

A RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE AND ACT TO CHANGE THE CASH BAIL BOND SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES INHERENT IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM

Spiritual Grounding: *Matthew 25: 31-33, 41-46 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. . . . Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For . . . I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you? He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

Summary of the Resolution: This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to advocate and act to change the Cash Bail Bond System in the individual states and United States of America to be more just to the economically disadvantaged.

Background: The United Church of Christ has a long record of advocating reform of the cash bail bond system. The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and African Americans, Latinos, Latinas, and indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated in the United States. Since 2000, the vast majority of the jail population increase was caused by the detention of individuals prior to trial (pretrial) of which 60 to 70% were classified nonviolent minimum-security. The cash bond system is an over \$2 billion dollar industry. At least 70% of inmates in local jails are not convicted of any crime.

Action Taken as General Synod 33: This resolution passed with overwhelming support: 98%. The resolution calls on the UCC to encourage the reform of the bail bond systems within individual states and the United States in order to eliminate the racial and social injustices inherent in the present cash bail bond systems. The Resolution calls upon all settings of the church to raise their consciousness of the theological, social, racial, ethnic, and economic inequities which make possible the existence of the unfair and unjust bail bond systems, and to accomplish these goals, the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to seek partnerships with other organizations also working toward the goals.

Resources:

- Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI): “Why We Need Pretrial Reform.” <https://www.pretrial.org/get-involved/learnmore/why-we-need-pretrial-reform/>
- Evaluating the Impacts of Eliminating Prosecutorial Requests for Cash Bail. Aurelie Ouss and Megan T. Stevenson. George Mason Legal Studies Research Paper No. LS 19-08, 25 Feb 2019. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3335138. Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes, Megan T Stevenson. The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization, 34, 2018, Pages 511–542. <https://academic.oup.com/jleo/article/34/4/511/5100740>. Kentucky's Pretrial System, NC Policy Watch, J. Killian, www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/04/24/national-pretrial-expert-reform-is-coming-to-the-broken-cash-bailsystem/. Jessica Smith of the UNC School of Government. <https://cjlil.sog.unc.edu/files/2019/06/Bail-ReformOptions-for-Local-Jurisdictions.pdf>
- what-happens-when-prosecutors-stop-asking-for-cash-bail, Jessica Smith. 2019. <https://nccriminallaw.sog.unc.edu/what-happens-when-prosecutors-stop-asking-for-cash-bail/>

- Bail Reform: A Guide for State and Local Policymakers. Criminal Justice Program. Harvard Law School. 2019. <http://cjpp.law.harvard.edu/publications/bail-reform-a-guide-for-state-and-local-policymakers>
- Additional Resources found within the resolution.

Prayerfully submitted,
Shirley Keith Knox

GS33 Delegate