

Resolution Title: A Living Wage for Economic Justice

Submitted by Rev. Jeffrey MacKnight, Rector, St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, Bethesda

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington endorses public policy measures reasonably designed to reduce economic inequality to a level compatible with Christian conceptions of justice and fairness; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Diocese engage in discussions with appropriate Episcopal Church officials to establish a separate ministry of Economic Justice seeking national, state and local policies aimed at reducing economic inequality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Diocese of Washington endorses a policy of a national living wage to be established through amendment to Federal law and to be no less than \$15 per hour, with annual adjustments for inflation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in order to implement this commitment to a policy of a national living wage the Diocese engage in discussions with the appropriate officials of the Episcopal Church with a view toward directing the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations to place national living wage legislation among its legislative priorities and to engage in effective advocacy efforts leading to the establishment of a national living wage; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Diocese should consider endorsing additional public policies for increasing economic equality through such measures as full funding for public education and public health services and tax reform that would restore a more equitable tax structure and end discriminatory tax loopholes.

Explanation: As Christians we believe that that all are equal in the eyes of God and therefore are all equally deserving of dignity and respect in our social and economic relationships and a fair share of God's bounty entrusted to us. As shown in the accompanying background material, great disparities in income and wealth exist in the United States. Great disparities in income and wealth tend to deprive those left out and left behind of the equal dignity, respect and opportunity demanded by Christian conceptions of justice and fairness. Economic inequality in the United States has grown to a level that is incompatible with Christian conceptions of justice and fairness. This trend toward increasing economic inequality stems from deep causes within our economic and political system including the increase in globalization, the use of high technology that reduces employment, and government regulatory and tax policies. This increase in inequality is nevertheless not an inevitable result of impersonal forces over which we have no control; it is a product of human activity and can be reduced or reversed by further human activity. As Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, says: "We cannot rely solely on the invisible hand of the market to restore justice...A good society in Christian terms does not leave people behind, alone or abandoned, and does not consider them to be mere instruments within an economic system."

A variety of proposed public policy choices are available to us; they are aimed at reducing economic inequality without unreasonable sacrifices of other worthwhile public and private objectives.