Recognition and Affirmation of the Inherent Dignity & Worth of Transgender (Binary and Non-Binary) and Gender Non-Conforming People as Beloved Children of God

Submitters:
The Rev. April Alford-Harkey (a.alfordharkey@stthomasnewhaven.org, 203-777-7623)
The Rev. Keri Aubert (k.aubert@stthomasnewhaven.org, 203-777-7623), The Rev. Dr. Paul Carling (paul.carling@yale.edu, 203-856-6399), The Rev. Barbara Cheney (bjcheney17@gmail.com, 203-562-2143), The Rev. Jakki Flanagan (jr.flanagan@comcast.net, 203-777-7623), The Rev. Diana Rogers (revdianamrogers@gmail.com, 860-538-4480), The Rev. Dr. Carolyn Sharp (carolyn.sharp@yale.edu, 203-432-2011)

Resolved, that all transgender people (binary and non-binary) and anyone whose gender identity and expression differ from the sex they were assigned at birth, are beloved children of God and share the same inherent dignity and worth as all members of the human family and should be afforded the same rights as other human beings; and be it further

Resolved, that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut opposes any attempt to legislate or make any public policy that defines sex and/or gender on the basis of physical appearance of external genitalia present at birth or presence of certain chromosomes within a person’s DNA; and be it further

Resolved, that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut support educational, pastoral, liturgical, and legislative efforts that seek to end systemic violence and discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people, calling special attention to violence against transgender women of color; and be it further
Resolved, that the Secretary of Convention convey this resolution to the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church and to appropriate state and federal legislative bodies.

Explanation
On October 21, 2018, the New York Times reported a memo drafted last spring by the US Department of Health and Human Services. “Sex means a person’s status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth.” The department proposed, “The sex listed on a person’s birth certificate, as originally issued, shall constitute definitive proof of a person’s sex unless rebutted by reliable genetic evidence.” (https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/us/politics/transgender-trump-administration-sex31definition.html) Thus a swift and public response to any attempts to erase transgender and gender non-conforming people or enshrine discrimination against them in legislation or public policy is essential.

How does this resolution further God’s mission of restoration and reconciliation with all of creation?
Transgender and gender-nonconforming people experience harassment, assault, and poverty at rates significantly higher than the national average. The Episcopal Church has a history of taking action to affirm that transgender people are beloved children of God, and of taking material action to ensure their safety and full inclusion in society and the church. In addition, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings have spoken against discrimination against transgender people, and in June 2016, the Executive Committee of The Episcopal Church passed a resolution “decrying the wave of anti-trans bills that have been sweeping the country.”

As Christians, we are called to love and to put our love into action. We are called by our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being. Further, Jesus gave us the great commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37) Romans tells us that “love does no harm to its neighbor.” (Romans 13:10)

**Statement of Requirements to Implement:**
Minimal resources necessary to implement this resolution.