

Lay Compensation Task Force Report to the 134th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Newark

The Lay Compensation Task Force was appointed by Bishop Croneberger after the 132nd Annual Convention in January, 2006. He stated he believed that the lack of guidelines for lay compensation was a matter of justice for our diocesan life and can no longer be pushed aside," and charged the study group to report back with guidelines and principles for justice in the workplace.

The task force members began meeting in April 2006 and started with a review of existing workplace policies and benefits throughout the congregations in the diocese. The members of the task force sought assistance from church leadership through the completion of a benefits survey in 2006 and the collection of lay employee job descriptions during the summer of 2007.

The timely and candid disclosures were critical to the Task Force's assessment of the overall compensation policies and practices of the Diocese. With this help, the task force could provide information and suggestions to help the diocese live out the themes of justice that we proclaim. These efforts were not intended to provoke judgments or be divisive, but to equip the task force to examine the ways in which the diocese and congregations support their lay ministers.

After prayerful consideration of the information provided in the benefits survey, the Lay Compensation Task Force recommended resolutions to help churches more fully live out the corporate belief in the value of these ministries.

Resolutions adopted at the Convention of 2007 recommended minimum vacation time for employees, provision of job descriptions and annual performance evaluations. Our work continued this past year when the collection of job descriptions was undertaken. We were appreciative of the responses received.

This year two resolutions are recommended for adoption by the deputies to the 134th Annual Convention. The first is participation in the state unemployment insurance program, and the second would provide group life insurance. These two programs are low cost to both the employer and the employee.

Members of the Lay Compensation Task Force - Ms. Kai Alston; Ms. Cheryl Brocking, co-chair; Ms. Issie Cherevko; Ms. Glenda deKruif; Mr. Michael Francaviglia; Ms. Lisa Green; Ms. Kathryn McCormick; Mr. Milton Merts; Ms. Janice Pedersen; The Rev. Paul Walker, co-chair.

We remember with fondness Mr. Frank Fenwick, an original member who died recently; he brought to the table his experience in the corporate world, his service as a warden, and his most recent role as a parish administrator. We give thanks to Ms. Joan Lodge for her leadership and guidance at the inception and during the first year of the task force.

RESOLUTIONS – adopted at the Convention.

Resolution 1: State Unemployment Insurance Program Participation (adopted as **amended**)

RESOLVED, That the 134th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark recommends that each employee **working at least 20 hours a week** of the diocese, congregations, and day care/schools participate in the State Unemployment Insurance (SUI) plan by the time of the 135th Convention of this Diocese.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

While it is not mandatory for non-profits to be included in the state unemployment insurance program, it is a benefit that that would be useful and appreciated by lay employees. Many employees, in fact, are unaware that they are not participants in this program until it is needed, at which point it is too late.

A part time employee working at minimum wage (\$7.15 per hour) must work a minimum of 20 weeks to be eligible for SUI. The employer contribution is \$3.84 per week or \$199.68 per year. The employee's contribution is \$0.55 weekly or \$28.60 per year.

Higher paid employees, those earning above the minimum wage, must work a minimum of 20 weeks. The maximum employer contribution in any single year is \$560.00 (based on an employee's annual \$20,875.00 or more).

Employers new to the state plan pay at the highest rate and, if the employer shows a relatively low rate of turnover, are likely to be lower rather than higher.

Resolution 2: Group Term Life Insurance Participation (adopted)

RESOLVED, that the 134th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark recommends that each lay employee working at least 20 hours a week at our congregations and day care/schools participate in the Group Term Life Insurance Program administered by the Church Life Insurance Corporation by the time of the 135th Convention of this Diocese.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Church Life Insurance Corporation offers employer paid coverage for lay employees working at least 20 hours a week at the levels of \$15,000 or \$25,000. The premium for the \$15,000 of group life and disability is \$7.35 per month per employee. For coverage of \$25,000 the premium of group life and disability is \$12.25 per month per employee.