
SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • LOUISVILLE 2013
Friday, June 21, 2013

Today's schedule includes the Debate and Vote on the Immigration as a Moral Issue SOC.

Just arrived and glazing over about how to navigate the social witness process? An overview of the entire process awaits in living color at the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) booth #427. Remember that this daily CSW Alert is organized according to what's happening most immediately for the draft Statement of Conscience (SOC), the current Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI), and Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW). All related events are described below.

SOC – Immigration as a Moral Issue – 2010-2013

Draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) – Immigration as a Moral Issue –

TODAY, Plenary IV - Debate and Vote on SOC – 8:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.– Friday, June 21

The revised draft SOC and the list of unincorporated amendments are attached.

CSAI – Reproductive Justice – 2012-2016

Panel: Reproductive Justice in our Congregations and Communities – Friday, June 21, 1:45 p.m., CC 104

In learning about and advocating for reproductive justice, our congregations are also transformed. This panel of congregation-based speakers, including youth, clergy, teachers, and advocates, will define reproductive justice and describe their work, while providing ideas and tips for specific opportunities to work for reproductive justice this fall.

Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs)

Deadline for Action of Immediate Witness Signature Petitions – 5 PM at GA Office!

As of 5 PM Thursday, text for each of the proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) was posted at the CSW Booth. To be considered for placement on the Final Agenda, each requires 150 signatures (from at least 25 congregations in at least five districts). You can sign petitions at the CSW Booth (#427) on petition forms accompanying the text of each AIW or on the petition form of individuals circulating through the convention center. Only delegates may sign petitions. As a delegate, you may support as many as you choose. The signature petitions must be submitted as instructed by 5 PM at the GA Office – Room 116 in the Kentucky International Convention Center.

Plan ahead!

Saturday, June 22

Plenary VI – 8:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

We'll debate and vote on whether to admit up to three proposed Actions of Immediate Witness to the Final Agenda.

Mini-Assemblies on proposed Actions of Immediate Witness – 1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. – CC 207, 208, 209

These mini-assemblies will be your only opportunity to suggest amendments to the text of all proposed AIWs admitted to the Final Agenda during the morning plenary. Debate on each AIW as initially amended, debate on prioritized unincorporated amendments, and voting on each AIW as finally amended will occur during the Sunday morning plenary.

UUMA/Commission on Social Witness Sermon Award – Saturday – 5:30 p.m.-6:45 p.m. – CC Cascade B

Reproductive Justice: The Issue that will Not Go Away” – Roger Howe

*Questions? Visit the CSW at Booth 427 in the Exhibit Hall
UUA Commission on Social Witness – www.uua.org/csw*

Proposed Statement of Conscious Immigration as a Moral Issue

1 *“Unless you are one of the first Americans, a Native American, we are all descended from folks who came from*
2 *somewhere else. The story of immigrants in America isn't a story of them. It's a story of us.”—Barack H. Obama*

3 *“Not only do immigrants help build our economy, they invigorate our soul.”—George W. Bush*

4 A belief in “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” is core to Unitarian Universalism:
5 every person, no exceptions. As religious people, our Principles call us to acknowledge the
6 immigrant experience and to affirm and promote the flourishing of the human family.

7 Our Sources “challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and
8 the transforming power of love.” Hebrew scripture teaches love for the foreigner because “you
9 were foreigners in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34). Christian scripture reports that Jesus and
10 his disciples were itinerants. When asked “who is my neighbor?” Jesus responded with the parable
11 of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who treated a badly beaten man as the foreigner would have
12 wished to be treated (Luke 10:25-37). The Qur’an teaches doing “good to ... those in need,
13 neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer
14 that you meet “ (4:36). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that “everyone has the
15 right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (Article 13.2).

16 Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources call us to recognize the opportunities and challenges
17 of human migration -- caring for ourselves and our families, interacting with strangers, valuing
18 diversity, and dealing with immigration systems.

19 **Historical Background**

20 Before recorded history, some people migrated out of Africa and later across the world. People left
21 their places of birth in order to feed themselves, protect themselves from hostile environments, or
22 better their lives. Some people migrated voluntarily while others were forced to migrate due to
23 enslavement, war, famine, marriage, or fear of persecution. Whatever the circumstances, the human
24 family is composed almost entirely of immigrants or descendants of immigrants.

25 Most of the land mass on earth is now divided into nations with boundaries. Although we
26 recognize that national boundaries are often arbitrary and disregard historical tribal boundaries and
27 wildlife migratory patterns, we acknowledge that these national boundaries exist and that nations
28 will protect their borders. Nations have assumed the right and obligation to protect the security
29 and well-being of their citizens by enacting and enforcing immigration laws. Our challenge as
30 religious people is to distinguish the moral from the immoral, supporting the former and opposing
31 the latter. Moral immigration laws that are just and humane contribute to the public good, define
32 the parameters of legal immigration, and restrict harmful influences such as criminal intent,
33 epidemics, and contraband. Unfortunately, not all immigration laws are moral; some use race, class,
34 religion, ethnicity, ability, or sexual orientation to dictate who belongs and who does not.

35 **Underlying Factors Contributing to Immigration and Lack of Documentation**

36 Today people leave their places of birth and migrate for the same reasons people always have -- to
37 be safe, to meet their needs for food and shelter, and to better their lives. Thus, violence,
38 environmental change, and economic conditions often motivate migration. Acts of violence that
39 drive people to migrate include armed conflicts, violence against women, violence related to sexual
40 orientation and gender expression, ethnic cleansing, political persecution, and genocide.
41 Environmental conditions that lead to migration include climate change, droughts, floods,
42 radiation, and pollution.

43 Economic factors are currently the primary driving force underlying immigration worldwide.
44 Economic factors that cause people to migrate include the inability to meet needs for sufficient
45 food and adequate shelter and the desire to better their lives. Contributors to these economic
46 conditions include population growth, environmental degradation, globalization, and policies that
47 address land ownership, tariffs, trade, and working conditions, many of which are continuing
48 legacies of imperialism and colonialism.

49 A mechanism for ~~implementing~~ regulating immigration laws is the issuance of visas, which are legal
50 documents giving permission to enter and stay in a nation for a period of time. When the supply of
51 visas is far below the demand, then pressure to enter a country illegally or overstay a visa increases.
52 A similar pressure occurs when the length of time between applying for a permanent visa and its
53 issuance is a matter of years. When people cannot obtain or renew visas but choose to enter or
54 remain in a country anyway, they become undocumented immigrants.

55 Visas that allow multiple border crossings encourage people to visit their families knowing that they
56 can return and work. When crossing a border is difficult or hazardous, the likelihood of returning
57 to one’s family decreases and the desire to send for one’s family increases. The families of
58 undocumented immigrants wanting to reunite with their loved ones also have no means of entering
59 legally. A broken immigration system opens the way for illegality, human trafficking, and
60 exploitation.

61 **Consequences**

62 Who migrates, how they migrate, where they migrate, and when they migrate are central to
63 immigration policies worldwide. While immigrants find jobs, build community, fall in love, have
64 children, and in other ways enrich a country with new ways of thinking and being, some ~~citizens~~
65 ~~and national policies declare them “illegal” and unwelcome~~ people declare them unwelcome and
66 label them – not just their status – illegal.

67 Lack of documentation and legal status can lead to exploitation. Work visas often require having an
68 employer-sponsor, which can limit a person’s freedom to change employment. Some employers
69 seeking workers are unable to find people willing to do certain jobs under the work conditions and
70 at the wages they offer. Other employers are stymied by onerous requirements to prove a need for
71 people with certain abilities. When the number of work visas is less than the economy’s demand for
72 labor, employers will fill the need regardless of workers’ documentation.

73 Undocumented immigrants are often denied the civil rights protections of citizens, paid less than
74 citizens, ~~and~~ labor in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, or are forced to work and live without pay
75 under the threat of violence. In the United States, increased border security has resulted in
76 undocumented immigrants crossing in more dangerous and remote areas where basic human needs
77 such as drinking water are nonexistent.

78 Increased enforcement of immigration laws ~~has led to creating detention centers, some of which~~
79 ~~are privately run for profit motives~~ and the proliferation of for-profit detention centers have led to
80 egregious human rights violations with little accountability or transparency. For example,
81 immigrants in the U.S. detention system are not afforded the same due process rights as U.S.
82 citizens, leading to unnecessarily lengthy detentions, and thus greater profits for the prison industry.
83 These centers are poorly regulated and often overcrowded. Essential needs including medical
84 attention are often denied, while more cost effective and humane measures are ignored.
85 Immigration enforcement consumes increasingly more of the federal government’s resources.

86 Many undocumented immigrants and their families live in constant fear of deportation. This fear
87 affects ~~use of educational opportunities, health care, and police protection~~ their use of educational
88 opportunities and health-care services, and their willingness to interact with local police officers.
89 Enlisting local law enforcement agencies in immigration enforcement violates accepted practices of
90 community policing and erodes trust between police and the communities they serve, sometimes
91 resulting in racial profiling of those who appear foreign. When deportation occurs, the result is
92 destroyed dreams and broken families—partners separated and children taken away from their

93 caregivers or forced to return to a place they do not know. The perceived and constructed threat of
94 those who are different has led some individuals and nations to meet immigrants with fear. Fear
95 has become a social and political force that incorrectly labels people as “illegals,” “criminals” and
96 “terrorists.”

97 **Therefore**

98 ~~*“Immigration policy should be generous; it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy we can turn to the*~~
99 ~~*world, and to our own past, with clean hands and a clear conscience.”*~~ ~~*John F. Kennedy*~~

100 Our Unitarian Universalist (UU) Principles and Sources compel us to affirm that all immigrants,
101 regardless of legal status, should be treated justly and humanely. At a minimum, a moral
102 immigration policy would include the following elements.

- 103 • A path to ~~citizenship or legal permanent residency~~ legal permanent residency and citizenship;
- 104 • Work visas that
 - 105 ○ Require the same worker protections applicable to citizens including fair wages, safe
 - 106 and healthful environments, and receipt of benefits;
 - 107 ○ Do not depend on a single employer;
 - 108 ○ Allow multiple entries;
 - 109 ○ Permit entry into the path for legal permanent residency and citizenship; and
 - 110 ○ Provide parity between the number of visas and the work available in the receiving
 - 111 nation;
- 112 • Timely processing of applications for visas and timely deportation decisions;
- 113 • Access to the same medical care and education available to citizens;
- 114 • Evaluation of human and environmental costs and benefits of proposed barriers to
- 115 immigration or other changes in immigration policy;
- 116 • Due process under the law including legal representation, rights of appeal, and the right to
- 117 initiate suits;
- 118 • Alternatives to detention for those not considered a threat to society and humane treatment
- 119 for those being detained;
- 120 • Preservation of family unity, including same-sex and transgender couples and families;
- 121 • Provision of asylum for refugees and others living in fear of violence or retribution; and
- 122 • Collaboration with source countries to address underlying causes contributing to
- 123 immigration including trade policies.

124 **Calls to Action**

125 Given the consequences of immoral and unjust immigration policies, we pledge to ground our
126 missions and ministries in UU Principles and Sources as we undertake individual, congregational,
127 and denominational actions such as:

128 ***As individuals, we can:***

- 129 • Educate ourselves and others about human migration, immigration policies, human rights
130 abuses that result from immigration policies, and the impact of trade and farm policies on
131 human migration.
- 132 • Learn a language used by a large number of immigrants in our communities.
- 133 • Advocate for moral immigration policies.
- 134 • Tour detention facilities and inquire about treatment of detainees.
- 135 • Volunteer for local organizations providing aid and advocacy for ~~recent~~ immigrants.
- 136 • Take direct action such as intervening to preserve the lives of immigrants, helping them get
137 needed medical and legal aid, refusing to report undocumented people, or reporting abuses
138 of immigrants.
- 139 • Advocate enforcement of laws that prevent employers from abusing undocumented
140 workers.
- 141 • Listen to those who have differing ideas about immigration and creatively develop
142 approaches that take those concerns and our concerns into account.
- 143 • Record stories of recent immigrants and of our own immigration histories.
- 144 • Learn how to identify and report human trafficking, including labor trafficking in our
145 communities.

146 ***As congregations, we can:***

- 147 • Cooperate with other UU congregations, other faiths, and ~~local~~ secular groups that are
148 focusing on immigration issues for the purposes of education and action.
- 149 • Offer lifespan education, youth and young adult programming, and worship services that
150 explore immigration issues.
- 151 • Create a covenant group that focuses on immigration issues.
- 152 • Adopt service projects that address issues of immigration and immigrant rights.
- 153 • Participate in efforts that support the rights and dignity of immigrants.
- 154 • Explore and implement ways to transform concern into action, including the possibility of
155 providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants at special risk.
- 156 • Support and participate in advocacy efforts to change immigration laws that are not moral,
157 including using state legislative ministries where they are available.
- 158 • Coordinate experiential trips to gain first-hand understanding of border, migrant, and
159 refugee issues; support groups such as No More Deaths and the UU Service Committee
160 (UUSC).
- 161 • Organize visits to local detention centers, inquire about the care of detainees, and support
162 detainees and their families.

- 163 • Meet with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials and local law enforcement
164 to oppose detention in privately-run facilities and advocate for alternatives to detention for
165 low-risk detainees.
- 166 • Fund college scholarships that are available to undocumented young people.
- 167 • Offer financial assistance to undocumented immigrants seeking to obtain legal immigration
168 status.
- 169 • Take an active role in UU and interfaith organizations including congregation-based
170 community organizations (CBCOs) that address the needs of immigrants such as UU
171 Refugee and Immigration Services and Education (UURISE), Interfaith Immigration
172 Coalition, Standing on the Side of Love, and Interfaith Worker Justice.
- 173 • Call upon the immigrants who are members or friends of our UU congregations to share
174 their stories and wisdom openly. Welcome changes as new immigrants join our
175 congregations.
- 176 • Encourage the sharing of congregants' cultural heritages and experiences to create personal
177 bonds and enhance appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures. Participate in a
178 refugee resettlement program.
- 179 • Provide tutoring to achieve English fluency and other skills needed by immigrants.
- 180 • Incorporate languages other than English into congregational life.
- 181 • Conduct citizenship classes, voter-rights education, and voter registration drives that target
182 new citizens.

183 ***At the denominational level, we can:***

- 184 • Publically witness against violations of the human dignity and human rights of immigrants
185 nationally and internationally.
- 186 • Advocate for moral immigration policies and international conventions as well as trade, farm
187 and other policies that alleviate the underlying causes of migration.
- 188 • Support efforts to deconstruct the for-profit prison system that treats humans as
189 commodities and fuels a culture of mass deportation and incarceration.
- 190 • Share with congregations information about immigration legislation at the national level.
- 191 • Advocate for expeditious implementation of national commitments made for visas to
192 foreigners who have loyally served alongside our nation's military.
- 193 • Join with other faith-based and human-rights groups working for improved national policies
194 on immigration, including labor regulations protecting undocumented immigrants that are
195 equivalent to those provided to citizens.
- 196 • Provide curricula, resources, current information, and networking opportunities that
197 congregations can use in their immigration education and advocacy efforts.

- 198 • Support the immigration-related work of the UU United Nations Office (UU-UNO), UUSC,
199 and other UU-related organizations such as UURISE and the UU College of Social Justice.

200 **Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we take up this call with joy and**
201 **commitment, celebrating the creative and life-giving diversity of our world’s peoples.**

Unincorporated Amendments

(G) = proposal supported by mini-assembly group

(I) = proposal supported by individual only

Unincorporated Amendment A: Line 172: New bullet point ‘Transform society’s assumptions and stigmas about immigrants and challenges us to view all people through the lens of Beloved Community’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Not actionable)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Line 158: New bullet point ‘Build and sustain a movement for systemic change making both immigrants and U.S. citizens free from fear. Eliminate fear as an instrument of immigration policy’ (G) (CSW: Complex idea that needs more development)

Unincorporated Amendment C: Line 29: Insert ‘Governments have regulated immigration based on purported concerns about citizen job loss and cultural dilution’ after ‘enacting and enforcing immigration laws’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Subject addressed elsewhere in another incorporated amendment)

Unincorporated Amendment D: Line 72: Insert ‘Attaching a profit motive to the incarceration of immigrants creates a system in which it is beneficial to the prison to maximize the numbers of people held in custody’ after ‘overcrowded’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Unnecessary detail)

Unincorporated Amendment E: Line 67: Insert ‘Documented and’ before ‘undocumented immigrants’, add ‘alike’ after immigrants (G) (CSW Reasoning: Unnecessarily complicates sentence)

Unincorporated Amendment F: Line 34: Delete ‘and Lack of Documentation’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Doesn’t accurately subdivide text) and line 44-5: New header ‘Underlying Factors Contributing to Lack of Documentation’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Doesn’t accurately subdivide the text)

Unincorporated Amendment G: Line 28: Insert ‘perceived or real’ after ‘protect the’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Confuses meaning of sentence)

Unincorporated Amendment G2: Line 44: Insert ‘In addition to these factors United States’ Policy causes militarization of nations through the ongoing training of militaries and militias worldwide’ (G) (CSW Reasoning: Introduces a new concept that needs more development. Theme covered in the ‘acts of violence’ paragraph)

Unincorporated Amendment H: Line 92-93: Insert ‘Require the same worker protections applicable to citizens including minimum wage and working conditions complying with OSHA safety standards’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Too U.S. specific)

Unincorporated Amendment I: Line 92-93: Delete and substitute ‘Advocate for greater worker protections, including fair and livable wages, safe and healthful environments and receipt of benefits for all workers’ and move to after line 157 (I) (CSW Reasoning: Existing statement is necessary in current section)

Unincorporated Amendment J: Line 123-124: Delete and substitute ‘Listen to those who have differing perspectives on immigration – particularly workers fearful of greater competition for jobs and lower real wages as the labor pool increases and making a living becomes harder in these difficult economic times – and creatively develop approaches that respond to the diversity of justice concerns’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Addressed by another, similar bullet point)

Unincorporated Amendment K: Line 43: Insert ‘the United States food aid dumping’ after ‘degradation, globalization’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Too specific and addressed in the same sentence by “trade policies”)

Unincorporated Amendment L: Line 97: Insert ‘enough work visas to create a parity’ after ‘Provide’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Repeats phrase from “work visa” section heading)

Unincorporated Amendment M: Line 7-15: Delete Lines 7-15 (I) (CSW Reasoning: Our Sources are important to grounding in UU theology and practice)

Unincorporated Amendment N: Line 1& 2: Move below line 19 (I) (CSW Reasoning: Lines deleted in an incorporated amendment) and line 3: Move below line 34 (I) (CSW Reasoning: Lines deleted in an incorporated amendment)

Unincorporated Amendment O: Line 67: Insert ‘and those who are able to migrate legally, are often’ after ‘citizens’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Changes intended meaning)

Unincorporated Amendment P: Line 65: Insert ‘is required to fill’ after ‘less than’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Unnecessary text)

Unincorporated Amendment Q: Line 65: Insert ‘for specific type of employee’ after ‘visas’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Unnecessary specificity)

Unincorporated Amendment R: Line 96: Delete (I) (CSW Reasoning: Conflicts with another incorporated amendment)

Unincorporated Amendment S: Line 99: Insert ‘even if self-paid’ after ‘available to citizens’ (I) (CSW Reasoning: Unnecessarily detailed)