

1 **Document: 700.04**
2 **Document Name: Affirmation of the Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and**
3 **Empowerment for LGBTQIA+ People in the UMC**
4 **Authors: NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa**
5 **Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators, NIC**
6 **General/Jurisdictional Delegation, Alka Lyall, chair**

7
8 Action:

9 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference:

- 10 1. Supports and amplifies the queer delegates' call to justice and empowerment for the
11 LGBTQIA+ community throughout the Northern Illinois Annual Conference, within
12 and beyond our local churches, districts, departments, centers, and committees;
- 13 2. Affirms the spirit of the abeyance or moratorium as proposed to the General Conference,
14 as referenced above, until changes can be made in The United Methodist Book of
15 Discipline;
- 16 3. Implores our Annual Conference to either not pursue, hold in abeyance, or resolve in a
17 timely fashion through a process of just resolution, any complaints against clergy
18 regarding their sexual orientation or the officiating of weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons;
- 19 4. Aspires to become a United Methodist Church in which LGBTQIA+ people will be
20 protected, affirmed, and empowered throughout our life, mission, and ministry
21 together.

22
23 Rationale:

24 In a groundswell response to the passage of harmful legislation at the 2019 Special Session of
25 General Conference, Annual Conferences elected queer clergy and lay persons to be General
26 and Jurisdictional Delegates in record numbers, for the first time empowering queer delegates
27 to speak and act from our diverse experiences. The 2019 Special Session of the United Methodist
28 General Conference passed the Traditional Plan, which increased penalties for United
29 Methodist clergy who are LGBTQIA+ and for clergy who support the LGBTQIA+ community
30 through officiating their weddings.

31
32 In an attempt to address the divide within The United Methodist Church, an abeyance or
33 moratorium was proposed to the General Conference, referenced below,² by the authors of the
34 Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation. We understand our call and
35 responsibility as United Methodists to do good, do no harm, and stay in love with God. We call
36 straight and cisgender allies to do good by using their voice and vote to support, empower, and
37 amplify the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community in The United Methodist Church. Forty-six
38 queer General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates from across all five jurisdictions wrote
39 the original resolution we are affirming, which was historically adopted at all five jurisdictional
40 conferences in November 2022.

1 **Document: 700.05**

2 **Name: Concerning the Rise of Child Labor in the USA**

3 **Authors:** Rachel Birkhahn-Rommelfanger; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC
4 MFSA, Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa
5 Gatz, co-facilitators; Rockford Urban Ministries, Violet Johnicker, Associate Director; John Bell;
6 Charles Straight; Lucas Pepper

7
8 **Action**

9 The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church:

- 10 • condemns the flagrant disregard and violation, by corporations and businesses across
11 the United States of America, of child labor laws, including limits on shift lengths,
12 restrictions on industries, and other policies that are in place to protect children’s well-
13 being and safety;
- 14 • condemns recent actions by state legislators and governors across the United States of
15 America who are seeking to roll back or weaken child labor laws because employers are
16 not paying enough or providing attractive enough working conditions to attract and
17 retain adult workers;
- 18 • encourages our churches to lift up workers in prayer and to reaffirm our belief in
19 workers’ rights on the Sunday nearest Labor Day or May Day;
- 20 • reaffirms our support for 2016 UMC Book of Resolution item 4135 - Rights of Workers,
21 and encourages local churches to study and discuss this document;
- 22 • encourages the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to continue to invest in
23 companies that set high standards for treatment of workers, especially children,
24 throughout the world and to file or join shareholder resolutions that encourage the
25 abolition of child labor;
- 26 • calls upon our clergy, laity, congregations, and community members to speak to elected
27 officials at all levels of government about:
- 28 ○ our opposition to child labor and to legislation that might weaken current
 - 29 prohibitions of child labor,
 - 30 ○ support for new policies, practices or laws that curb the use of child labor and
 - 31 crack down on violators, and
 - 32 ○ the long history of our denomination in standing for the rights of children and
 - 33 workers.
- 34

35 **Rationale**

36 Children are working in every industry in every state, and businesses are flouting child labor
37 laws that have been in place for nearly a century, laws that the United Methodist Church and its
38 predecessors aided in advancing.

39
40 In the Department of Labor's last fiscal year, 2021 through 2022, 835 companies were found to
41 have employed more than 3,800 children in violation of federal labor laws. Child labor
42 violations include not only situations involving hazardous work, but also cases of minors
43 working schedules far longer and later than what’s legally permissible.

44
45 In February, the Department of Labor announced that it had discovered 102 teenagers between
46 the ages of 13 and 17 working in hazardous conditions for a company that cleans meatpacking

1 equipment at factories around the country. In other places we are seeing child roofers,
2 construction workers, packagers in food factories and other jobs across dangerous industries.

3
4 Reports by New York Times and Reuters found that most of these workers are migrant
5 children, who have been coming into the United States without their parents in record numbers.
6 These children are ending up in some of the most punishing and hazardous jobs in the country.
7 The United Methodist Church is clear in its convictions that work is a means of stewardship
8 and God-given creativity, and that all human beings deserve dignity and justice in the
9 workplace.

10
11 In 1908, The Methodist Episcopal Church, a predecessor of The United Methodist Church,
12 adopted a Social Creed that was all about support for the workers in our world. The creed
13 called, "For equal rights and complete justice for all (people) in all stations of life....for the
14 protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injuries and
15 mortality...for the abolition of child labor."¹

16
17 Today, children and teens are exposed to dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injuries,
18 and mortality as they are illegally working jobs like construction, meat packing, factory work,
19 and other roles where children and teens are prohibited by law.

20
21 Our Social Principles contain the following about children: "Once considered the property of
22 their parents, children are now acknowledged to be full human beings in their own right, but
23 beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations ...Moreover, children
24 have the rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being as do adults... In
25 particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual
26 exploitation and abuse."

27
28 Jesus' words in Matthew 19:14 tell us that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to the children, and
29 thus we have an obligation and call from our Lord to care for children.

30
31 In the 2016 Book of Resolutions, item 4135 affirms the rights of workers, and specifically that
32 "The United Methodist Church: supports the conventions of the International Labor
33 Organizations that advance safety in the workplace; freedom from bonded or forced labor;...
34 **effective abolition of child labor**; fair compensation; just supervision; and the right of
35 collective action for employees in all nations. The United Methodist Church shall continue to
36 seek ratification and enforcement of these conventions."

37
38 We encourage our churches to study the emerging and on-going crisis of child labor in the
39 United States using or adapting lesson plans and resources from the New York Times exposé on
40 the topic found at [https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/12/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-plan-](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/12/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-plan-a-new-child-labor-crisis-in-america.html)
41 [a-new-child-labor-crisis-in-america.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/12/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-plan-a-new-child-labor-crisis-in-america.html) or other reliable sources.

¹ <https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/the-1908-social-creed-of-the-methodist-episcopal-church#:~:text=The%20Methodist%20Episcopal%20Church%2C%20a,fair%20wage%20and%20safety%20standards.&text=For%20equal%20rights%20and%20complete,in%20all%20stations%20of%20life>

1 **Document: 700.06**
2 **Name: Concerning the Current State of Attacks on Transgender People in The United States**
3 **Authors:** Rachel Birkhahn-Rommelfanger; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC
4 MFSA, Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa
5 Gatz, co-facilitators; Rockford Urban Ministries, Violet Johnicker, Associate Director; John Bell;
6 Charles Straight; Lucas Pepper
7

8 **Action**

9 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

- 10 • opposes the proliferation of bills across the United States targeting transgender people
11 that restrict access to health care, bathrooms, the joining of sport teams and other rights
12 and freedoms. We condemn rhetoric that portrays trans & non-binary people as
13 dangerous or unworthy of love and respect;
- 14 • calls upon our congregations and clergy to speak out for the rights of trans & non-binary
15 people, and to boldly declare that trans & non-binary people are deserving of love,
16 dignity, respect, compassion, and to remember that The United Methodist Social
17 Principles affirms “that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image
18 of God”;
- 19 • urges our Bishop, Cabinet, and conference leadership to publicly speak out, sign letters
20 or petitions, author op-eds, and advocate for the rights of trans & non-binary people;
- 21 • urges the Council of Bishops to make a public statement condemning the anti-trans bills
22 being presented across the country;
- 23 • encourages our churches to participate in activities that honor the International
24 Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31), and International Transgender Day of
25 Remembrance (November 20);
- 26 • invites our congregations to consider hosting drop-in centers and other supportive
27 programs for LGBTQ+ youth in our church buildings; and
- 28 • implores our clergy, laity, and community members to call, write, or set up meetings
29 with their elected officials at all levels of government to share our support for the
30 sacredness of trans and non-binary people and condemn laws restricting the rights of
31 trans & non-binary people.

32 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference’s secretary shall send this resolution condemning
33 the large number of anti-trans bills to other Annual Conferences and to the Commission on
34 the General Conference for the next General Conference.

35

36 **Rationale**

37 As of March 2023, over 400 anti-trans bills have already been introduced in states across the
38 United States. By comparison, between 2018 and 2022, state legislators introduced at least 361
39 anti-LGBTQ bills total, making 2023 a record year for anti-trans hate.

40 Many of these bills, and the rhetoric surrounding them, portray trans & non-binary people as
41 dangerous and conflate the demands of trans & non-binary people to be treated with dignity

1 and respect with the actions of cis-phobic hate groups. Likewise, cries for justice and equity are
2 portrayed as vitriol and violence against cis-gender people.

3 As written, these bills will block access to healthcare, limit access to bathrooms and restrict the
4 ability to join sports teams, and restrict drag shows. They represent an attempt to remove
5 transgender people from protection under the law and from public life; and, these restrictions
6 are a threat to the freedom that every person deserves.

7 Bloomberg News reports that, “anti-LGBTQ hate crimes in the USA are on the rise...nearly 200
8 anti-LGBTQ incidents (reported) in 2022, were three times the amount reported in 2021.
9 ...Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles’s School of Law, noted that
10 around one in 10 incidents targeting LGBTQ people are trans hate crimes, and (trans people are)
11 nine times more likely than their heterosexual, cisgender peers to be the victim of a violent hate
12 crime.”¹

13 This attempted eradication and restriction or removal of freedoms will not stop at trans & non-
14 binary people. At this same moment, we see reproductive rights under attack, the banning of
15 books that share stories of LGBTQ, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian perspectives; a re-
16 writing of our USA history to omit historical truths that some find uncomfortable; and an
17 attempt to erase Black and Indigenous histories altogether. We must speak out against the
18 injustices we see being committed.

19 The Northern Illinois Conference has been a reconciling annual conference since 1986. We
20 remember that our call is to create a safe space for all people, especially those targeted for harm
21 or marginalized by society.

22 Our scriptures call us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to remember that all people are
23 created in the image of God. The Bible speaks extensively about justice and the importance of
24 treating all people equally (Micah 6:8). Jesus illustrated for us compassion for those who were
25 marginalized and oppressed (Matthew 9:36), and welcomed all kinds of people into his
26 ministry, including those who were considered outcasts by society (Luke 15:1-2).

27 Finally, if we believe in the unity of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3), then we must speak out
28 when any part of the body is harmed. When trans people are harmed, demonized, and stripped
29 of their human and civil rights, the body of Christ itself is attacked, and thus we are all harmed.

¹ Ceron, Ella. “2023 Is Already a Record Year for Anti-LGBTQ Bills in the US.” *Bloomberg.Com*, 8
Mar. 2023. *www.bloomberg.com*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-08/2023-is-already-a-record-year-for-anti-lgbtq-bills-in-the-us>.