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# Report of the Committee on Reference

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*This document serves as notice  
of proposed resolutions for  
consideration at the 184th  
Convention of the Episcopal  
Diocese of Michigan*

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**October 26/27, 2018**

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1 **Resolution #1**

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3 **Sponsor:**

4 The Rev. Charles Swinehart

5  
6 **Subject: Opioid Crisis**

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8 **RESOLVED**, that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan study all parts  
9 of C037 Call to Respond to Opioid Epidemic,  
10 <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C307?house=hd&lang=en>, adopted in July  
11 by the 79<sup>th</sup> General Convention detailing our nation’s opioid public health crisis.  
12

13 **RESOLVED**, that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges each  
14 participant to contact legislators in support of legislation that strengthens and  
15 funds the fight against opioid addiction, specifically HB 5085 and/or any other act  
16 designed to eliminate or lessen the harm caused by this public health crisis.  
17

18 **RESOLVED**, that the 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges people to  
19 visit the website (with resources) of Bryan’s HOPE (Heroin & Opiate Prevention &  
20 Education), [www.bryanshope.org](http://www.bryanshope.org), and other sites helping in the battle against  
21 opioid addiction.  
22

23 and be it further

24  
25 **RESOLVED**, that the 184th Convention of the Diocese of Michigan seek  
26 representation from deaneries and congregations in exploring opportunities to  
27 work together with Bryan's HOPE and other organizations to eliminate or lessen  
28 this public health crisis.  
29

30 **EXPLANATION/RATIONALE:** The opioid overdose crisis in our nation is the  
31 deadliest in history. Overdoses constitute the leading cause of death for  
32 Americans under 50-years-old, killing more people than guns or auto accidents,  
33 and doing so at a rate faster than the HIV epidemic at its peak. Michigan deaths  
34 have more than tripled during the last decade, reaching 1,762 deaths in 2016  
35 (almost five deaths per day). These facts and statistics were cited by Ms. Emily  
36 Pasman, a master of social work student at Michigan State University and guest  
37 columnist for the Lansing State Journal (Viewpoints – Your Turn) on August 19,

38 2018. An advocate for drug policy and criminal justice reform, she is also the  
39 source for the next paragraph.

40

41 “Michigan House Bill 5085 offers a practical solution to the addiction epidemic by  
42 providing sustainable, dedicated funding for substance abuse services. Every  
43 dollar invested in addiction treatment programs yields a return of between four  
44 to seven dollars in reduced drug-related crime and criminal justice costs. Thus,  
45 the level of investment could yield over \$170 million in criminal justice savings  
46 and healthcare costs. HB 5085 will also reduce the human and social costs of  
47 addiction by expanding evidence-based prevention programs, increasing access to  
48 treatment, and supporting long-term recovery.

49

50 Bryan’s HOPE (Heroin & Opiate Prevention & Education) is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit  
51 organization located in Oakland County and named after one of Jeannie Richard’s  
52 sons, who died from addiction. Bryan's HOPE is "a concerned group of citizens  
53 coming together to provide awareness and education in the battle against heroin  
54 and opiate addiction," Ms. Richards herself is a Certified Overdose Education and  
55 Naloxone Distribution (OEND) Responder Trainer. She and Ms. Francine Zysk  
56 presented “Project Opiate” at the 2018 Ministry Fair. Contact Ms. Zysk at  
57 [fzysk@livgov.com](mailto:fzysk@livgov.com) to learn more about Project Opiate and its operation in  
58 Livingston County.

59

60 Hopefully, HB 5085 will have become law by October 27<sup>th</sup>, but it is incumbent on  
61 each of us to add our voices if necessary legislation has not passed. We need to  
62 remain active as this is not a partisan issue and everyone is vulnerable. It is, also,  
63 important to have specific representatives from our churches that will be active in  
64 helping to eliminate this public health crisis.

65

1 **Resolution #2**

2 **Sponsors:** Lucinda Keils  
3 Covenant 5  
4 The Reverend Charles Swinehart  
5

6 **Subject: One Person One Vote**

7 **RESOLVED**, that this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the  
8 people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to follow the lead  
9 of the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in reaffirming that one  
10 person one vote means that the votes of all citizens of all races and ethnicities are  
11 fairly represented, counted and accounted for, and

12 **RESOLVED**, that this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan lifts up the 79<sup>th</sup>  
13 General Convention of The Episcopal Church, Resolution D003 Addressing the  
14 issue of Voter Suppression, and opposes any form of partisan gerrymandering  
15 which has the same effect of racial gerrymandering;

16 <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003?house=hd&lang=en>  
17

18 and be it further

19 **RESOLVED**, that this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the  
20 people and congregations of the Diocese of Michigan learn about, educate others  
21 and support the Voters Not Politicians Ballot Initiative on the November 2018  
22 ballot that offers an amendment to the State Constitution that addresses  
23 gerrymandering and offers a fair process to protect one person one vote and to  
24 end the partisan gerrymandering process in Michigan.

25 **RATIONALE/EXPLANATION:** One person, one vote means more than that each  
26 person gets only one vote in any given election. It also means that the electoral  
27 process is designed fairly so that each person's vote has an equal impact on the  
28 outcome. In other words, no individual's vote carries greater weight than anyone  
29 else's. (Source: [www.law.cornell.edu/wex/one-person\\_one-vote\\_rule](http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/one-person_one-vote_rule)). This is "a  
30 principle of political democracy that underpins universal suffrage and political  
31 equality." (Source: [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\\_man,\\_one\\_vote](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_man,_one_vote)).

32 As with most principles, continual effort is needed in its defense and in making  
33 sure that we as a country move ever closer to its full realization.

34 **Faith Mandates:** People of faith believe that all individuals are created equal and  
35 remain equal in the sight of God. This is a common theme in the holy books of  
36 various faith traditions. This idea operates at the spiritual level, but also has  
37 temporal, including political implications. Even though modern democratic  
38 governments require secular justification for their policies, we Episcopalians draw  
39 upon Christian teaching and the positive contributions that American Christians  
40 have made in the political evolution of the United States to affirm our own  
41 support for the principle of one person, one vote.

42 **Legal Precedents:** A series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions beginning in the 1960s  
43 established the principle of one person, one vote within American constitutional  
44 law. Baker v. Carr (1962), Gray v. Sanders (1963), Reynolds v. Sims (1964),  
45 Wesberry v. Sanders (1964), and Avery v. Midland County (1968) held that the  
46 Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires all districts in any  
47 given election -- whether at the congressional, county, or local level -- to contain  
48 approximately the same number of voters. (Source:  
49 [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\\_man,\\_one\\_vote](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_man,_one_vote)) Equalizing the number of voters  
50 within districts is one way to ensure that "as nearly as is practicable, one person's  
51 vote...is to be worth as much as another's." (Source: Wesberry v. Sanders, pp. 7-8,  
52 18).

53 **Work Remaining:** In spite of the progress that resulted from these court  
54 decisions, many impediments remain to the full realization of the underlying  
55 principle. Some impediments are as old as our nation and are embedded within  
56 the U.S. Constitution, such as the electoral college and the manner in which U.S.  
57 senators are elected. Other impediments are newer or have become increasingly  
58 problematic over recent decades, such as gerrymandering, variations in ballot  
59 access and in how votes are cast and counted across the country, certain aspects  
60 of campaign financing, and the increasingly sophisticated technology used in  
61 micro-targeting voters. Source for language in the explanation:  
62 <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/C047?house=hd&lang=en> **C047 Support**  
63 **of One Person, One Vote**

64  
65 **Additional Resources:**

66 [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xz\\_D3\\_i3\\_27tuEhcFcB-](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xz_D3_i3_27tuEhcFcB-rachGG9Ko0ha1Lfgvby_eUc/edit)  
67 [rachGG9Ko0ha1Lfgvby\\_eUc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xz_D3_i3_27tuEhcFcB-rachGG9Ko0ha1Lfgvby_eUc/edit)

68 <https://www.votersnotpoliticians.com/thesolution>

69 [https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/07/31/michigan-](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-initiative/871624002/)  
70 [supreme-court-gerrymandering-initiative/871624002/](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-initiative/871624002/)

71 “Our state Constitution begins with, ‘All political power is inherent in the people.’  
72 The proposal would create a 13-member redistricting commission that would be  
73 composed of four Democrats, four Republicans and five independent members  
74 who vow they are not affiliated with any major political party. The secretary of  
75 state would select the commission members.  
76 The committee would be tasked with redrawing political boundaries every 10  
77 years, a power currently reserved for whichever political party controls Lansing at  
78 the time.”

79  
80 [https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-](https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-ruling/872133002/)  
81 [court-gerrymandering-ruling/872133002/](https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/31/michigan-supreme-court-gerrymandering-ruling/872133002/)

82 “There were other legal issues at play, but a major one was whether the Voters  
83 Not Politicians proposal is a constitutional amendment, as its proponents assert,  
84 or whether it is a general revision of the constitution, as its challengers say.  
85 Amendments may be made through ballot questions. General revisions require a  
86 constitutional convention.  
87 The four justices were clear in their decision that the VNP proposal was closer to  
88 the existing state constitution than the way districts are drawn now.  
89 “The last time the voters had direct input on this issue, they opted for  
90 apportionment and redistricting to be conducted by a commission, and the  
91 Legislature now exercises a power that the constitution of 1963 expressly denied  
92 to it,” the opinion stated.”

1 **Resolution #3**

2 **Sponsors:** Lucinda Keils  
3 The Rev. Charles Swinehart  
4 Covenant 5

5  
6 **Subject: Protecting Voting Rights**  
7

8 **RESOLVED**, that this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the  
9 people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to support the  
10 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church D003 in working to overcome  
11 efforts that suppress the voting rights of the citizens of Michigan and the United  
12 States, and

13  
14 **RESOLVED**, That this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the  
15 people and congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan to follow the lead  
16 of the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church D003 calling “on  
17 governments on all levels to create policies to enhance voter participation by,  
18 among other strategies, seeking to implement policies that will increase early  
19 voting, extend registration periods, guarantee an adequate number of voting  
20 locations, allow absentee balloting without the necessity of having an excuse, and  
21 prohibit forms of identification that restrict voter participation...” and be it further

22 **RESOLVED**, That this 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urges the  
23 people and congregations of the Diocese of Michigan to learn about, educate  
24 others and support the Promote the Vote Ballot Initiative on the November 2018  
25 ballot that offers an amendment to the State Constitution that provides  
26 safeguards our elections, puts voters first, and removes barriers that make it  
27 more difficult for voters to vote and for their votes to be counted: by protecting  
28 the right to vote a secret ballot, ensuring military service members and overseas  
29 voters get their ballots in time for their votes to count, providing voters with the  
30 option to vote straight party, automatically registering citizens to vote at the  
31 Secretary of State’s office unless the citizen declines, allowing a citizen to register  
32 to vote anytime with proof of residency, providing all registered voters access to  
33 an absentee ballot for any reason and ensuring the accuracy and integrity of  
34 elections by auditing election results. <https://promotethevotemi.com/>  
35

36 **RATIONALE/EXPLANATION**

37 [https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003/original\\_text?house=hd&lang=en](https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/D003/original_text?house=hd&lang=en)

38 **D003 Addressing the issue of Voter Suppression Explanation**

39 The Voting Rights Act's passage was a signature accomplishment of the civil rights  
40 movement, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in the case, known as Shelby v.  
41 Holder, effectively invalidated Section 5 which required state, county and local  
42 governments with histories of discrimination (as well as other more technical  
43 factors) to submit any changes to voting laws to federal authorities for approval;  
44 and the current administration is using its bully pulpit to falsely allege that  
45 millions of ballots were cast illegally and to suggest that early voting should be cut  
46 down. Under the current administration's leadership, politicians with records of  
47 aggressively curtailing voting rights will be shaping federal policies; and  
48 At the state level, emboldened by Shelby v. Holder, certain politicians have long  
49 been leading a sustained assault on voting rights. In state after state, these  
50 politicians have pursued a consistent and ambitious agenda to curtail voting  
51 rights, an agenda that includes requiring voter IDs, cutting early voting hours and  
52 locations, slashing Sunday voting, and eliminating same-day voter registration. It  
53 also includes restricting urban counties' ability to open additional polling sites and  
54 purging voter registration rolls through the use of manipulative and overly  
55 zealous techniques. It extends to bans on straight-ticket voting, one byproduct of  
56 which is longer voting lines, and on ballot harvesting, a practice by which  
57 individuals collect absentee ballots filled by other voters so as to deliver them to  
58 election authorities. A brief explanation of each of the reforms asked for in the  
59 above Resolution is as follows:

60 **Implement automatic voter registration (AVR):** Since March 2015, six states have  
61 adopted legislation to automatically register citizens when they come into contact  
62 with governmental agencies, notably a Department of Motor Vehicles. Oregon,  
63 the first state to adopt this reform (after years of advocacy by the Oregon-based  
64 Bus Federation), has registered 225,000 people this way since the start of the year  
65 2016.

66 The payoff: 43 percent of those new voters cast ballots on November 8, 2016.

67 **Enable same-day voter registration (SVR):** Same-day voter registration allows  
68 qualified residents to register to vote or update their existing registration on  
69 Election Day.

70 **Prepare for natural disasters:** Absent same-day voter registration bills, rules  
71 should provide for the automatic extension of voter registration deadlines in  
72 counties where a natural disaster is declared in the weeks leading up to an  
73 election. Last year, Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott and North Carolina's state  
74 elections board denied extensions in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. New rules

75 could limit such gamesmanship.

76 **Allow online voter registration:** Many states still provide no procedure by which  
77 residents can register to vote or update their voter registrations online.

78 Remedying this situation is very feasible since Republicans have been willing to  
79 get on board with adopting online registration systems, as they did in Florida in  
80 2015.

81 **Expand the circle of people who are eligible to vote:** Restore felons' voting  
82 rights: A recent report by the Sentencing Project laid bare the urgency of  
83 countering felon disenfranchisement rules. Two and a half percent of all American  
84 adults are disenfranchised, and the share of African Americans who are  
85 disenfranchised is triple that (7.4 percent), a disparity that is in keeping with the  
86 origins and history of the practice. In four Southern states with severe  
87 disenfranchisement laws — Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia — the  
88 share of disenfranchised black adults surpasses 20 percent, more than double  
89 that of white adults.

90 Absent the above step, a range of incremental reforms beckon. The most urgent  
91 is to restore voting rights to people who have completed their sentences. In  
92 Virginia, one of four states to permanently disenfranchise individuals with felony  
93 convictions, Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe has used his executive authority to  
94 achieve this objective. In August, he began issuing thousands of restoration orders  
95 on an individual basis after a narrow ruling by the state Supreme Court blocked  
96 him from issuing a blanket clemency; he has said he will continue to mail  
97 individual restoration orders to more than 200,000 people.

98 **Make it easier to vote by mail. Implement all-mail voting:** In three states  
99 (Colorado, Oregon, and Washington), election authorities mail a ballot to every  
100 registered voter. This far-reaching step could be pursued in states like California  
101 that already conduct a large share of their elections by mail. States that don't  
102 wish to go that far in privileging mail voting can take intermediary steps —  
103 enabling no-excuse absentee voting where it is not yet available, and creating  
104 long-term absentee voter lists.

105 **Enable no-excuse absentee voting:** Twenty states — many of them states where  
106 Democrats wield political influence, including Connecticut, Delaware,  
107 Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island — require that voters provide a  
108 reason they can't vote on Election Day in order to receive an absentee ballot. New  
109 York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is now advocating legislation to  
110 implement no-excuse absentee voting in the Empire State, a minimal step that  
111 these 20 states should prioritize.

112 **Create long-term mailing lists for absentee voters:** The idea behind absentee  
113 ballot standing requests is that when a voter requests an absentee ballot in a

114 given year, authorities then continue to automatically send them absentee ballots  
115 into the future. This can encourage turnout from voters who tend to only cast a  
116 ballot in the fall of a presidential election year, and it makes voting more  
117 accessible to people with disabilities, as a recent study documented. In some  
118 states, like Florida, requests expire after a few general elections, which can lead  
119 to some confusion. A handful of other states, such as California, allow voters to be  
120 put on an absentee ballot list permanently.

121 **Make it easier for people to vote early, in person:** Thirteen states provide no  
122 option to cast a ballot in person before Election Day. Democrats already enjoy  
123 some power in many of these states, including Connecticut, Delaware, New York,  
124 Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Schneiderman’s proposal to create a two-week  
125 early voting window in New York is an urgent starting point for consideration.  
126 Enable weekend voting and extended hours: Early voting ought to be helping  
127 people who struggle to find the time to vote on Election Day Tuesdays, especially  
128 if they fear the long lines that disproportionately affect predominantly minority  
129 precincts. But simply adding more voting hours during other weekday working  
130 hours cannot meet that goal. Extended voting hours on weekdays are needed, as  
131 well as weekend voting.

132 **Guarantee an adequate number of voting locations:** In Ohio, each county is  
133 restricted to only one early voting location, no matter its physical size or  
134 population. Giving local county boards more leeway to open additional voting  
135 sites can be helpful to ensuring that highly populated counties are adequately  
136 served, but obstacles such as inequities in the allocation of statewide resources or  
137 the lack of representativeness of some counties’ elected officials loom large.  
138 Voting rights advocates should champion statewide benchmarks as to a minimum  
139 number of polling places per resident and per physical distance, require a  
140 minimum number of voting machines at each voting location, and put in place  
141 rules to ensure an adequate allocation of state resources.

142

#### 143 **Resources:**

144 **[michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote)**

145 Voters can use the **[Michigan Voter Information Center](#)** to:

146 **[View your Sample Ballot for the upcoming election](#)**

147 **[Request and Track your Absentee Ballot](#)**

148 **[Verify your Voter Registration](#)**

149 **[Find your Polling Place](#)**

150 **[Contact your Local Election Official](#)**

151 **<http://www.lwvmi.org/>** - League of Women Voters - nonpartisan

