

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Affirmative action is designed to bring about justice and equal opportunity for people who have long been excluded from or underrepresented in certain fields of training or education, various types of jobs, and in promotion to or selection for upper level decision-making positions. It is designed to assist in overcoming the effects of past discrimination and to make equal opportunity a reality rather than a theoretical goal.

Affirmative action is also designed to overcome deficiency within our democratic system that allows part of the population to be unrepresented where decisions are made that affect the entire society. It is important to the well-being of our society that persons of color and women be in positions where decisions are made. Priorities are set according to the perspectives and understanding of those persons setting the priorities. If persons of color and women are not involved in the decision making or not involved in enough numbers to be heard, priorities and programs will fail to reflect their needs and interests and the insights they can bring to the decisions will be lost.

Affirmative action means recognizing that a person has competence already or the ability to attain it. It recognizes that for the sake of justice and in order to meet adequately the needs of our society, persons of color and women must have opportunities to work effectively in all facets and at all levels.

Different forms of affirmative action have long been part of the American life. For example, veterans have been receiving certain preferences in civil service jobs and promotions. Colleges and universities have geared admission policies to make sure that places were reserved for persons from particular geographical areas or who were interested in particular lines of work or willing to serve in particular situations.

In light of the widespread public misconception of affirmative action and the danger that the movement toward affirmative action may be slowed or reversed, American Baptists:

- recognize that affirmative action has always been a part of the American system and has been used in ways to promote our national interest.
- believe that it is in society's interest to apply affirmative action in the areas of employment and educational opportunities to people of color and women.
- call upon our political leaders to resist the rising number of legislative efforts to restrict civil rights and nullify policies designed to gain full equality in our society for people of color and for women.
- recommit ourselves to the ends and purposes of affirmative action in society with the determination that if one means of achieving these ends is not permitted we will seek and use other formal and informal means to accomplish these ends.
- reaffirm our commitment of affirmative action in the life and practice of the American Baptist Churches, USA.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1977
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - February 1986
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 2002

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

8. The right to develop skills and abilities, to utilize these in economic, political, social, intellectual and religious institutions, and to receive a just return for one's labor;
9. The right to human dignity, to be respected and treated as a person, and to be protected against discrimination without regard to age, sex, race, class, marital status, income, national origin, legal status, culture or condition in society;