

RESOLUTIONS

Approved at the 2023 Pacifica Synod Assembly

23-01

Resolution in Support of Afghan Adjustment Act

Whereas, In the aftermath of the U.S. troop withdrawal and the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban in August 2021, over 80,000 vulnerable Afghans were evacuated who had assisted the U.S. efforts there, and later that year 76,000 of those evacuees were transferred into the U.S.. In addition, the U.S. continues evacuation and protection efforts for vulnerable Afghans left behind in Afghanistan; and

Whereas, Most of those evacuees were processed under “humanitarian parole” legal processes because other immigration processes were too slow, leaving them in a status which is limited and is a temporary condition with no clear path to permanent status; and

Whereas, Both the U.S. House and Senate have introduced bipartisan bills to provide a path to permanent status for Afghan evacuees (HR8685 and S4787) which have yet to be enacted; and

Whereas, There are current efforts to re-introduce these bills in the new session of Congress; and

Whereas, These bills in both the House and Senate seek to establish a special task force to give care to issues of eligibility, vetting, security and relocation, and

Whereas, Amongst champions of the bill are the US chamber of commerce, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Veterans for Foreign Wars, American Legion, With Honor Action, Association of Wartime Allies, top military commanders, [including Joint Chiefs of Staff, Generals, and Admirals](#) of the Afghanistan war; and

Whereas, The bill has been endorsed by the editorial boards of [The Wall Street Journal](#), [The New York Times](#), [Bloomberg](#), [The Washington Post](#), Maine’s [The Bangor Daily News](#), and Greensboro’s [News & Record](#). Hundreds of articles, [interviews](#), and op-eds – many [penned](#) by [veterans themselves](#), including [Afghanistan veteran Jack McCain](#), the son of former Senator John McCain – have called for the passage of the AAA as part of fulfilling America’s promise to its allies. Last year as Ranking Member of the Senate Veteran Affairs Committee Senator Moran put it, “For two decades countless Afghans stood by our servicemembers and risked their lives and their families’ lives to support our troops in Afghanistan. Veterans of the Afghan War are now calling for Congress to provide safety and certainty for their allies and friends who assisted them; and

Whereas, Nearly every U.S. ambassador assigned to Afghanistan since 2002 signed a [letter](#) urging Congress to include the Afghan Adjustment Act in the omnibus spending bill besides the [Polling](#) that showed three in every four Americans want to see Congress act to provide permanent protection to Afghan evacuees by passing the Afghan Adjustment Act ([S.4787/H.R. 8685](#)), known as the “triple A”; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church and the ELCA have strong traditions of welcoming immigrants and assisting in their resettlement, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services has played a major role in receiving and relocating these particular Afghan evacuees; and

Whereas, One of the largest concentrations of these Afghan evacuees in our country is in the territory of the Pacifica Synod, especially in the East County of San Diego; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA go on record as supporting these Afghan evacuees in their effort to achieve paths to permanent status in the U.S.; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod instructs our Bishop to communicate to our appropriate representatives in the U.S. House and Senate our endorsement of the Afghan Adjustment Act and our encouragement to make sure that the bills HR8685 and S4787, which failed to come to a vote in 2022, are re-introduced in this 2023 legislative year and that our representatives actively support these efforts; and

RESOLVED, That the congregations of the Pacifica Synod are encouraged to inform their members of this issue and pending legislation, and to encourage their members to directly communicate this support and urgency to their federal representatives.

Resolution Regarding Ending Private Immigration Detention Centers

Whereas, The United States government maintains the world's largest immigration detention system, made up of a network of approximately 200 jails across the country – 79 percent of people in ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) custody are held in privately owned or operated facilities; and

Whereas, ICE currently holds 20,892 persons in detention facilities and detained a total of 306,979 individuals in fiscal year 2022, at an average cost of \$2 million dollars a month for private prison companies to maintain; and

Whereas, 56 percent of ICE detainees have no criminal record and many more have only minor offenses, including traffic violations, and includes persons seeking asylum from threats to their lives in their home countries and persons seeking to navigate the complex U.S. immigration system who should be able to do so with their loved ones and in community, not behind bars in immigration detention; and

Whereas, Privately managed detention centers have little accountability to the persons they detain or to the public or to publicly created standards and are managed to produce a profit over the care of those in detention; and

Whereas, Substantial documentation of instances of abuse, neglect, denial of access to lawyers or medical care, and separation of and from families within private detention facilities, particularly against Black and Indigenous migrants, have been noted by congress, media, and independent reports; and

Whereas, President Joe Biden issued an executive order in January 2021 to phase out federal private prisons, but it failed to include privately operated ICE detention centers, and private prisons are able to circumvent the order by entering intergovernmental service agreements with counties receiving federal funding for immigration; and

Whereas, ICE maintains a privately operated detention center in Otay Mesa CA in the territory of the Pacifica Synod; and

Whereas, Our historic strong Lutheran tradition of welcoming the foreigner and stranger calls us to honor and respect immigrants and seek humane treatment for those seeking refuge and safety, seeing in them the refugee Holy Family and Jesus himself, and seeking to treat immigrants as we would want to be treated; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA calls for the canceling of all contracts for private companies managing detention centers; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod call on the federal government and ICE to call on states which manage state operated detention centers to follow this same course; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod calls on our representatives in Congress and the leadership of U.S. immigration agencies to pursue community-based case management services as true alternatives to detention collaboration with service providers equipped to provide migrants with a warm welcome and reception, which has proven to be more humane, efficient, and cost-effective; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod Bishop communicate these actions to appropriate officials in the government and immigration agencies; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod encourage each congregation of the Synod to engage their members in study of this issue and encourage individual members to communicate this action of the Synod with their federal and state representatives.

Memorial Regarding Ceasing the Use of Private For-Profit Companies for Immigration Detention

Whereas, The Pacifica Synod in its May 2023 Assembly adopted the resolution entitled “Resolution Regarding Ending Private Immigration Detention Centers”; and

Whereas, The Pacifica Synod has a particular interest in seeing this change of policy for the immigration detention centers in our territory, yet there are some 200 immigration centers across the U.S., many of which are run by private for-profit companies, to which it is appropriate and needed for our national church to address this issue; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod Assembly of 2023 memorialize the 2024 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), asking the ELCA to publicly call for an immediate end to the U.S. government practice of contracting management of U.S. immigration detention centers out to private for-profit companies; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod Assembly further memorialize the 2024 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to ask the appropriate officers of the ELCA to communicate this call to cease the use of private for-profit companies for immigration detention to all appropriate legislative authorities and federal and state agencies.

Baseline Salary Increase Recommendation for Rostered Ministers 2024

RESOLVED, That, based on the recommendation of the Pacifica Synod Council, the Baseline Salary for Rostered Ministers (Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service) of the Pacifica Synod is increased by 7.3%* for the year 2024 to bring the baseline salary (including salary and housing allowance) to \$78,102 for Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

*Based on the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase.

The Synod Council encourages congregations to use the Compensation Worksheets available online at www.pacificasynod.org.

Resolution Regarding the Increase of Parental Leave Guidelines for Rostered Leaders

Whereas, According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, postpartum recovery normally ranges from a minimum of six to eight weeks, up to 12 weeks or longer depending on birth complications and the mother's overall health; and,

Whereas, Paid parental leave is associated with decreased rates of infant deaths, low birthweight, and premature births, as well as a 51% reduction in likelihood of mothers re-hospitalization, and a 47% reduction in infant re-hospitalization; and,

Whereas, Several studies have found that that the length of paid leave matters for maternal and infant health, including findings that less than eight weeks of paid leave is linked to a reduction in overall maternal health status and increased risk of postpartum depression, findings that every additional week of paid leave a mother takes reduces the likelihood of reporting poor mental well-being, and findings that longer paid leave significantly increases breastfeeding success and duration, which has innumerable benefits for moms and babies, and reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer for the mother; and,

Whereas, The Pacifica Synod Guidelines which are currently 4 weeks minimum, 6 weeks recommended, are lower than the 12 weeks of paid parental leave provided for all federal employees and military personnel, as well as the 12 weeks recommended by several other ELCA Synods around the country, including but not limited to the Sierra Pacific Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, North Carolina Synod, and Northern Illinois Synod; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA increase fully paid parental leave guidelines for rostered leaders to 12 weeks recommended, 8 weeks minimum, effective beginning in 2024; and,

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod support rostered leaders in renegotiating the parental leave allowance in their current letter of call; and,

RESOLVED, That rostered leaders and members of congregations of the Pacifica Synod be encouraged to call upon our representatives at city, state, and federal levels, to increase protections for paid family leave for state and city employees, and to pursue policies that would increase access to paid family leave in the private sector

Resolution in Support of Trans Persons

Whereas, in John 13:34 Jesus Christ says “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”; and

Whereas, faithful members of the ELCA include trans and non-binary adults and youth, who are Beloved Children of God; and

Whereas, the Pacifica Synod is a Reconciling in Christ Synod, affirming and advocating for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of LGBTQIA+ persons; and

Whereas, our ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton issued a statement on 3/30/23 condemning Anti-Transgender Legislation*; and

Whereas, this is a pressing issue, as anti-trans legislation is on the rise, with over 540 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills introduced in state legislatures so far in 2023 (more than twice the number introduced in the 2022 calendar year)**; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA go on record as supporting Trans and Non-Binary persons, and condemning Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod instructs our Bishop to communicate to our appropriate representatives, in the House and Senate on both the state and federal levels, our support of Trans persons and our condemnation of Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation; and

RESOLVED, That the Pacifica Synod recommends our bishop share this concern with bishops of other ELCA synods, that they may consider taking similar actions in their respective legislative districts and states; and

RESOLVED, That the congregations of the Pacifica Synod are encouraged to inform their members of ongoing Anti-Trans and Anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation efforts, and to encourage their members to directly communicate, with urgency, their support of Trans persons to their state and federal representatives.

* https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8191?_ga=2.81515986.473938401.1683304793-1344994209.1683304793

**Human Rights Campaign, [hrc.org https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/weekly-roundup-of-anQ-lgbtq-legislaQonadvancing-in-states-across-the-country-3](https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/weekly-roundup-of-anQ-lgbtq-legislaQonadvancing-in-states-across-the-country-3)