

PETITION TO THE 2016 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TITLE: ELECTION OF EPISCOPAL LEADERS IN THE WEST

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference encourages our Jurisdictional
2 Conference delegates to elect an Episcopal leader as detailed in the list below: Christ-centered; strong
3 administrator/leader; strong communicator; deep spiritual maturity; and demonstrated effectiveness in leading the
4 diverse people of the Western Jurisdiction. Sexual orientation and gender identity should not be a barrier to
5 election.
6

PETITION DETAILS

This Petition is

- A Legislative Petition (Binding on the Annual Conference)
 A Resolution (Not Binding)

Effective Date: July 1, 2016

Termination Date: June 30, 2017

Does this Petition modify the Annual Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedures (SROP)?

- Yes
 No

If "Yes," please complete the information below.

- This petition will modify Section x.x.x
 This petition will create a new Section x.x.x

Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review:

NOTE: All paragraph numberings within the SROP and the final designation of the Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review are subject to review by the Rules Committee.

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION (individual, church, or organization):

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 Convener, Western Jurisdiction Justice Movement
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PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

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FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Will there be any identifiable financial impact to the Conference?

Yes
 No

If "Yes," please fill in the information below.

To Be Completed by the Originator of the Petition

Cost: \$
Period
 One Time
 One Year
 Multiple Years

To Be Completed by Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)

Review by CFA 04/22/2016

Included in proposed 2017 budget

Yes
 No

Amount if included \$

May be considered for budgets in future years

Yes
 No

Projected Amount \$

Recommendation by CFA concerning funding: N/A

Reason for recommendation

RATIONALE (Debatable):

1 WHEREAS

- 2 • For years, the Western Jurisdiction has had a commitment to prophetic and pastoral ministries among all
3 people, regardless of sexual orientation. This was explicit in the resolution of protest at the 2000 Western
4 Jurisdiction Conference, "We Will Not Be Silent."

5 The votes may have been cast but our voices will not be silent. Our jurisdictional vision calls us to be
6 "a home for all God's people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation." Affirming
7 the statement of United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church, "We acknowledge that there
8 may be differences of opinion among us, but this does not require that we wait on justice." We cannot
9 accept discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons and therefore, we will work
10 toward their full participation at all levels in the life of the church and society. Valuing the voices of
11 those who disagree, we will continue to be in dialogue as we journey together in creative tension. We

- 12 will continue to be in ministry with all God's children and celebrate the gifts diversity brings. We will
13 continue to feast at table with all God's children.
- 14 • The Rocky Mountain Conference spoke the following year in support of this vision, and has continued to
15 speak on the importance of inclusion without regard to sexual orientation since then. As recently as 2015
16 the Annual Conference has expressed its desire to remove the discriminatory language from the UM Book
17 of Discipline (Par. 161F).
 - 18 • Over the years, there have been petitions adopted by the Annual Conference as well as petitions to the
19 General Conference expressing the desire of this Conference to
20 work joyously and boldly together to build a fully inclusive church. We commit to be in ministry with
21 all people, regardless of their economic status, race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, or
22 immigration status. (2012)

ATTACHMENTS (For Information / Not Debatable):

The following additional materials have been included with this petition:

**APPENDIX A
Background and Perspective**

Recognizing that bishops must be "Christ-centered; strong administrators/leaders; strong communicators; with deep spiritual maturity; and with demonstrated effectiveness in leading the diverse people of the Western Jurisdiction," the Western Methodist Justice Movement (WMJM) is urging each of the Conferences of the Western Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church to pass a resolution stating that "Sexual orientation should not be a barrier to election [as a bishop]."

The WMJM is concerned that the bishop who will be elected in July by the Western Jurisdictional Conference be effective in leading the diversity of persons that live in the West, as well as having the usual characteristics that are always sought in a bishop. Believing, however, that God has gifted persons of diverse sexual orientations with the gifts and graces they need to serve as effective bishops, the WMJM is asking the Jurisdictional Conference to give full consideration to any qualified elder who allows his or her name to be put forward for this crucial church office – irrespective of that person's sexual orientation.

The proposed resolution is in keeping with recent declarations by the Jurisdictional and several Western Annual Conferences (including RMCUMC) of an openness to welcoming and providing full ministry to and with all persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. There has also been extensive support in the West for incorporating qualified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons into all levels of the church's life and leadership including its ordained ministry. This resolution would now extend this to the possible election of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender bishop.

(The Western Methodist Justice Movement (WMJM) is a network of United Methodists seeking to build a multi-cultural and inclusive community of jurisdictional leaders and advocates who will work in diverse settings for local and global justice, organized into Action Networks focused on diverse justice areas. More information can be found on the WMJM.org web site.)