

FLUME COMMENTARY

RESOLUTIONS – AC 2017

FLUME advises all members of the Annual Conference to closely read and to consider the eight resolutions presented to us this year. Please read them in full in the Annual Conference Workbook. The summary provided online can be of assistance in your review. FLUME members may be of various opinions on all of these resolutions, but most of us support the pro-life Resolution, “Supporting Equality of Love for Both Born and Unborn Children.” For the other resolutions, consider the Pros and the Cons.

Drivers' Licenses for All Florida Drivers - Pages 206-208

- PROs: Calls on the State of Florida to give all Florida drivers the opportunity to apply for a driver's license, hopefully allowing for more training, insurance and safety on the road.
- CONs: Allows undocumented immigrants/illegal aliens to get driver's licenses.

Welcoming the Migrant in our Midst - Pages 208-211

- PROs: Commits us to work to eliminate racism and violence directed toward newly arriving migrants, encourages and provides guidance to churches in ministry to migrants, calls for advocacy for just policies.
- CONs: Expresses opposition to immigration policies that exclude refugees solely on the basis of their religion or national origin. While we ethically may support this, we must consider national security concerns as well.

Support Equality of Love and Value for Both Born and Unborn Children - Pages 211-212

- PROs: Recognizes unborn children as biblical “neighbors” and “strangers” whom we are to welcome as “the least of these.” Supports the belief that both born and unborn children are equally loved by God and are of equal value to God and God's church. Encourages mothers and fathers to love unborn children and do no harm. Supports the sanctity of life, and encourages the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers.
- CONs: None see. FLUME strongly supports this resolution

Death Penalty Reform in Florida - Page 213

- Calls for an end to the death penalty in Florida and recommends that our individual churches and members support advocacy efforts toward this goal.
- PROs: Reminds us of the love of Christ, who preached nonviolence in all human interactions.
- CONs: Does not address biblical issues of justice. Does not address what to do with murderers who would be otherwise sentenced to death. Such individuals are deterred from further crimes against the open society, but not against other prisoners and staff. Does not address equitability of imposed sentences.

Abolishing the System of Mass Incarceration - Pages 214-216

- PROs: Identifies mass incarceration as a critical human and civil rights issue in the United States, encourages provision of opportunities for education, mobilization, public witness and policy-making to advocate against mass incarceration.

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- CONs: Does not address corporate involvement in building and running prisons, which turns the rightful restriction of dangerous offenders by due process into a “prison industrial complex.” Language to “speak and act prophetically to disrupt and abolish the growing prison industrial complex in the United States” is vague and undefined, and can be interpreted to advocate violence against the government’s prison system. Successfully identifies disproportionate racist and non-violent offender incarceration, without giving other possible dispositions.

Protecting the Right to Peacefully Address Injustice through Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions - Pages 216-217

- PROs: Opposes legislation to restrict right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions . . . and calling on our elected officials to “to resist efforts to stifle the movement toward justice for Palestinians through the current wave of 'anti-BDS' legislation.”
- CONs: Does not identify BDS as a movement to Boycott-Divest-Sanction any businesses that do business with Israel, as well as to Boycott-Divest-Sanction Israel itself. BDS has been perceived as anti-semitic. See for example: <http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/German-Chancellor-Merkels-party-labels-BDS-antisemitic-474715>

Black Lives Matter: A Movement for All United Methodists - Pages 218-219

- PROs: Advocates that the Florida Conference will support Black Lives Matter by sharing awareness; supporting and encouraging our congregations to be safe spaces and sanctuary for peaceful protesters, participating in and hosting sacred conversations and dialogue on race relations and inclusion, and be spiritual allies in prayer, for God to enable the pursuit of justice through those who take a stand and lift their voices for justice, not ignoring this opportunity to embrace the new generation of peaceful protesters, non-violent demonstrations and young leaders who come from all races, living into our mission imperative to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world .
- CONs: Black Lives Matter is a secular movement which stirs controversy, strong opinion and extreme views. Many of their allegations and positions are open to debate. Restricting support in this resolution to this one organization is improper and unnecessary. United Methodists can support Black Lives Matter in particular cases as seems warranted, without support from the full Annual Conference.

Combating the Erosion of Human Dignity - Pages 220-222

- PROs: Advocates standing in the light of Wesleyan social holiness and historic Methodist praxis by valuing the dignity and worth of all humans through acts of hospitality, compassion, mercy and grace, speaking out about injustice and the erosion of human dignity, and modelling “commitment to addressing the needs of the poor, marginalized and suffering through social and sometimes political engagement, committing to do everything in our power to ensure that all persons are afforded their dignity and human rights.”
- CONs: None perceived, although engaging in “sometimes political engagement, committing to do everything in our power to ensure that all persons are afforded their dignity and human rights” seems to require undescribed political support for undefined measures or positions.