

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING SENTENCING OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

WHEREAS, the number of children and youth committing crimes in South Carolina and in the nation is on an alarming rise; and

WHEREAS, many children and youth who commit crimes are from dysfunctional families and are products of a society that has failed to come to their aid; and

WHEREAS, in our state and nation there is not a standard age in which a child or youth can be transferred from juvenile justice system into the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, according to data from the SC Department of Correction 2006, in the state of South Carolina over 3% or approximately 750 of the inmates in adult criminal justice facilities are nineteen years of age and younger, and 31 are younger than 17 years old; and

WHEREAS, placing children and youth into the general population of the criminal justice system exacerbates their needs and problems and makes them victims of the adults in the penal system; and

WHEREAS, South Carolina law now allows life without parole for children and youth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the United Methodist Church of South Carolina encourages the governor and the legislature to address these concerns by establishing a more humane, restorative and constructive way to manage children and youth who are in the penal system so that they may become productive citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a standard age be established in which a youth can be transferred from juvenile justice system into the criminal justice system; and be it further

RESOLVED, That laws allowing life without parole for juvenile offenders be abolished; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded immediately to the members of the South Carolina General Assembly and the Governor of South Carolina for action; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of this conference be encouraged to contact their representatives and let their voices be heard.

*By The South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women
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