

The Report of the Committee on Reference

To the 185th Convention of the
Diocese of Michigan

October 25/26, 2019

This document serves as notice of proposed resolutions for consideration by the clergy and lay delegates to the 185th convention of the Diocese of Michigan.

Proposed Resolution #1

Sponsor: Lucinda Keils

Subject: CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE, REFUGEES AND IMMIGRATION

Resolved, that acting from our Christian faith and conscience the 185th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan urge that all persons, parishes, deaneries and diocesan leadership join to protect the human rights, legal rights, physical safety and dignity of all persons who, seeking asylum, fleeing persecution, and attempting to immigrate to the United States of America, are caught in the current (21st century) border and immigration process; continuing now and until the issues can be resolved fairly in accordance with international and domestic laws providing protection, and be it further

Resolved, that the 185th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan urge that all persons, parishes, deaneries and diocesan leadership actively oppose the indefinite detention of families and children in for-profit or other facilities that deny essential protections to fellow human beings, especially children and families, harmed by current border and immigration policies and be it further

Resolved, that as inhumane and unlawful governmental border practices and policies escalate and result in grave harm to vulnerable people, the 185th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan urge that all persons, parishes, deaneries and diocesan leadership work for the safety and security of our immigrant neighbors, by actively connecting with The Episcopal Church, other Episcopal dioceses, our local and national communities, institutions, coalitions and groups supporting immigrant rights, and together educate, advocate, organize and take direct action where appropriate in each situation to mitigate the root causes of migration and to create a humane and just immigration system and policies, and be it further

Resolved, that such actions might include learning about the situation at the borders; taking actions to accompany undocumented immigrants; supporting ministries that welcome immigrants and help them; defending access to asylum, including communicating with elected officials, government agencies and fellow citizens about the nature of and need for asylum; sharing information in our communities so that people know their rights; and praying The Migrant Circle of Prayer for people in detention facilities; donating to Dioceses and border ministries, working for and electing officials who will create a just path to citizenship and end cruel practices toward all persons, establishing just and humane treatment for each person.

Rationale:

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/episcopal-church-statement-asylum-restrictions>

Episcopal Church Statement on Asylum Restrictions *July 17, 2019*

The Episcopal Church is deeply concerned with the recently released Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) [interim final rule on asylum](#). The United States is obliged by international and domestic law to provide protection to people fleeing persecution, including asylum seekers. This rule wholly upends our current asylum system and will leave vulnerable people in further danger.

As Presiding Bishop Michael Curry recently said, “When you welcome the stranger, you welcome Jesus. The book of Hebrews in the New Testament says those who have welcomed the strangers have sometimes welcomed angels unawares.” The men, women, and children fleeing their country and seeking asylum in the U.S. are not only exercising a legal right to do so, but are also deserving of our care and compassion. Rather than prevent those persons from seeking the protection they need, the U.S. should respond by improving our existing system and investing in efforts to address root causes of migration in the first place.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/statement-family-detention>

Statement on Family Detention August 22, 2019

The Episcopal Church strongly opposes the DHS-HHS Federal Rule on Flores Agreement. As a Christian organization, our primary concern with federal policies is how they impact the most vulnerable. This rule would rollback critical child welfare protections and would undoubtedly further harm families and vulnerable children.

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry [wrote](#), “What is the Christian way to manage borders? Strength does not require cruelty. Indeed, cruelty is a response rooted in weakness. Jesus was clear about what true strength is and it always is driven by love. There may be many policy prescriptions, but the prism through which we view them should be the same: does the policy treat people with love, acknowledging our common humanity? If the answer is no, it is not a Christian solution.” An examination of the family detention system in the U.S. makes it clear that this is not a compassionate response for children seeking asylum with their parents. Detaining children who are escaping violence should be an absolute last resort, and the Flores Settlement Agreement has established necessary guardrails for children in detention. Removing this guardrail would only expose children to further harm, as there is already significant documentation of the harm children are already exposed to in our current detention system. Through official policy from General Convention, the governing body of The Episcopal Church, the Church deplores conditions found in immigration detention centers and the over-reliance on a costly prison-like detention system for immigrants, and urges the use of alternatives to detention, and calls for accountability and oversight to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care, and sanitary conditions. The Episcopal Church also calls for an immediate end to the inhumane practice of family detention as a response to individuals seeking protection.

The Flores Settlement Agreement is intended to ensure the safety and proper care of children in immigration detention. This is a sensible and humane effort. For while we must ensure that those who wish to do harm here or those who are smuggling drugs or trafficking human beings are stopped, border enforcement and detention policies must not come at the detriment to human life or our legal obligations to those seeking protection. The Episcopal Church urges the administration to invest in alternatives to detention rather than relying on an expensive and inhumane system of family detention.

https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/ogr_advocacy_refugee_and_immigration_overview.pdf
eppn@episcopalchurch.org.

Resources: *Resources Developed by The Episcopal Church*

[Presiding Bishop Curry joins faith leaders' statement on children in detention 6/6/2019](#)

[Backgrounder on Detention and Immigration updated: 6/26/2018](#)

[Five Investments In Our Immigration System To Address The "Crisis" At The Border](#)

[Letter to Congress on Federal Funding Allocations: Prioritize Human Needs,](#)

[Not Immigration Enforcement that Harms Workers, Families](#)

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/faithful-response-caravan-five-things-know>

[Presiding Bishop Michael Curry Joins Statement on Family Separation at our Borders 6/7/2018](#)

[Statement from Rebecca Blachly, Director, Office of Government Relations](#)

[Episcopal News Service Coverage](#)

[READ: "Asylum and the Caravan" from May 2, 2018](#)

Resources Developed by Partners

[Interfaith Toolkit to End Family Separation](#)

[UNHCR Urges Family Unity at Southern US Border](#)

[Actions from the Women's Refugee Commission](#)

[Background Information from Kids In Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#)

Proposed Resolution #2

Sponsor: Lucinda Keils

Subject CARE OF CREATION: CARBON TAX

Resolved, that the 185th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges congregations to seek information in order to more fully understand ways to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to stabilize our climate and sustain life on earth; and be it further

Resolved, that Episcopalians in the Diocese of Michigan urge lawmakers and local officials to commit to public policy which may include a Carbon Fee and Dividend model or other way to calculate and mitigate greenhouse gas and carbon-based fossil fuel emissions to prevent further irreversible climate change; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Michigan urges that Episcopalians seek collaboration in study and action with other congregations and community groups regarding ways to work to prevent further irreversible climate change, as well as meeting and communicating with their elected representatives, and be it further

Resolved, that in implementing any such policies, the 185th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges that Episcopalians advocate for appropriate measures to reduce the economic impacts on poor people and people of modest income, which means might include use of a trust fund paid for with carbon fees and distributed to the poorest people first.

Rationale:

The 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church concurred in Resolution C020 Carbon Tax that we should collaborate to accomplish a larger effort to reduce and reverse climate destruction. Incorporating their explanation in our rationale:

As Christians and members of a faith community, we have a responsibility to care for the earth and for the peoples of the earth. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." Psalm 24:1

General Convention has previously adopted resolutions urging support for measures approving of efforts to reduce global warming, including Resolution GC2006-B002, "Acknowledge and Reduce Global Warming." While local, regional, and state actions are important and necessary, they are not sufficient to solve this global problem which is accelerating ever more rapidly. The United States must take significant steps to participate fully in the international effort to preserve a livable world.

The non-partisan non-profit Citizens' Climate Lobby offers a scientifically-based proposal with bipartisan appeal. This climate solution, known as Carbon Fee and Dividend, is a national, revenue-neutral carbon fee- and-dividend system (CF&D) that would place a predictable, steadily rising price on carbon, with all fees collected minus administrative costs returned to households as a monthly energy dividend.

In just 20 years, studies show, such a system could reduce carbon emissions to 50% of 1990 levels while adding 2.8 million jobs to the American economy. The benefits of a fully-rebated revenue-neutral carbon tax are clear to and endorsed by leaders of faith, business associations, national security leaders, and energy and healthcare industry leaders. This market-based solution will save lives, create jobs, and boost our economy while reducing the risks associated with climate change.

[EPPN Creation Care Series: Carbon Tax](#)

As Christians, we have a responsibility to care for the earth and all of the living things that dwell on it. Scientific research clearly shows that climate change, one of the greatest dangers to creation, is caused, in part, by carbon emissions from human industrialization. Longstanding Episcopal Church [policy](#) acknowledges the reality of climate change and urges action to address it at local, regional and state levels. While environmental action at every level is important, addressing climate change requires the United States, a leading contributor of carbon emissions, to be a part of international efforts to reduce harmful emissions and advance to cleaner energy sources.

At the 79th General Convention, the Episcopal Church adopted a [resolution](#) to support a carbon fee and dividend model or another carbon pricing system. A carbon pricing system would increase the cost of fossil fuels to reflect their full societal costs. Various legislative and policy proposals would create various flat-rate prices that companies would pay by the ton of CO₂ emissions released, with exceptions for different industries such as agriculture or the armed forces.

The Episcopal Church, recognizing the effect that an inevitably higher energy cost could have on lower-income individuals, has also [resolved](#) to advocate for appropriate measures to reduce the economic impacts on those of poor and modest income, which might include the use of a trust fund paid for with the carbon fees, distributed to the poorest people first. Some current policy proposals also include a dividend model so that the money collected from a carbon fee would be paid in dividends to American citizens and permanent residents to offset the higher cost of energy. Some proposals would phase in pricing, others would start at higher levels, while some would also include provisions that provide immunity from lawsuits over climate change to companies in an effort to win their support. Some proposals also debate the prioritization of helping the domestically vulnerable or the globally vulnerable, or to focus funding on infrastructure to prevent damage.

While there is a diversity of ideas about how a price on carbon could or should be implemented and funding allocated, the scientific community has strongly supported pricing as a method to incentivize change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of dozens of scientists and researchers from around the world, issued a study in the fall of 2018 that anticipates negative impacts of climate change to occur sooner than previously thought. The same day that the IPCC issued their report, the Noble Prize for Economics was awarded to Professor William Nordhaus for his work on calculating the economic impact of climate change

and devising a way to put a price on carbon to change behavior and prevent catastrophic damage.

It is our duty to create incremental change in our energy system in order to be true stewards of creation. A carbon fee is a market-based solution that will create jobs, boost our economy, and reduce the risks associated with climate change by lowering our CO2 emissions. While there are many different proposals for a carbon fee policy, The Office of Government Relations has been charged to support legislative efforts that include a carbon fee or other means of accounting for greenhouse gas emissions, recognizing the need for sound policy, but also the need for timely action in our first step towards reclaiming our call to care for God's creation.

Additional Resources

[Creation Care](#) homepage, filled with more opportunities for individual and collective action and learning.

[H.R. 763 - Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019](#)

[S. 1128 - American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act of 2019](#)

[2018 IPPC Report](#)

[William D. Nordhaus Nobel Prize Page](#)

[Baker-Shulz Plan for Conservative Carbon Pricing](#)



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