, continual effort is needed in its defense and in making sure that we as a country move ever closer to its full realization.

Faith Mandates: People of faith believe that all individuals are created equal and remain equal in the sight of God. This is a common theme in the holy books of various faith traditions. This idea operates at the spiritual level, but also has temporal, including political implications. Even though modern democratic governments require secular justification for their policies, we Episcopalians draw upon Christian teaching and the positive contributions that American Christians have made in the political evolution of the United States to affirm our own support for the principle of one person, one vote.

Legal Precedents: A series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions beginning in the 1960s established the principle of one person, one vote within American constitutional law. Baker v. Carr (1962), Gray v. Sanders (1963), Reynolds v. Sims (1964), Wesberry v. Sanders (1964), and Avery v. Midland County (1968) held that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires all districts in any given election -- whether at the congressional, county, or local level -- to contain approximately the same number of voters. (Source: en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\_man,\_one\_vote) Equalizing the number of voters within districts is one way to ensure that "as nearly as is practicable, one person's vote...is to be worth as much as another's." (Source: Wesberry v. Sanders, pp. 7-8, 18).

Work Remaining: In spite of the progress that resulted from these court decisions, many impediments remain to the full realization of the underlying principle. Some impediments are as old as our nation and are embedded within the U.S. Constitution, such as the electoral college and the manner in which U.S. senators are elected. Other impediments are newer or have become increasingly problematic over recent decades, such as gerrymandering, variations in ballot access and in how votes are cast and counted across the country, certain aspects of campaign financing, and the increasingly sophisticated technology used in micro-targeting voters. Source for language in the explanation: [**https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C047?house=hd&lang=en**](https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C047?house=hd&lang=en) **C047 Support of One Person, One Vote**

**Additional Resources:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xz_D3_i3_27tuEhcFcB-rachGG9Ko0ha1LfgvbY_eUc/edit>

<https://www.votersnotpoliticians.com/thesolution>

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-initiative/871624002/>

“Our state Constitution begins with, ‘All political power is inherent in the people.’

The proposal would create a 13-member redistricting commission that would be composed of four Democrats, four Republicans and five independent members who vow they are not affiliated with any major political party. The secretary of state would select the commission members.

The committee would be tasked with redrawing political boundaries every 10 years, a power currently reserved for whichever political party controls Lansing at the time.”

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-ruling/872133002/>

“There were other legal issues at play, but a major one was whether the Voters Not Politicians proposal is a constitutional amendment, as its proponents assert, or whether it is a general revision of the constitution, as its challengers say.

Amendments may be made through ballot questions. General revisions require a constitutional convention.

The four justices were clear in their decision that the VNP proposal was closer to the existing state constitution than the way districts are drawn now.

"The last time the voters had direct input on this issue, they opted for apportionment and redistricting to be conducted by a commission, and the Legislature now exercises a power that the constitution of 1963 expressly denied to it," the opinion stated.”

**RESOLUTION #3**

**SUBJECT: PROTECTING VOTING RIGHTS**

**RESOLVED,** that this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to support the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church D003 in working to overcome efforts that suppress the voting rights of the citizens of Michigan and the United States, and

**RESOLVED*,*** That this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to follow the lead of the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church D003 calling “on governments on all levels to create policies to enhance voter participation by, among other strategies, seeking to implement policies that will increase early voting, extend registration periods, guarantee an adequate number of voting locations, allow absentee balloting without the necessity of having an excuse, and prohibit forms of identification that restrict voter participation…” and be it further

**RESOLVED*,*** That this 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the people and congregations of the Diocese of Michigan to learn about, educate others and support the Promote the Vote Ballot Initiative on the November 2018 ballot that offers an amendment to the State Constitution that provides safeguards our elections, puts voters first, and removes barriers that make it more difficult for voters to vote and for their votes to be counted: by protecting the right to vote a secret ballot, ensuring military service members and overseas voters get their ballots in time for their votes to count, providing voters with the option to vote straight party, automatically registering citizens to vote at the Secretary of State’s office unless the citizen declines, allowing a citizen to register to vote anytime with proof of residency, providing all registered voters access to an absentee ballot for any reason and ensuring the accuracy and integrity of elections by auditing election results. <https://promotethevotemi.com/>

**Rationale/explanation:**

[**https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003/original\_text?house=hd&lang=en**](https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003/original_text?house=hd&lang=en)

**D003 Addressing the issue of Voter Suppression**

**Explanation**

The Voting Rights Act's passage was a signature accomplishment of the civil rights movement, the Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in the case, known as Shelby v. Holder, effectively invalidated Section 5 which required state, county and local governments with histories of discrimination (as well as other more technical factors) to submit any changes to voting laws to federal authorities for approval; and
The current administration is using its bully pulpit to falsely allege that millions of ballots were cast illegally and to suggest that early voting should be cut down. Under the current administration's leadership, politicians with records of aggressively curtailing voting rights will be shaping federal policies; and
At the state level, emboldened by Shelby v. Holder, certain politicians have long been leading a sustained assault on voting rights. In state after state, these politicians have pursued a consistent and ambitious agenda to curtail voting rights, an agenda that includes requiring voter IDs, cutting early voting hours and locations, slashing Sunday voting, and eliminating same-day voter registration. It also includes restricting urban counties’ ability to open additional polling sites and purging voter registration rolls through the use of manipulative and overly zealous techniques. It extends to bans on straight-ticket voting, one byproduct of which is longer voting lines, and on ballot harvesting, a practice by which individuals collect absentee ballots filled by other voters so as to deliver them to election authorities.
A brief explanation of each of the reforms asked for in the above Resolution is as follows:
Implement automatic voter registration (AVR): Since March 2015, six states have adopted legislation to automatically register citizens when they come into contact with governmental agencies, notably a Department of Motor Vehicles. Oregon, the first state to adopt this reform (after years of advocacy by the Oregon-based Bus Federation), has registered 225,000 people this way since the start of the year 2016. The payoff: 43 percent of those new voters cast ballots on November 8, 2016.
Enable same-day voter registration (SVR): Same-day voter registration allows qualified residents to register to vote or update their existing registration on Election Day.
Prepare for natural disasters: Absent same-day voter registration bills, rules should provide for the automatic extension of voter registration deadlines in counties where a natural disaster is declared in the weeks leading up to an election. Last year, Florida’s Republican Gov. Rick Scott and North Carolina’s state elections board denied extensions in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. New rules could limit such gamesmanship.
Allow online voter registration: Many states still provide no procedure by which residents can register to vote or update their voter registrations online. Remedying this situation is very feasible since Republicans have been willing to get on board with adopting online registration systems, as they did in Florida in 2015.
Expand the circle of people who are eligible to vote. Restore felons’ voting rights: A recent report by the Sentencing Project laid bare the urgency of countering felon disenfranchisement rules. Two and a half percent of all American adults are disenfranchised, and the share of African Americans who are disenfranchised is triple that (7.4 percent), a disparity that is in keeping with the origins and history of the practice. In four Southern states with severe disenfranchisement laws — Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia — the share of disenfranchised black adults surpasses 20 percent, more than double that of white adults.
Absent the above step, a range of incremental reforms beckon. The most urgent is to restore voting rights to people who have completed their sentences. In Virginia, one of four states to permanently disenfranchise individuals with felony convictions, Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe has used his executive authority to achieve this objective. In August, he began issuing thousands of restoration orders on an individual basis after a narrow ruling by the state Supreme Court blocked him from issuing a blanket clemency; he has said he will continue to mail individual restoration orders to more than 200,000 people.
Make it easier to vote by mail. Implement all-mail voting: In three states (Colorado, Oregon, and Washington), election authorities mail a ballot to every registered voter. This far-reaching step could be pursued in states like California that already conduct a large share of their elections by mail.
States that don’t wish to go that far in privileging mail voting can take intermediary steps — enabling no-excuse absentee voting where it is not yet available, and creating long-term absentee voter lists.
Enable no-excuse absentee voting: Twenty states — many of them states where Democrats wield political influence, including Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island — require that voters provide a reason they can’t vote on Election Day in order to receive an absentee ballot. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is now advocating legislation to implement no-excuse absentee voting in the Empire State, a minimal step that these 20 states should prioritize.
Create long-term mailing lists for absentee voters: The idea behind absentee ballot standing requests is that when a voter requests an absentee ballot in a given year, authorities then continue to automatically send them absentee ballots into the future. This can encourage turnout from voters who tend to only cast a ballot in the fall of a presidential election year, and it makes voting more accessible to people with disabilities, as a recent study documented. In some states, like Florida, requests expire after a few general elections, which can lead to some confusion. A handful of other states, such as California, allow voters to be put on an absentee ballot list permanently.
Make it easier for people to vote early, in person. Thirteen states provide no option to cast a ballot in person before Election Day. Democrats already enjoy some power in many of these states, including Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Schneiderman’s proposal to create a two-week early voting window in New York is an urgent starting point for consideration.
Enable weekend voting and extended hours: Early voting ought to be helping people who struggle to find the time to vote on Election Day Tuesdays, especially if they fear the long lines that disproportionately affect predominantly minority precincts. But simply adding more voting hours during other weekday working hours cannot meet that goal. Extended voting hours on weekdays are needed, as well as weekend voting.
Guarantee an adequate number of voting locations: In Ohio, each county is restricted to only one early voting location, no matter its physical size or population. Giving local county boards more leeway to open additional voting sites can be helpful to ensuring that highly populated counties are adequately served, but obstacles such as inequities in the allocation of statewide resources or the lack of representativeness of some counties’ elected officials loom large. Voting rights advocates should champion statewide benchmarks as to a minimum number of polling places per resident and per physical distance, require a minimum number of voting machines at each voting location, and put in place rules to ensure an adequate allocation of state resources.