

Resolution on Dismantling Racism and Ending Criminalization of Children and Youth

Submitted by: Criminalization of Children and Youth Task Force

Number of Members: 6 Members present when voting: 6 Members voting for: 6 Members voting against: 0

Date adopted: August 28, 2020

Co-sponsored by: Advocacy and Justice. Number of members: 13 present when voting: 9

Members voting for: 7 Members voting against: 2 Date adopted: Sept. 5, 2010

Contact person: Patricia Daugherty

Fiscal Impact: None

Resolution:

1 **Be it resolved that the California Nevada Annual Conference endorses the following federal legislation to protect**
2 **children and youth**

3 1) H.R. 5325 "Ending Punitive, Unfair, School-based Harm that is Overt and Unresponsive to Trauma Act of 2019"
4 or the "Ending PUSHOUT Act of 2019"

5 2) H.R.2407 "Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act"

6 3) S.2936 / H.R.5210 "Refugee Protection Act which incorporates S.292 / H.R.541 "Keep Families Together Act"

7 **Be it further resolved** that the Annual Conference Secretary will inform all members of Congress within Annual
8 Conference boundaries of these endorsements, encouraging them to support and advocate for passage of these bills.

9 **Be it further resolved** that members of the Annual Conference are encouraged to contact their own members of
10 congress urging them to support and advocate for passage of these bills, and to inform their congregations of these
11 endorsements and recommend reading of the [report issued by the Criminalization of Children and Youth Task Force](#) ¹
12 the contents of which informs these recommendations

13 **Be it further resolved** that congregations are encouraged to study and engage locally and nationally with Poor People's
14 Campaign, particularly the Moral Budget ² which has been endorsed by both the General Board of Church and Society
15 and United Methodist Women.

Background:

The Criminalization of Children and Youth Task Force was created with the passage of Annual Conference 2019 Item #22
"Towards Ending Child Incarceration Through Support for the Rights of Children."

Charged with studying the global intersection of the military, prison, and security industries and
their relationship with racism, poverty and the criminalization of children and youth, Item #22 further charged the task
force with issuing a report, study resources, and to provide recommendations for the Annual Conference 2020 actions.

Illustrating the intertwining of racial justice, immigrant rights and Palestinian human rights struggle, the [task force
report](#) ³ identifies parallels and intersections between the so called "school to prison pipeline", migrant children and
youth at our southern border, and Palestinian children and youth caught up in Israeli military detention.

The report also exposes the linkages between racism, increased militarism both at home and abroad, and the profit
motives behind criminalizing children and youth. In 2019, the militarized budget grew to 64.5 percent of discretionary
spending while programs serving human needs remain underfunded.⁴ In a similar trend, U.S. law enforcement claim

¹ <https://endcriminalization.wordpress.com/>

² <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/poor-peoples-moral-budget/>

³ <https://endcriminalization.wordpress.com/>

⁴ <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2020/militarized-budget-2020/>

large portions of municipal discretionary funds compared to other crucial community service programs. This year, U.S. police budgets average between 20% to 45% of municipalities' discretionary funding.⁵

The coronavirus crisis has magnified these challenges. Yet, at this same moment, the movement for racial justice is elevating collective awareness to the inherent racism that rationalizes, condones and profits from the criminalization of people of color, the poor, disenfranchised and vulnerable. This is a critical issue of faith for the Church, and accompanying deepening awareness, must come action.

This resolution acts on specific recommendations by the task force to support pending federal legislation that support the rights of children and youth. It also recommends further study and the active engagement of our congregations in questioning military spending, war profiteering, and militarized policing in our communities. Ultimately, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that our tax dollars are not used for harm, rather used for the collective good.

H.R. 5325: In December 2019, Representative Ayanna Pressly of Massachusetts introduced “Ending Punitive, Unfair, School-based Harm that is Overt and Unresponsive to Trauma Act of 2019” or the “Ending PUSHOUT Act of 2019” (H.R. 5325).⁶ This bill will work to disrupt the school-to-confinement pipeline by investing in safe and nurturing school environments for all students, especially girls of color, a phenomenon that has been called “push-out.”

“Push Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School” is the United Methodist Women 2020 Mission Issue Study.⁷ The UMW is actively promoting its membership to urge their Congress members to co-sponsor and support H.R. 5325

H.R. 2407: In April 2019, Representative Betty McCollum of Minnesota introduced the "Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act" (H.R. 2407).⁸ This bill would prohibit U.S. taxpayer funds from contributing to the military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of children by any country, including Israel.

In November, 2019, 26 faith leaders signed a letter in support of HR 2407. Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary General Board of Church and Society was among the signers.⁹ Over the past 5 years the California Nevada Annual Conference has passed four resolutions specifically in support of the rights of Palestinian children living under Israeli occupation.¹⁰

S.2936 / H.R.5210: Introduced in November 2019, the “The Refugee Protection Act”^{11 12} incorporates “Keep Families Together Act” which was also introduced simultaneously in the House and Senate. The bill would provide for the admission and protection of refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable individuals, while ensuring that children are not separated from their families except when there is reason to believe that the child is being trafficked or abused.

Our faith commitments call us to pay close attention in safeguarding the rights of those most vulnerable. Endorsing these legislative efforts puts action behind our words to protect the humanity and dignity of children and youth.

In April 2018, the *Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival* released a *Moral Budget* along with a *Moral Agenda and Declaration of Fundamental Rights*.¹³ The demands contained within that document present a comprehensive response to the systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism, and war economy plaguing our country today. The Poor People’s Campaign and the Moral Budget has been endorsed by both the General Board of Church and Society and the United Methodist Women.

⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2020/06/12/how-much-are-us-cities-spending-on-policing-in-2020-infographic/#4ed3d0d5751a>

⁶ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5325>

⁷ <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/pushout-the-criminalization-of-black-girls-in-schools>

⁸ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2407>

⁹ https://nwtac.dci-palestine.org/faith_leaders_support_hr_2407

¹⁰ <https://iptaskforce.weebly.com/resolutions.html>

¹¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5210/text>

¹² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/2936>

¹³ <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/>