

CSW Alert!

SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • CHARLOTTE 2011

Sunday, June 26, 2011

ACTIONS for TODAY—

Actions of Immediate Witness

**Debate and Vote on Four Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs)
– Plenary VI – Hall C – approximately 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.**

In the Sunday GA plenaries, you'll have the opportunity to debate and vote on each of the four remaining proposed AIWs. All four can be adopted if each receives the required two-thirds vote. Our Rules of Procedure permit up to 20 minutes of debate for each proposed AIW. No amendment may be offered until 12 minutes of debate have occurred if there are speakers at both pro and con microphones. To move an amendment, come to the amendment table to the right of the stage as soon as the plenary session begins.

The text of the draft AIWs is attached to this CSW Alert, with the unincorporated amendments listed and lettered in order of priority. You may also move to unincorporate an incorporated amendment. The four AIWs, revised with the amendments proposed during Saturday's mini-assemblies, are:

- AIW-1 **Protest Rep. Peter King's Hearings on "Muslim Radicalization"**
- AIW-2 **Support Southern California Supermarket Workers' Struggle for Decent Wages and Benefits**
- AIW-3 **Toward Ending the U.S. Military Engagement in Afghanistan**
- AIW-4 **Oppose Citizens United – Support Free Speech for People**

While Actions of Immediate Witness carry the authority only of the General Assembly at which they are adopted, AIWs reflect considerable thought, collaboration, and commitment. Use adopted AIWs to inform and organize others in your congregations and districts.

**The social witness process is our communal process.
Implementation of our adopted statements is everyone's responsibility.**

Plenary VII, 2:00 – 5:00pm

**Debate and Vote on proposed bylaw and rule changes to Article IV, Section 4.16.
Matters regarding General Assembly Actions of Immediate Witness: either to eliminate Actions of Immediate Witness entirely, or to suspend AIWs in 2012, reconstitute them beginning with the 2013 General Assembly, and modify the process for submission.**

Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness

Proposed AIW #1

1 **Protest Representative Peter King’s Hearings on “Muslim Radicalization”**

2 Because Unitarian Universalist principles affirm the goal of a just community, representing unity in our
3 multi-racial world;

4 Whereas, the hearings of Rep. Peter King, the Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, which
5 profess to present the “radicalization” of the Muslim community, have begun as of March 10, 2011, and
6 he intends on pursuing these hearings;

7 ~~Whereas, on March 6, thousands of interfaith protestors demonstrated in Times Square against the~~
8 ~~“Muslim radicalization” hearings;~~

9 Whereas, these hearings fail to acknowledge or represent the complexity of the American Muslim
10 community;

11 Whereas, the vast majorities of the Arab and Muslim American communities are law abiding and
12 committed citizens and residents of the United States;

13 Whereas, such hearings lead to demonization of Arab and Muslim Americans and incite more hatred,
14 racism, and division along racial and religious lines; ~~more hatred, racism and division along racial lines;~~

15 ~~Whereas, such divisions foster the notion that the Middle East wars are against Muslim “terror”.~~
16 ~~However, Washington’s quest for oil and control of natural resources has become apparent in Iraq, and~~
17 ~~since the early 90’s, the US planned to build a lucrative gas pipeline through Afghanistan (TAPI), a plan~~
18 ~~finalized on May 28, 2011, in Ashkhabad. This "New Great Game" (Journal of Energy security: 2010)~~
19 ~~and competition among world powers—a war over the control of energy resources—is being promoted as a~~
20 ~~war against Islamic terror by the US;~~

21 Whereas, the first amendment to the Constitution states that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an
22 establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;”

23 Whereas, on March 6, thousands of interfaith protestors demonstrated in Times Square against the
24 “Muslim radicalization” hearings; and

25 Whereas, on May 21, a coalition of Unitarian Universalist congregations, 25 civil rights and interfaith
26 groups, including chapters of the NY Civil Liberties Union, local mosques and peace activists
27 demonstrated in front of Rep. Peter King’s office in Massapequa Park, Long Island, NY;

28 Therefore, be it resolved that the 2011 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association
29 affirms ~~to uphold~~ multi-racial unity and interfaith solidarity in the interest of world peace and calls upon
30 member congregations to:

31 * urge our local congressional representatives to halt Rep. Peter King’s hearings; and

32 * ~~demonstrate as interfaith coalitions against the divisive promotion of “Muslim radicalization” and~~
33 instead join coalitions working against the divisive idea of “Muslim radicalization” and advocating multi-
34 racial for interfaith unity.

Unincorporated Amendments

AIW #1

A: Line 15: Add, “Whereas, such hearings could create the very radicalization they seek to curtail;” **CSW Rationale: Hypothetical and unsubstantiated.**

B: Line 21-22: Delete “wars...However”. Replace with, “more so than the result of substantive power changes over natural resources such as oil. Since”. **CSW Rationale: This phrase deleted by another incorporated amendment.**

C: Line 19-20: Delete “a war.....by the US.” **CSW Rationale: This phrase deleted by another incorporated amendment.**

D: Line 13-31: Replace with, “Whereas, the hearings have not been balanced and have tended to promote hatred based on religious stereotyping; Therefore, be it resolved that the 2011 GA of the UUA condemns the hearings and urges Rep King to cease further hearings, or if he elects to proceed with them, that he recognize affirmatively and explicitly that the vast majority of American Muslims are loyal to the US and subscribe to American ideals, including racial and religious toleration,” **CSW Rationale: These ideas are now included in incorporated amendments.**

Proposed AIW #2

- 1 **Support Southern California Supermarket Workers’ Struggle for Decent Wages and Benefits**
- 2 BECAUSE our Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm “the inherent worth and dignity of every person”
- 3 and call for “justice, equity and compassion in human relations” and
- 4 BECAUSE our denomination has a long history of opposing racism and sexism;
- 5 WHEREAS, fulltime supermarket workers in Southern California (SoCal) earn an average of less than
- 6 \$30,000 per year, despite the high cost of living in the area;
- 7 WHEREAS, many workers get only 24 hours of work per week and therefore earn far less;
- 8 WHEREAS, SoCal supermarket workers are disproportionately African-American and Latino;
- 9 WHEREAS, SoCal supermarket workers are disproportionately female;
- 10 WHEREAS, the 5-month strike/lockout of these workers in 2003 resulted in reductions in health
- 11 insurance and pensions;
- 12 WHEREAS, despite that, the 62,000 members of United Food and Commercial Workers voted
- 13 overwhelmingly on April 21, 2011 to authorize a strike against the three major SoCal supermarket
- 14 chains—Ralphs, Albertsons and Von’s;
- 15 WHEREAS, the supermarket chains are demanding further increases in workers’ payments for health
- 16 insurance;
- 17 WHEREAS, by authorizing a strike the supermarket workers acted on behalf of all workers, courageously
- 18 rejecting the Great Recession rhetoric of “shared sacrifice,” which has so far meant primarily that only
- 19 workers (employed and unemployed) and their families sacrifice;

20 WHEREAS, in 2003 the supermarket chains adopted a “national strategy,” relying on profits from
21 operations throughout the US to offset losses in Southern California; and

22 WHEREAS it appears likely that the workers will strike within a few weeks of this General Assembly;

23 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2011 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist
24 Association:

- 25 • Calls upon UU congregations in Southern California to support the supermarket workers,
26 ~~including but not limited to~~ in ways such as educating our members, organizing petition
27 campaigns and pledges not to shop at supermarkets where workers are on strike, holding
28 demonstrations, walking picket lines, serving meals to the workers if they strike, and organizing
29 congregations of other denominations and the community in general to do the same;
- 30 ~~• Calls upon congregations outside Southern California to hold demonstrations and picket lines at~~
31 ~~stores owned by the parent companies of the three supermarket chains: Safeway (Von’s), Kroger~~
32 ~~(Ralphs), and Supervalu, Inc. (Albertsons), and to collect pledges not to shop at stores owned by~~
33 ~~the chains if the workers strike, and to urge members of the community not to shop at those stores~~
34 ~~until the strike is settled, and to support the workers in other ways. Calls upon congregations~~
35 ~~outside Southern California to a) support the strikers in ways they consider appropriate such as:~~
36 ~~letters of support, donations to the strikers, petition campaigns, demonstrations at markets owned~~
37 ~~by the parent companies of the three supermarket chains: Safeway (Von’s), Kroger (Ralphs and~~
38 ~~Fry’s), and Supervalu, Inc. (Albertsons), b) collect pledges not to shop at stores owned by the~~
39 ~~chains if the workers strike, and c) urge members of the community not to shop at those stores~~
40 ~~until the strike is settled.~~

Unincorporated Amendments

AIW #2

A: Line 25: Add “all” after “Calls upon.” Delete “in Southern California.” **CSW Rationale: Changes the intent of the AIW, which focuses on Southern California.**

B: Line 30-34: Delete. **CSW Rationale: Existing language gives specific instructions for action by congregations within geographic area and for congregations outside of geographic area.**

C: Line 30: New bullet. “Meet with Union officials with members in our areas to plan actions in support of better wages and benefits for members.” **CSW Rationale: Diverts efforts to support workers in Southern California, which is the intent of this AIW.**

D: Line 37: Add after colon “only if they are non-union or they are not the only union workers in food and gasoline sales in the area.” **CSW Rationale: Unclear; confuses overall intent of AIW.**

Proposed AIW #3

1 **Toward Ending the U.S. Military Engagement in Afghanistan**

2 **Because** we covenant in our *Principles and Purposes* to promote “Justice, equity and compassion in
3 human relations” and to seek “. . . world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;”

4 **Because** the 2010 Statement of Conscience, *Creating Peace* calls upon our Unitarian Universalist
5 Association, congregations and individuals “to speak truth to power” and “to engage with more depth,
6 persistence, and creativity in the complex task of creating peace;” and

7 **Because** we honor the valiant efforts of those in the armed services in Afghanistan, and ~~mourn the losses~~
8 ~~of lives and disabling injuries of all involved – military and civilian~~ mourn the deaths and disabling
9 injuries of all involved - military and civilian, including the people of Afghanistan;

10 **Whereas** the United States continues to pursue a military solution to the political conflicts in Afghanistan
11 and in the region in spite of an announced timetable for military withdrawal starting this summer;

12 **Whereas** after almost 10 years of U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan, ~~and in spite of defeating al~~
13 ~~Qaeda there and eliminating Osama bin Laden,~~ the current goal of building a central government with
14 democratic institutions continues to be elusive and likely unattainable;

15 **Whereas** the intensive presence of U.S. troops required by counter-insurgency strategy is resented by the
16 majority of Afghans, and contributes to the recruitment of armed resistance fighters and to terrorists
17 around the world;

18 **Whereas** the economic costs to our nation, as well as to Afghanistan, are tremendous at a time of
19 recession and unemployment when our resources could be effectively used to strengthen ~~our domestic~~
20 ~~economy~~ economies that serve human needs; and

21 **Whereas** American popular support ~~continues to decrease, thus encouraging continued fighting among~~
22 ~~warring Afghan groups~~ for an end to this war continues to increase;

23 **Therefore**, be it resolved that the 2011 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls
24 upon the United States government to ~~change its course in Afghanistan from a policy of combating~~
25 ~~insurgents to a policy of~~ modify its course from a policy of combating insurgency to placing greater
26 emphasis on supporting international assistance to the Afghan people in developing and maintaining their
27 own security and governance;

28 **Furthermore**, we call upon the government and peoples of Afghanistan to resolve conflicts through
29 democratic processes and to support human rights, especially religious freedom and the rights of women;
30 and

31 **Be it further resolved** that we urge the United Nations to help mediate among the hostile parties and
32 facilitate rebuilding and reconciliation;

33 **And finally**, we urge the Unitarian Universalist Association, our congregations and their members to
34 participate fully in local, national, and interfaith efforts to bring an end to the U.S. combat mission in
35 Afghanistan.

Unincorporated Amendments

AIW #3

A: Line 15-17: Delete. **CSW Rationale: Removing text weakens the statement; the statement introduces important information.**

B: Line 24-26: Delete “upon the....governance”. Replace with “upon the United States government to place major emphasis on a policy of supporting international assistance to the Afghan people in their”

development and maintenance of their own security and governance.” **CSW Rationale: One of multiple alternatives to amendment accepted for Line 24-26.**

C: Line 24-26: Delete “change...assistance.” Replace with “set a course in Afghanistan for a policy of supporting increased international assistance.” **CSW Rationale: One of multiple alternatives to amendment accepted for Line 24-26.**

D: Line 24-26: Delete “change...insurgents to.” Replace with “be expeditious in its intent to change its course in Afghanistan from a policy of combating insurgents to place intense emphasis and energy toward.” **CSW Rationale: One of multiple alternatives to amendment accepted for Line 24-26.**

E: Line 35: Add “as soon as possible.” **CSW Rationale: Doesn’t add to statement and not supported in mini-assembly.**

F: Line 17: Insert lines 15-20 from proposed AIW #1. **CSW Rationale: Not pertinent to this AIW.**

Proposed AIW #4

1 **Oppose Citizens United – Support Free Speech for People**

2 **BECAUSE** Unitarian Universalists believe in the “inherent worth and dignity of every person,” and in the
3 “use of the democratic process” in society at large;

4 **WHEREAS** the U.S. Supreme Court decision of January 21, 2010 in *Citizens United v. FEC* enshrined
5 corporations as persons and equated money with speech;

6 **WHEREAS** this unprecedented ruling has already resulted in unlimited spending by corporations in state
7 and federal elections in 2010, flooding the political marketplace with corporate money, drowning out the
8 voices of individuals, and jeopardizing the very democracy that we hold dear;

9 **WHEREAS** anonymous, unlimited campaign spending and its associated domination of the media
10 conflict with the 4th and 5th UU principles;

11 **WHEREAS** Congress cannot pass a law to overturn the Supreme Court decision, once the Supreme
12 Court has interpreted the Constitution to say that corporations have the First Amendment rights of people;

13 **WHEREAS** continuing this precedent might result in ever increasing gaps between rich and poor,
14 concentrated efforts by the wealthy to control elections by vast infusions of money into campaign front
15 groups, and increasing corruption of the democratic process; and

16 **WHEREAS** we are entering the first Presidential election cycle where this ruling takes effect, so the
17 urgency is for people to speak up NOW in opposition to this ruling and in support of a Constitutional
18 amendment to overturn it, so that this is part of the Presidential debates in 2012;

19 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2011 General Assembly urges member congregations to
20 sign the resolution for The People’s Rights Amendment proposed at www.freespeechforpeople.org and
21 encourage their Congressional representatives to sponsor such a resolution in opposition to the Supreme
22 Court decision in Citizens United (Find your U.S. Representatives at www.house.gov); and

23 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2011 General Assembly urges member congregations to support pending
24 and future federal and state legislation requiring maximum disclosure by corporations of all political
25 contributions they make, whether directly to candidates or indirectly to advocacy groups; and

26 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2011 General Assembly encourages member congregations to support
27 similar motions of other organizations such as MovetoAmend, People for the American Way, and Public
28 Citizen (See www.movetoamend.org, www.pfaw.org, www.citizen.org.); and

29 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2011 General Assembly encourages member congregations to press their
30 state Senators and Representatives to file similar state and local resolutions opposing the equation of
31 corporate political speech with the free speech of individual persons and to use as models the 2011 state
32 resolutions of Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington State, and the local
33 resolutions of the towns of Brewster, Chatham, Dennis, Great Barrington, Orleans, Provincetown, Truro,
34 Wellfleet, and Williamstown, Massachusetts (See www.freespeechforpeople.org, 2011 resolutions.); and

35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2011 General Assembly encourages the existing eleven UU
36 legislative ministries in the UU State Advocacy Network (UUSAN, www.uustatenetwork.org) to consider
37 adopting “Oppose Citizens United—Support Free Speech for People” as a core issue among their
38 statewide efforts, and encourages member congregations in states that do not YET have a legislative
39 ministry to start one by contacting Interim Administrator Nancy Banks, at nancy.banks1@verizon.net or
40 617-835-5426.

41 ~~Working together we can grow our souls, help heal the world, and perhaps make a significant impact in~~
42 ~~2011-2012 to restore free speech to people and strengthen the voices of WE the People in our democracy.~~
43 Working together with other groups and other faith traditions we can make a significant impact in 2011-
44 2012 to restore the effective voice of “we the people” and help to heal our democracy.

No unincorporated amendments for proposed AIW #4.