



# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Jun 15, 2020

## **MB 017 Policing Reform**

The following is a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Executive Council at its meeting from June 8 – 11, 2020, at which a quorum was present and voting.

*Resolved*, That in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the many others whose names and stories often go unreported, the Executive Council reaffirms General Convention Resolution 2018-A229, in which the Church “condemns the improper and violent actions of authorities against people of color”; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council also acknowledges the deep pain and grief in Black communities and widespread multiracial protests across the nation due to the ongoing racialized killings; violence and discriminatory practices of individuals in law enforcement and civil authorities and legislation that unjustly and disproportionately impact Black, Latino and Indigenous Americans, systemically causing harm to individuals, families and whole communities, and in this, we confess that we as the Church, and as a society, have failed to respect the dignity of every human being; and be it further

*Resolved* that all Episcopalians, dioceses, institutions, in particular, the Office of Government Relations, push for police reform as part of overall efforts to address racial justice and criminal justice reform. We recommend the following proposals– or any incremental change in the direction of increased accountability, transparency, and responsiveness with the aim of making our communities safer; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council urges the Church, its dioceses and institutions, clergy and lay leaders, and all Episcopalians to be reminded of, and to abide by, our Baptismal vow to strive for justice and peace for all God’s people; working for federal, state, regional, and local transformation of the criminal justice system; by urging elected officials, legislative bodies, government agencies and law enforcement entities to implement policies that:

1. Examine the purpose, efficacy and disproportionate use of force and emphasize de-escalation policies and practices that end the use of excessive force, especially when dealing with unarmed citizens or those in mental health crisis and distress. Advocacy should include but not be limited to banning the use of chokeholds and strangleholds, requiring warning before shooting, and banning shooting at moving vehicles.
2. Evaluate the hiring practices, equipment procurement, accountability measures and personal training of

police departments and law enforcement agencies. Such evaluation should require transparency and accountability in the documenting and reporting of threats and use of force by members of law enforcement. Limit or end the transfer of military-grade weapons to state and local police departments; and ban the use of pretext stops that promote racial and ethnic profiling.

3. Establish and adopt policies that include duty-to-intervene policies, which require officers to stop excessive force used by other officers and report the incidents immediately to a supervisor; requiring use of, and policies for, body cameras.

4. Promote the use of civilian review boards and other community and civilian oversight bodies;

5. Improve the length, quality, and frequency of police training, including in-service training, recognizing that better-trained police use force less often and more wisely;

6. Adopt statutory changes and policies to assure that a federal review by independent prosecutors be conducted of all deaths in law enforcement custody or in other encounters with law enforcement personnel, and that a statutory waiver of the statute of limitations be adopted so that all such deaths over the past ten years will be reviewed for appropriate action to redress civil rights violations;

7. Assure that where no federal investigation occurs, an independent state investigation is undertaken in all cases where people die in encounters with, or in the custody of, state or local law enforcement personnel, especially when a person of color dies in any such encounter or custody;

8. Initiate appropriate criminal prosecutions to address unjustified law enforcement violence resulting in death or injury of anyone;

9. Adoption of enforceable federal policing standards, the violation of which shall result in the abrogation of immunity defenses in federal civil rights actions against law enforcement personnel;

10. Resumption of federal civil rights reviews of law enforcement agency practices where data show a disproportionate number of deaths and injuries have occurred in a police agency's operations, or where data show a racially or ethnically disproportionate number of such incidents, and where warranted by evidence of significant civil rights violations, the use of appropriate judicial decrees, monitors and similar measures to assure that effective permanent reforms in police practices takes place.

*Resolved*, That working to enact these policies is not a means to an end but one part in addressing systemic racism and providing long overdue protections to communities of color, ensuring that we live in a society that recognizes, values, and empowers all of God's children; and be it further

*Resolved*, The Executive Council recognizes and commends the work of the great majority in law enforcement agencies who undertake their efforts conscientiously to improve and protect their communities, safeguarding the human rights of the citizens they serve, and striving to provide law enforcement equally and without discrimination; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this resolution be sent to the Dioceses of The Episcopal Church.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Barlowe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe**  
Secretary of Executive Council and  
The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society  
of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America