

THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

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To: Sessions of the Churches of the Presbytery of Detroit

Re: Presbytery resolution on the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative.

The Presbytery of Detroit passed the following resolution in opposition to the proposed Michigan Civil Rights Initiative at its April stated Meeting, which I pass on to you.

Resolved:

That the Presbytery of Detroit approve the following resolution, send an approved copy to each church in the presbytery, and actively request that the other Presbyteries in Michigan do the same:

(1) To educate and encourage members and friends of Presbyterian churches to vote against the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative ballot proposal (specifically replicated below)

The approved ballot language for Proposal 2:

A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO BAN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS THAT GIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS BASED ON THEIR RACE, GENDER, COLOR, ETHNICITY OR NATIONAL ORIGIN FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR CONTRACTING PURPOSES.

The proposed constitutional amendment would:

** Ban public institutions from using affirmative action programs that give preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin for public employment, education or contracting purposes. Public institutions affected by the proposal include state government, local governments, public colleges and universities, community colleges and school districts.*

** Prohibit public institutions from discriminating against groups or individuals due to their gender, ethnicity, race, color or national origin. (A separate provision of the state constitution already prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.)*

Should this proposal be adopted?

(2) To add the Presbytery of Detroit to the list of supporting organizations to One United Michigan, the umbrella organization that opposes the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative.

The Stated Clerk of Presbytery is directed to send this resolution to all churches in the Presbytery and to the other Presbyteries in Michigan requesting their support as soon as possible following Presbytery approval.

RATIONALE

- The Presbyterian Church (USA) is called to respond to the rich Biblical tradition of caring for the poor and oppressed (Deut. 24.14, 17; Ps. 76.7-9; Is. 61.1-2; Ezek 34.17-31; Mt. 11.5; Mk. 14.7; Lk. 4.18; Jn. 12.6; Rm. 15.26, 27; Jas. 2.5-6, etc.).
- The Confession of 1967 clearly calls the church to action. *In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act* (9.43) and *the church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless...the church calls every man (sic) to use his abilities...for the maintenance of his family and the common welfare.* (9.46). The Brief Statement of Faith proclaims *trust in Jesus Christ, preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives.* (10.2)
- The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) issued statements supporting Affirmative Action in 1995 and 1998.
- If passed, the MCRI amends our constitution to end opportunities for women and minorities to have equal access to education, jobs and contracts in Michigan.
- If passed, it will immediately end all state and local policies that promote equal opportunity
- If passed, it will immediately eliminate all state and local affirmative action and outreach programs:
 - to encourage minorities and women to enter key fields such as police, firefighting and engineering or to attend college,
 - to encourage women and minorities to stay in school and prepare for good-paying jobs in engineering, science or even construction and law enforcement,
 - to encourage men to become teachers or nurses, where they are under-represented.
- If passed, there will be no affirmative action goals for contracting or hiring in state and local governments.