

R-5 Civil Discourse Resolution

The Committee recommends the **adoption** of R-5 with the amendment, as follows:

R-5a

Whereas, B009, adopted at the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, calls upon all Episcopalians to practice civil discourse in our political life, while not making peace with evil and injustice; and

Whereas, In the Diocese of Virginia, we seek to demonstrate empathy and esteem for all beloved children of God, believing in the inherent worth of different cultures and perspectives. We proclaim in our Baptismal Covenant that we will seek and serve Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

Whereas, While the political conflict that strains the fabric of our nation is not new, the increasingly partisan and fractured climate of our country undermines our position as a world power and leading democracy; and

Whereas, We need to discuss the problems facing our nation and society constructively. A Christian value remains that violence against any person is unacceptable and must be condemned without equivocation. Violence against a person or institution is not and does not ever represent legitimate political or civil discourse; and

Whereas, Civil discourse has been defined as “the exercise of patience, integrity, humility and mutual respect in civil conversation, even (or especially) with those with whom we disagree.”¹ Civil discourse leads to productive exchanges where everyone thoughtfully listens to what others say, focusing on the issues rather than the individuals espousing them. Accepting the standards of civil discourse means never inflicting harm on others through words or actions and taking responsibility when we do so.

Now therefore be it,

Resolved by the 228th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia, that we call upon all elected officials, candidates for all offices, and Episcopalians, in particular, to publicly repudiate hate speech and to engage in civil discourse.

Resolved, That the 228th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia urge individual Episcopalians and parishes to use the Civil Discourse Curriculum developed by The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations as a resource to guide discussions about politics, policy, and legislation while strengthening our relationships with one another; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Diocese send copies of this Resolution to:

- The Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations, for use in its efforts with the U.S. Congress and the Executive Branch to bring about these changes,
- to Virginia's Senators and Members of Congress representing districts within the Diocese of Virginia;
- the Governor of Virginia and to the members of the Virginia General Assembly representing districts within this Diocese.

¹ In Defense of Civility How Religion Can Unite America on Seven Moral Issues That Divide Us, James Calvin Davis