

11 January 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the Convention of the Diocese of West Virginia, held in Charleston, West Virginia in 2009, the following resolution was passed:

*RESOLVED, That the Diocese of West Virginia urge members of the West Virginia Senate and House of Delegates to pass legislation which would amend the current state human rights law, W.Va. Code 5-11-1 et seq. to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and to add sexual orientation to the motivations justifying prosecution under the West Virginia Hate Crimes statute, W.Va. Code § 61-6-21.*

*RESOLVED, That the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia communicate such to the 2010 members of the West Virginia Senate and House of Delegates during the week prior to the start of the 2010 legislative session until the West Virginia Senate and House of Delegates pass legislation which amends the current state human rights law, W.Va. Code 5-11-1 et seq. to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and adds sexual orientation to the motivations justifying prosecution under the West Virginia Hate Crimes statute, W.Va. Code § 61-6-21.*

This is identical to the resolution that was passed at the 2008 Convention.

Following my letters to the Members of the Senate and the Delegates to the West Virginia Legislature in 2008, I heard practically nothing from any of the elected officials.

This year, following the mailing of the letters, I have begun to hear from some of the legislators of West Virginia.

I am posting this letter for two reasons:

1. To list those Lawmakers in West Virginia who have contacted me, and to share their comments, and
2. To let you know my personal and Episcopal understanding of the need for this legislation.

First, let me say that since the Federal Government has already passed this legislation, it appears that all States in the Union ought to/must comply. It is incomprehensible to me that a Federal Statute does not automatically get adopted on the State level. That being said, I will leave this point to the legal minds that are trained in this area.

Second, I believe that this is more than just an issue of Civil Rights. I believe that the inclusion of sexual orientation as a category of 'hate crimes' has its grounding in the Doctrine of Creation. God created all things, and all things are created good. To deny one part of God's creation any form of protection, simply because of their existence, is a violation of the incarnate presence of God in Creation. All persons, just by their being, are entitled to protection from violence, degradation, and hate. I call upon the Senators and Delegates in West Virginia to honor such a reality.

To date, the following Legislators have spoken to me:

Donna Boley (3<sup>rd</sup> District) to say NO. She cannot accept our resolution, and will not support such a statute.

In Christ,

+W Michie Klusmeyer

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer  
Bishop