

**SUPERIMPOSED QUOTAS**

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has utilized quota systems since its inception in 1988 to address concerns over inclusiveness; and

WHEREAS, the superimposition of multiple quota systems, based on geography, gender, ordination status, ethnicity, youth, and historically underrepresented groups may, in many cases, be counter-productive to the stated goal of inclusiveness (for example, a synod recently allocated its delegates to the churchwide assembly by conference, gender, and ordination status, assigning its male clergy slot to a conference with only three male clergy; thus, in the name of inclusiveness, almost all of the Lutherans in that conference and almost all male clergy in the synod were excluded from consideration); and

WHEREAS, the superimposition of multiple quota systems has also created significant challenges for nominating committees; and

WHEREAS, although it is acknowledged that sexism and other forms of prejudice remain significant in U. S. society, it is unclear whether the multiplication of specified quotas in nominations for the ELCA's internal boards, committees, and assembly delegations is a necessary or effective way of addressing those social ills; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Michael Burns, First and Trinity Lutheran Parish, Tioga, requested the Western North Dakota Synod Council to submit this memorial to the Synod Assembly; and

WHEREAS, on May 12, 2026, the Western North Dakota Synod Council approved the submission of this memorial to the Synod Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2026 Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorializes the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Church Council to conduct a systematic review of ELCA quota systems, seeking to eliminate superimposed mandatory quotas that are not directly relevant to the task at hand (for example, a task force on ELCA outreach in African American communities might be well-served by a racial target in recruiting, but not necessarily by a geographic quota, a clergy/lay quota, or a gender-based quota); and

RESOLVED FURTHER that the 2028 Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to report recommended constitutional changes to the 2031 Churchwide Assembly.

SUBMITTED BY:

Western North Dakota Synod Council

Note:

On May 13, 2026, the Reference and Counsel Committee voted to take no position regarding this memorial, believing it should be considered by the Synod Assembly.