

8172:6/88

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION ON VOTER REGISTRATION**

We affirm the progress made in our nation toward guaranteeing the right of all citizens to vote. However, we note with dismay that barriers persist to full participation in the political process.

In many places, voter registration rules, hours and locations, constitute a significant hindrance to voting. Persons with disabilities, those socially and economically disadvantaged and other minorities are frequently blocked toward the first step to full participation.

The Bible teaches us that all humanity is created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27) and that we are all valuable in God's sight (Psalm 8; Matt. 6:25-30; 10:29-31). Jesus showed his concern for all people throughout his life (Luke 10:25-27; 4:16-19; Matt. 25:31-46). The apostle Paul affirmed the value of all persons in his letter to the church at Galatia (Gal. 3:28).

Our understanding of humankind as God's valued creation has political and social implications. Because we are all equal before God, we believe that society should not deny basic rights to any persons.

Therefore, the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA urges:

1. All persons to take seriously the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship and register to vote;
2. Individuals and churches to work with public officials in their towns and states to remove barriers to voter registration;
3. Congress to continue examining barriers to voter registration and to pass legislation removing those barriers while preserving safeguards against fraud.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - June 1988
170 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1995
(General Board Reference - # 8172:6/88)

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:

11. The right of citizenship in a nation, to participate in the political process, to form political parties, to have a voice in decisions made in the political arenas...

American Baptist Policy Statement on Racial Justice

Based on the mandate of our Christian faith and our belief that a nation cannot be secured unless it is founded on justice and opportunity for all, we believe that Christians must work for racial justice within their own societies and within the world. Therefore, as American Baptists:

3. We recognize the responsibility to protect the rights of, and support opportunities and equity for, racial minorities in the political...systems in this country. We will initiate and support actions to enable persons of all racial backgrounds to become full participants in and beneficiaries of the life of this country.
