

Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) Process for 2024-2025

Congregational Study Action Issues are issues selected by Unitarian Universalist member congregations for three years of study, reflection and action. The purpose is to provide member congregations of the Association with an opportunity to mobilize energy, ideas and resources around a common issue. The end result will be a deeper understanding of our religious position on the issue, a clear statement of Association policy as expressed in a Statement of Conscience, and a greater capacity for congregations to take effective action.

In the third year of this process, delegates at GA can vote to approve a Statement of Conscience (SOC) resulting from two years of congregational feedback on the CSAI. There have been no CSAIs for the past few years, and we are now restarting this process.

A CSAI offers us the opportunity to put our UU Values into practice by:

- Alerting us to important social justice issues in alignment with our principles so that we may practice them in the world
- Educating us on those issues
- Creating and identifying opportunities for us to act on those issues
- Articulating a faith perspective on those issues
- Achieving a strong majority of congregations agreeing on that position
- Calling on congregations and Unitarian Universalist Association staff to implement our shared position articulated in a Statement of Conscience.

CSAIs are proposed by Congregations by a vote of the congregation or board (unless the congregation has another articulated & adopted congregation practice for such statements). Multiple congregations can propose a CSAI together. CSAIs

are not proposed by individuals or groups of individuals (other than congregations).

What Kind of Issue is Appropriate for a CSAI?

A CSAI should be an issue complex enough to merit years of study and action by congregations before a position on the matter is adopted by the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). In addition, an ideal CSAI issue is:

- **Connected:** An issue which is connected to UUism such that our theology and practice resonates with the issue historically, ethically, or spiritually.
- **The Right Opportunity:** Circumstances make it likely that our member congregations would become respected participants in public dialogue on this issue.
- **A “Fit”:** Our member congregations have the resources and people to take meaningful action on this issue.
- **Studyable:** An issue that lends itself to study and action that would enable UUs to put our Values into practice
- **Actionable & Accountable:** An issue that lends itself practically to congregational action projects with actions taken in accountable relationship with those most impacted.

CSAI Requirements

A CSAI proposal must meet all of the following:

1. Pertain to a current social witness issue that requires further study.
2. Have a meaningful study process for UU Congregations to engage with.

3. Present an opportunity for member congregations to build partnerships and/or act in solidarity with marginalized groups beyond and within the Association.
4. Be connected to UU theology and practice.
5. Be crafted in anti-oppressive and inclusive language that is conducive to justice.

A CSAI must not:

1. Be an issue that the UUA has a well-established and consistent position and history of action with the issue. (Issues we've debated and had inconsistent positions on are appropriate.)
2. Be an issue so urgent and specific that it is better addressed through an Action of Immediate Witness.
3. Duplicate a past CSAI issue that became a Statement of Conscience since 1999:
 1. Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action: 2021
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/undoing-systemic-white-supremacy>)
 2. Our Democracy Uncorrupted: 2019
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/our-democracy-uncorrupted>)
 3. Escalating Economic Inequity: 2017
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/escalating-economic-inequity>)
 4. Reproductive Justice: 2015
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/reproductive-justice>)
 5. Immigration as a Moral Issue: 2013
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/immigration-moral-issue>)

6. Ethical Eating: Food & Environmental Justice: 2011
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/ethical-eating-food-environmental-justice>)
7. Creating Peace: 2010 (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/creating-peace>)
8. Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society: 2007
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/moral-values-pluralistic-society>)
9. Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change: 2006
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/threat-global-warmingclimate-change>)
10. Criminal Justice and Prison Reform: 2005
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/criminal-justice-and-prison-reform>)
11. Civil Liberties: 2004 (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/civil-liberties-0>)
12. Economic Globalization: 2003
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/economic-globalization>)
13. Alternatives to the "War on Drugs": 2002
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/alternatives-war-drugs>)
14. Responsible Consumption Is Our Moral Imperative: 2001
(<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/responsible-consumption-our-moral-imperative>)
15. Economic Injustice, Poverty, and Racism: We Can Make a Difference!: 2000 (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/economic-injustice-poverty-and-racism-we-can-make-difference>)
16. Beyond Religious Tolerance: The Challenges of Interfaith Cooperation Begin with Us: 1999 (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/beyond-religious-tolerance-challenges-interfaith-cooperation-begin-us>)

4. Reproduce other recent social witness statements such as Actions of Immediate Witness or General Resolutions from the last 10 years.
5. Be focused on issues within the UUA or direct the UUA's staff or funds.
6. Use overt partisan political language, such as the names of politicians or political parties.

The Commission on Social Witness recommends this CSAI as a good past example of a successful CSAI proposal: Reproductive Justice: Expanding Our Social Justice Calling (Congregational Study/ Action Issue for 2012-2016) (<https://www.uua.org/reproductive/choice/calling/209024.shtml>)

Proposal Period for 2024-2025

- **Tuesday, October 1st, 2024:** Deadline for CSAI
- **Initial Proposals.** Initial proposals should be submitted by document (Word, Google Doc or PDF) to socialwitness@uua.org. Any CSAIs submitted will receive CSW feedback on if it meets the CSAI requirements (see below), and if it doesn't if it's possible to amend the topic. A sample template including the sections for the Initial Proposal and the Final Documentation can be found here: [CSAI Sample Template](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-oGz9IQD51gyuU41MxKlJdDscb-aL_8USBOLYitP1OM/edit?usp=sharing) (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-oGz9IQD51gyuU41MxKlJdDscb-aL_8USBOLYitP1OM/edit?usp=sharing) . The information in this Initial Proposal document will include:

○ **A Cover Sheet** with the following:

- **Title** of your CSAI
- **Submitted by:** The name, email, and phone number of the person submitting the information.
- **Congregation Name(s):** The Name, City and State of a congregation that has or will be taking by November 1st a board vote to sponsor this CSAI. There can be more than one congregation supporting.
- **General Assembly Contact:** The name, email and phone number of a person who will speak for this CSAI in the General Assembly session. (This can be TBA until the Final Documentation is submitted.)
- **Contact Person(s) (for congregation sponsoring):** The name, email and phone number of a member of the Congregation sponsoring the CSAI who can confirm the board or congregational vote to sponsor.

○ The **Initial Proposal** including:

- **The Issue:** A paragraph introducing the issue for study (<50 words)
- **The Need:** A paragraph (<50 words) on how your topic meets the CSAI requirements

- **Friday, November 15, 2024:Final Documentation** submission deadline. Final documentation should be again submitted by document (Word, GoogleDoc or PDF) to socialwitness@uua.org. Any CSAIs which have not had the final documentation submitted by this date will not move forward. The information on this form will include a request for a document of less than three pages (Google doc preferred, Word and PDF accepted) to be attached. A sample template can be found here:CSAI Sample Template (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-oGz9IQD51gyuU41MxKljDdscaL_8USBOLYitP1OM/edit?usp=sharing) . A sample of a previously submitted CSAI can be found here (<https://www.uua.org/reproductive/choice/calling/209024.shtml>) .

- Your **CSAIFinal Document** should include:
 - **The Cover Sheet (repeated or adapted)**
 - The rest of the **Initial Proposal** Information (repeated or adapted)
 - **Grounding in Unitarian Universalism:** How this issue is grounded in Unitarian Universalism, including in our Values, Principles, history, or theology. (<50 words)
 - **Topics for Congregational Study:** A list of smaller subtopics within the overall topic for congregations to study (<10 topics)
 - **Possible Congregational/Regional Actions:** List actions that congregations and other UU bodies (such as regions or state advocacy networks) can take. (<10 actions)
 - **Related Prior Social Witness Statements:** previous General Resolutions, actions and statements on related issues with dates (if applicable), and related UUA, Regional, or State Action initiatives. None of these should exactly mirror your issue. We recognize this may not be available if the CSAI is a truly new area within UUism for study.
 - **UU and/or Other Organizations Addressing This Issue:** A list of organizations both within and outside the UU faith, that are working on the issue, if available, that UU congregations can partner with.
 - **Resource List:** A resource list for further study (books, videos, etc.) (Please keep this under one standard-format page – quality and diversity is of more value than volume.)
 - **Other Endorsing Organizations and Individuals:** A list of individuals and groups within UUism that are endorsing this proposal is not required for a CSAI (as they are proposed by congregations, not individuals) but this may be included.
- **Early December:** The CSW will announce which CSAIs have met the requirements and will move forward.

- **In the Congregational Annual Certification:** The UUA Bylaws state (4.12):
“For the proposed Congregational Study/Action Issue to be placed on the Final Agenda of the General Assembly, twenty-five percent (25%) of all certified congregations must participate in the ballot vote concerning the proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues.” Congregations will vote on the CSAIs through a poll in the annual congregational certification portal.
- **Mid-February:** CSAIs which passed the vote in the Annual Certification form will be announced and put on the UUA webpage.
- **Spring 2025:** The CSW plans to hold informational sessions in the spring prior to the General Assembly for the CSAI authors to introduce their topics.
- **June 2025:** CSAIs admitted to the GA Agenda will be discussed and voted on at the General Assembly, where only one CSAI may be chosen.

See the CSAI Timeline (<https://www.uua.org/action/process/timeline-congregational-study/action-issue-csai-process>)

For more information contact socialwitness@uua.org.

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