

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

***10th Episcopal District
State Convention
The Legislative Process***



WORKSHOP FOCUS

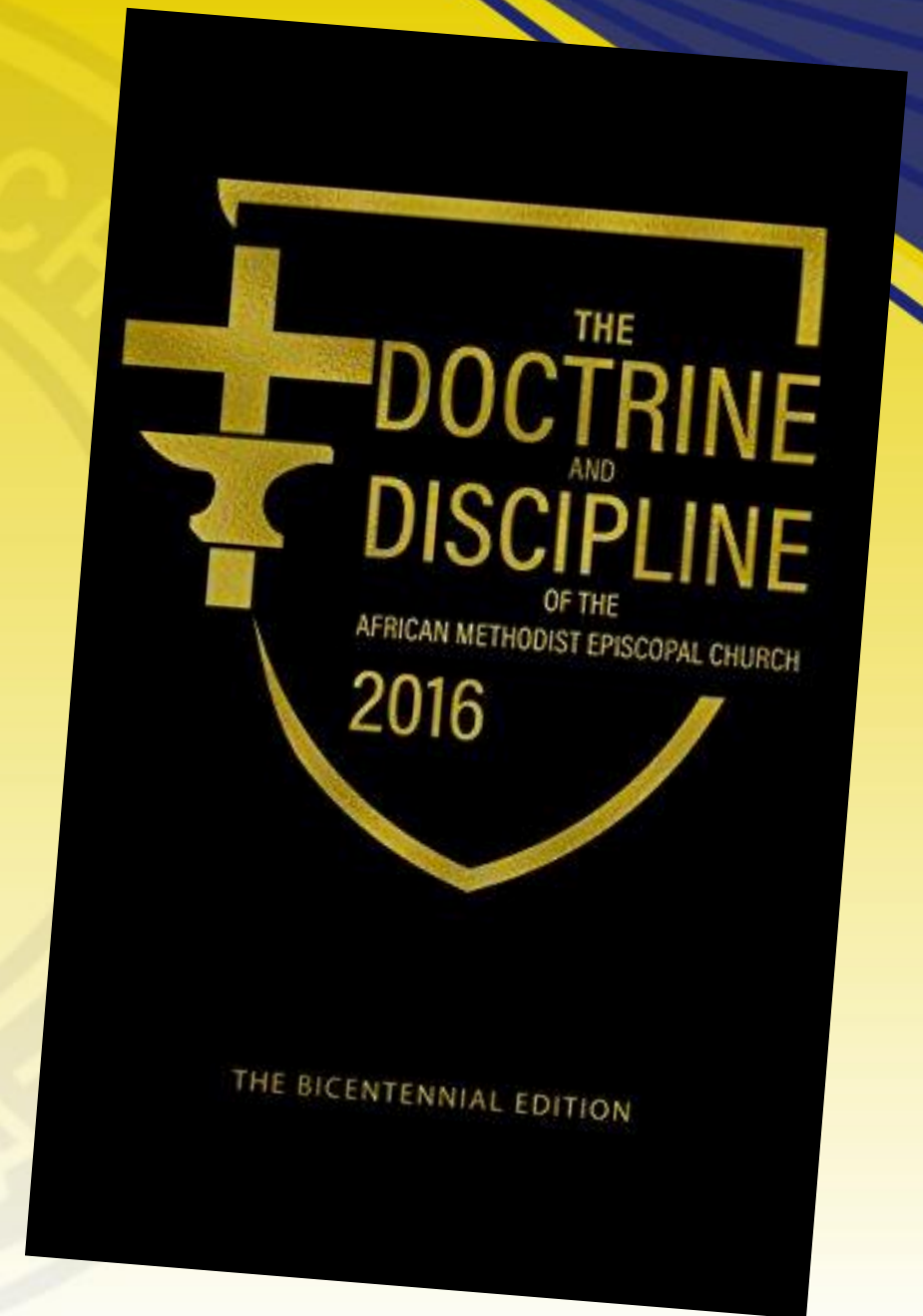
- What is Legislation?
- How do new bills make it into the AME Church Discipline (*the Process*)?
- Timelines
- Next Steps

WHAT IS LEGISLATION?

- Legislation refers to the preparation and enactment of laws by a legislative body through its lawmaking process.
- The legislative process includes evaluating, amending, and voting on proposed laws and is concerned with the words used in the bill to communicate the values, judgments, and purposes of the proposal.
- Legislation passed serves as our GPS and guiding principle.

QUESTION: When was the last time you looked at or read your AME Church Discipline?

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2021 Proposed Legislation – By The Numbers

- How many bills were submitted?
 - Over 300 pieces of raw legislation was submitted to the General Conference Revisions Committee
- How many bills came out of the Revisions Committee?
 - 55 Bills were prepared to be presented to the General Conference

2021 Proposed Legislation – By The Numbers

- How many bills were presented to the GC?
 - 9 made it to the GC
- How many were passed and became law?
 - **7** bills passed and became law in the 2021 GC

WHAT HAPPENED? *The Perfect Storm!*

- Large number of bills
- Limited reviews (CONVOS)
- Time and Technology Constraints
- Criteria Not Met

Legislation Criteria

- GC Restrictions – 2016 Discipline Page 264
- Multiple Bills on Same Subject
- Ambiguous Intent, Rationale or Text
- Duplicates
- Budgetary Impact
- Judicial Administration or Legal Implications

Legislation Categories

- Incorporation and Church Property (CP)
- Church Membership (CM)
- Ministry (MIN)
- General Governmental Divisions and Authority (GGDA)
- General Board Connectional Departments and Commissions (GGB)

Legislation Categories contd

- Conferences and Conventions (CC)
- Global Development (GD)
- Judicial Administration (JA)
- Constitution and By-Laws (CSO)
- Local Church Organization (LC)

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- It starts with an idea, concept, or recognition of a procedural problem.
- Once an idea, concept, or procedural problem has been identified, you should complete the official legislation template.
 - The template will include the following:
 - The Title **(Category AND Title)**
 - The name of the person submitting the legislation
 - Page reference in the most recent AME Discipline (if applicable)
 - The Intent
 - The Rationale
 - The Current Text (if applicable)
 - The Amended Text

WHAT IS THE PROCESS? Contd.

- Once you have completed the official legislation template, you should send it up through the proper chain.
 - *This varies based on Episcopal District structures and where or on what level the legislation was created/ conceptualized.*
- Prior to the legislation being submitted to the CLO Legislation Committee for review, your Episcopal District Legislation Taskforce or Committee should review, debate, and provide approval.
- Episcopal District Legislation Taskforces or Committees will submit their District's proposed legislation packets to the CLO Legislation Committee for review and debate during the respective CLO meetings leading to the CLO Biennial Convention.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS? Contd.

- Once the proposed legislation pieces have been brought to the floor of the CLO meetings, they will be voted up or down.
- Those voted “up” or those who have majority support will be combined in an official packet to be submitted to the General Secretary in preparation for the impending General Conference.
- During the General Conference, the revisions committee will meet to “fine-tune” all of the pieces of legislation submitted by both clergy and laity. The revisions committee assesses if the submitted legislation meets the criteria outlined on the official template and identifies if the submitted pieces have any financial or legal implications.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS? Contd.

- The revisions Committee will present the final pieces on the floor of the General Conference. Traditionally, the Revisions Committee will have an established way or order in which they would present the bills however, members of the General conference may call for a particular piece or bill to be presented.
- Members of the General Conference will vote up or down on the legislation presented.
- Those pieces of proposed pieces of legislation that were voted in would be sent to the Compilations Committee, who will add the new content to the discipline.

The background features a large, faint watermark of the AME Church Lay Organization logo. The logo is circular and contains a central emblem of a chalice with a sword. The text "AME CHURCH" is arched across the top, and "LAY ORGANIZATION" is arched across the bottom. The background is a gradient of yellow and white, with a blue and yellow geometric pattern in the top right corner.

Let's Write A Bill

The background features a large, faint watermark of the AME Church Lay Organization logo. The logo is circular and contains a central cross with a chalice below it. The text "AME CHURCH" is arched across the top, and "LAY ORGANIZATION" is arched across the bottom. The background is a gradient of yellow and white, with a blue and yellow geometric pattern in the top right corner.

TEMPLATE

The background features a large, faint watermark of the AME Church logo, which is a circular emblem with a cross in the center and the words "AME CHURCH" and "YOUTH ORGANIZATION" around the perimeter. The logo is centered behind the text.

An Example of Passed Legislation

*Child and Youth Protection
and Background Checks*

JA-01 : Child and Youth Protection and Background Check

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline pg. 332

Intent This proposed legislation seeks to require adult employees and volunteers beginning work with or already working with ministries with children and/or youth or with organizations or agencies associated with the church that serve children and/or youth to have periodic national criminal background checks and training related to child protection policies and procedures.

JA-01 : Child and Youth Protection and Background Checks

Rationale The Book of Doctrine and Discipline speaks of criminal background checks and anti-sexual harassment training for those entering ministry and for clergy. It further speaks of preventing any and all sexual misconduct by clergy, staff, appointed or elected officers, or volunteers of the AME Church; **but, it does not make explicit the requirement of adult employees and volunteers to have periodic national criminal background checks.** Such an explicit requirement strengthens the churches' safeguards for children and youth and offers protection to the churches' ministry and service to and with young people

Child and Youth Protection and Background Checks

Amended Text

The church must be a safe place where faith can be nurtured, free from abusive and predatory behavior. This is particularly true for the sake of children and youth. As proactive measures toward this goal, adult employees and volunteers beginning their work with or already working with ministries with children and/or youth or with organizations or agencies associated with the church that serve children and/or youth must have national criminal **background checks** **no less than every two years** as well as

Child and Youth Protection and Background Checks

Amended Text

participate in a child abuse prevention and ministry protection training also no less than every two years administered by the Department of Christian Education. **Responsibility of any costs associated with the background check or training to be covered should be** negotiated and determined by the adult staff or volunteer and the church leader/ministry/organization/agency recruiting or having oversight over the adult staff or volunteer.

Child and Youth Protection and Background Checks

Amended Text cont'd.

Results of said background checks should **be kept securely** on file in the headquarters of the episcopal district, in which the adult staff or volunteer is serving. Verification of completion of the before mentioned training will be maintained in a secure, central database within the Department of Christian Education, with periodic reports shared with the respective episcopal districts.

JA-01 : Child and Youth Protection and Background

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOU?

This inclusion in the Book of Discipline means that there is a REQUIREMENT for any of us who deal with or work with children or youth to have periodic national criminal background checks. This goes for church employees as well as volunteers. PRIOR to this, the language spoke explicitly about criminal background checks and anti-sexual harassment training for those entering ministry and for clergy.

Churches need to make provisions as you may be responsible for the costs!

CLO Legislation Timeline

- November 10, 2022 – Deadline to submit all proposed legislation to the CLO Legislation Chair prior to the Fall CLO Executive Board meeting.
- December 2022– The Committee will present the proposed legislation to the CLO Executive Board.
- April 2023 – The Committee will present the proposed legislation again to the CLO Executive Board.
- June 2023 – Connectional Lay Organization BIENNIAL - Chicago, IL

**Presentation, discussion, and approval of the CLO Proposed Legislation Packet*

CLO Legislation Timeline contd.

- CONVO Fall 2023 – Encourage participation in the CONVO. Consider recommendations/revisions gleaned/obtained from participants.
- December 2023/April 2024 – Final review & approval of the Proposed Legislation Packet for submission to the General Secretary for the General Conference by the CLO Executive Board.
- General Conference 2024

10th District Legislation Committee

- William Earl – Chair
- Sherry Williams – NWTX Conference
- Johnny Tellis – NT Conference
- Thomas Rockey Moore – SWTX Conference
- Joel Scott – Texas Conference

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THANK YOU !

