

**PETITION REQUESTING ACTION OF 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

YAC No. 102

MSC No. 09

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Carefully read the separate document containing important instructions for critical details. The submittal deadline is March 10. If possible, submit electronically.

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**1. TITLE :** Inclusive Local Church Lay Staff Employment Policy

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**2. ACTION BLOCK**

The Yellowstone Annual Conference (Mountain Sky Annual Conference) is committed to employment practices that are aligned with our Social Principles. We will encourage and support local church policies in which laity called to serve are employed and dismissed based solely on their gifts and graces without regard for sexual orientation or gender identity.

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**3. WHY IS THIS ACTION NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE?**

Paragraph 161G of The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church states: “We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence” (Book of Discipline, 2016);

Paragraph 161G of The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church also states: “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.” (Book of Discipline, 2016);

Paragraph 162J of The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church states: “Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation... Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.” (Book of Discipline, 2016);

That same paragraph includes “equal protection before the law” amongst such basic rights and liberties;

Most United Methodist churches – regardless of their stand on the *Book of Discipline* and LGBTQ persons – frequently state that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons are welcome in their local church;

Some United Methodist Churches practice a policy that inquires about sexual orientation during the interview process and forbids the employment of called and qualified laity to non-appointed staff position if they are lesbian or gay;

Laity employed by United Methodists Churches have been fired from their non-appointed staff positions based solely on their sexual orientation;

Such dismissal is in direct conflict with the aforementioned Social Principles of The United Methodist

Church and causes significant harm; and

We wish for each of our local churches a staff that possesses the gifts and graces for relative and effective ministry, and would *not* wish for either our churches or the neighbors we serve to be denied the most qualified person due to a practice that prevents employment based on sexual orientation or gender identity,

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**4. ELABORATE FURTHER ON THE COST OF YOUR PROPOSED ACTION:**

No fiscal impact.

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**5. IF POSSIBLE, SUGGEST SOME PERSON OR GROUP TO PERFORM THIS ACTION:**

The affirmative vote of the conference is sufficient action.

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**6. WHEN WILL THE PROPOSED ACTION BE COMPLETED: (Short-term? Long-term? Ongoing?)**

Action will be completed upon adoption. The annual conference and local churches may use this as a guideline in updating their respective employment policies.

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**7. IF ADOPTED, HOW CAN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION BE EVALUATED?**

Effectiveness can be measured by the adoption of employment policies by the annual conference and local churches consistent with this resolution.

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**8. NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP SUBMITTING THIS PETITION:**

Rev. Ira Robison and Rev. Israel Alvaran for Reconciling Ministries Network ([www.rmnetwork.org](http://www.rmnetwork.org))

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**9. IF GROUP, ALSO STATE NAME OF THE GROUP'S CONTACT PERSON (see Instructions):**

See above.

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**10. ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND E-MAIL ADDRESS OF SUBMITTER (OR CONTACT PERSON):**

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