

**PETITION TO THE 2016 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**TITLE: A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS' PROPOSAL: A WAY FORWARD**

**ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Conference endorses *A Way Forward*, commits to being in continued prayer for the Council of Bishops and the Commission throughout the journey ahead, and encourages the Council of Bishops to do the following:

1. Name the members of the *A Way Forward Commission* on or before a date that allows for the first official meeting of the Commission to be convened before the end of this calendar year, 2016.
2. Among the members of the Commission, include out LGBTQI persons so that such voices will be represented in what will otherwise be a conversation about LGBTQI persons by heterosexual, persons who identify as the gender in which they were born. Such a conversation will lack integrity if LGBTQI voices are not included;
3. Authorize and encourage the Commission to seek out and invite established experts to provide information as needed.
4. Provide a forum for the Commission to receive input from individual churches and members, perhaps through and with the cooperation of the Annual Conferences.
5. Report to the Annual Conferences at least once each quarter on the progress of the work of the Commission;
6. Provide a final report at least two months in advance of any called General Conference that shall take up any necessary legislation to implement the recommendations of the Commission;
7. Provide continued leadership and a commitment to unity during this interim and vulnerable period, agreeing to a moratorium on the processing of any current or future complaints related to Discipline paragraphs having to do with human sexuality until the General Conference is reconvened.

**PETITION DETAILS:**

This petition is

X – A Resolution, a non-binding action on the Annual Conference

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 30, 2016

TERMINATION DATE: December 31, 2016

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

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**PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:**

Name: Mark Simmonds  
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**RATIONALE (Not Debatable):**

WHEREAS, the United Methodist General Conference (May 2016) adopted the recommended plan authored by the Council of Bishops entitled, *A Way Forward*, and deferred consideration of all legislation related to human sexuality before the 2016 General Conference;

WHEREAS, *A Way Forward* provides that the Council of Bishops shall appoint a special Commission “to develop a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality” and that the Council of Bishops will “maintain an on-going dialogue with this Commission” and that if they complete their work in time, report to a called General Conference before the regular 2020 General Conference;

WHEREAS, the Rocky Mountain Conference supports *A Way Forward*, and endorses the leadership of the Council of Bishops and the 2016 General Conference in its decision to address discrimination against lesbian and gay persons currently in the Book of Discipline;

WHEREAS the Rocky Mountain Conference has affirmed the We Will Not Be Silent statement adopted by the United Methodist Western Jurisdictional Conference in 2000 and has affirmed amplifications of that statement in subsequent actions,

WHEREAS, Social Principle ¶161F, Book of Discipline provisions ¶341.6 and ¶304.3, and other sections conflict with the Constitution of the United Methodist church which provides that “all persons are of sacred worth,” and “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.”

WHEREAS, our United Methodist connection calls us to treat well-intentioned, well-reasoned differences of opinion with mutual respect rather than insisting upon a verdict or language that rejects one side or the other;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the critical importance of carrying out this historic process with the utmost of care, effectiveness, and timing. And, while we agree that establishing the details and naming the members of the Commission are paramount to overall success, we must also acknowledge the harm that grows with each passing day and the importance of preserving momentum and collective trust that this new way forward will not ultimately result in failure as similar Commissions have in our past. We must not repeat past mistakes.