

# RESOLUTION E

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2 **Support the proposal in United States Congress, bill H.R. 301, to designate “Lift Every**  
3 **Voice and Sing” as our National Hymn.**

4 **Sponsor:** Linda E. Ketchum-Pompili, delegate from Trinity Greece, warden of Monroe District

4

5 *Whereas* this bill has the support of Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry, the Executive Council  
6 of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church Office of  
7 Government Relations, and members of the Association of Anglican Musicians and the Union of  
8 Black Episcopalians;

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10 *Whereas* “Lift Every Voice and Sing” is regularly sung at various religious services and choir  
11 performances at community and cultural events to commemorate the struggles that have  
12 accompanied our Nation’s “pursuit of a more perfect Union”;

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14 *Whereas* the purpose of this proposed law is to promote healing and unity; *now therefore be it*

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16 *Resolved*, that this 90th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester supports H.R. 301  
17 and invites all delegates, clergy, and parishioners in the Diocese to show support by informing  
18 others and asking their representatives in Congress to support the bill.

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## 20 **Explanation & Background Information**

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22 After participating in The Episcopal Church’s webinar, “Lift Every Voice and Sing: A New  
23 National Hymn,” on September 30, 2021, Trinity Greece parishioner Dorothy Romanet, a leader  
24 of Trinity’s music ministry, called Linda Ketchum-Pompili to ask if we could share the  
25 information throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester via our Convention.

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27 **H.R. 301**, introduced by South Carolina representative James E. Clyburn, is “To amend title 36,  
28 United States Code [USC], to establish the composition known as "Lift Every Voice and Sing"  
29 as the national hymn of the United States.” Title 36 covers laws for “Patriotic and National  
30 Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations,” including (in Chapter 3, Sections 301 to 305):

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• § 301. **National Anthem.** “Star-Spangled Banner.” Signed into law in 1931 by President  
32 Herbert Hoover.

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• § 302. **National Motto.** “In God we trust.” Signed into law in in 1956 by President  
34 Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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• § 303. **National Floral Emblem.** “The Rose.” Signed into law in 1986 by President  
36 Ronald Reagan.

37

• § 304. **National March.** “The Stars and Stripes Forever. Signed into law in 1987 by  
38 President Ronald Reagan.

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• § 305. **National Tree.** “The Oak” Signed into law in 2004 by President George W. Bush.  
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The goal of H.R. 301 is to amend Title 36, Chapter 3 to add:

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• § 306. **National Hymn.** “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

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44 The Episcopal Church Executive Council Resolution, passed in June 2021, explained:  
45 “The Episcopal Church in the HYMNAL 1982 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
46 America in the LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP were the first predominantly white  
47 denominations to add this hymn to their authorized hymnals and are generally seen as the  
48 source for the introduction of the hymn to other predominantly white denominations and  
49 congregations.”

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52 The Resolution directed the Office of Government Relations to advocate for the passage  
53 of H.R. 301.

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55 “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was written as a poem in 1900 by James Weldon Johnson to  
56 celebrate Abraham Lincoln’s birthday. His brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, wrote the music. It  
57 later became an Episcopal hymn and a cultural anthem, often called the “Black national anthem.”  
58

59 Making “Lift Every Voice and Sing” our National Hymn would give it a special place alongside  
60 the existing U.S. National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” As Congressman James E.  
61 Clyburn explained, it “would be an act of bringing the country together... You aren’t singing a  
62 separate national anthem: you are singing the country’s national hymn. The gesture itself would  
63 be an act of healing.”

67  
68 *Lift every voice and sing*  
69 *Till earth and heaven ring,*  
70 *Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;*  
71 *Let our rejoicing rise*  
72 *High as the listening skies,*  
73 *Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*  
74 *Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,*  
75 *Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.*  
76 *Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,*  
77 *Let us march on till victory is won.*

78  
79 *Stony the road we trod,*  
80 *Bitter the chastening rod,*  
81 *Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;*  
82 *Yet with a steady beat,*  
83 *Have not our weary feet*  
84 *Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?*  
85 *We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,*  
86 *We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,*  
87 *Out from the gloomy past,*  
88 *Till now we stand at last*  
89 *Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*  
90

91           *God of our weary years,*  
92           *God of our silent tears,*  
93           *Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;*  
94           *Thou who hast by Thy might*  
95           *Led us into the light,*  
96           *Keep us forever in the path, we pray.*  
97           *Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,*  
98           *Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;*  
99           *Shadowed beneath Thy hand,*  
100          *May we forever stand.*  
101          *True to our God,*  
102          *True to our native land.*