

CSW Alert!

SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • LOUISVILLE 2013
Sunday, June 23, 2013

ACTIONS for TODAY—

Actions of Immediate Witness

Debate and Vote on Three Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) – Plenary IX – 1:45 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

In the Sunday afternoon GA plenaries, you'll have the opportunity to debate and vote on the three proposed AIWs. All three may be adopted if each receives the required two-thirds vote. The Rules of Procedure (Rule 13 J) state that up to 20 minutes will be allowed for debate, if needed. No amendment shall be in order unless there have been at least 12 minutes of debate, if needed, on the merits of the proposed Action of Immediate Witness. 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 according to the level of support generated in the mini-assemblies around these amendments. These three revised AIWs are:

- AIW-1 Amend the Constitution: Corporations are not persons and money is not speech
- AIW-2 Condemn the racist mistreatment of young men of color by police
- AIW-3 Consider divestment from the fossil fuel industry.

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. .

FUTURE ACTIONS

Congregational Study/Action Issues

Engage in study and action related to Reproductive Justice.

Engage in actions to implement the Statement of Conscience: Immigration as a Moral Issue and other previously adopted SOCs.

Propose New Congregational Study/Action Issues

Refer to the Proposers Guide for Congregation Study/Action Issues available at www.uua.org/csw.

By October 1, 2013, submit proposed Congregational Study Action Issues to socialwitness@uua.org.

Vote on proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues as part of the congregational poll by February 1, 2014.

Actions of Immediate Witness

Use adopted AIWs to advocate in your congregations and districts.

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

Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness

Proposed AIW 1:

1 **~~Support the proposed 28th "WE THE PEOPLE" Amendment to the Constitution:~~**

2 **~~Corporations are not persons and money is not speech~~**

3 **Amend the Constitution: Corporations are not persons and money is not speech**

4 **BECAUSE** Unitarian Universalists believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every human
5 person, and in the use of the democratic process in society at large, and because approval of
6 the 2011 AIW opposing *Citizens United* paved the way for the UUA to take the spiritual lead in
7 the passage of ~~the proposed 28th amendment which states that a constitutional amendment to~~
8 establish that corporations are not persons and money is not speech;

9 **WHEREAS** a series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings have established corporations as persons,
10 equated money with speech, and eliminated limits on amounts that corporations can
11 contribute to political campaigns and political advertising;

12 **WHEREAS** these court-created doctrines have flooded the political landscape with
13 unprecedented amounts of money from corporations and other ~~wealthy~~ interests, corrupting
14 our democratic processes and putting our entire democracy at risk, and

15 **WHEREAS** Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides for amendments, a process that
16 has occurred 27 times including seven constitutional amendments that have overturned U.S.
17 Supreme Court decisions; and

18 ~~**WHEREAS** the "WE THE PEOPLE" 28th Amendment to the Constitution was drafted by~~
19 ~~Move to Amend, a national coalition of organizations seeking to establish true democracy of,~~
20 ~~by and for the people and was introduced in Congress as H.J.R.29 on February 14, 2013 by~~
21 ~~Representatives Rick Nolan (DFL-MN) and Mark Pocan (D-WI); and~~

22 **WHEREAS** ~~Move to Amend is~~ citizens are successfully initiating and supporting needed
23 actions there are pending proposals in Congress and states that need action NOW at city,
24 county and state levels necessary to achieve passage of this an amendment;

25 **WHEREAS** the UUJEC (Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community), UUA
26 (board of the Unitarian Universalist Association), the UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service

27 Committee) and various congregations have already endorsed a constitutional amendment
28 ~~Move to Amend~~; and

29 ~~**WHEREAS** other proposed amendments to the Constitution to overturn *Citizens United*~~
30 ~~do not eliminate both corporate personhood and money as speech;~~

31 **WHEREAS** an amendment to the Constitution is needed to overturn *Citizens United* and
32 eliminate both corporate personhood and money as speech.

33

34 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly instructs the Unitarian
35 Universalist Association to make their endorsement formal and public, supporting ~~the~~ efforts
36 of the ~~Move to Amend~~ coalition and the 28th ~~“We the People” Amendment~~ to amend the
37 Constitution; and

38 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly further requests member
39 congregations or their social justice committees to pass resolutions of support and endorse
40 ~~Move to Amend~~ at www.movetoamend.org/organizations, and individuals to sign the
41 petition at www.movetoamend.org and, contact their U.S. Representative to co-sponsor
42 HJR29; and a constitutional amendment to establish that corporations are not persons and
43 money is not speech; and

44 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly encourages Unitarian
45 Universalist Legislative Ministries nationwide (www.uustatenetworks.org) and other affiliated
46 Unitarian Universalist organizations to join this important cause.

47 Working together with other groups and other faith traditions, we can make a significant
48 impact to further the progress of a constitutional amendment ~~the proposed comprehensive~~
49 ~~28th Amendment~~ to preserve the constitutional rights that our founding fathers intended
50 solely for human persons, restore the effective voice of ~~“We the People”~~ the people and save
51 our democracy.

No Unincorporated Amendments

Proposed AIW 2:

1 **Condemn the racist mistreatment of young ~~men~~ people of color by police**

2 **WHEREAS** programs such as the “War on Drugs” and practices such as “Stop and Frisk”
3 are actively used by police to harass and oppress communities of color;

4 **WHEREAS** Michelle Alexander, at the 2012 UUA General Assembly said, “We use our
5 criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices
6 we supposedly left behind... As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less

7 respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended
8 racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it”;

9 **WHEREAS** this racist harassment has led to a growing list of African-American and
10 Hispanic youth who have been mistreated and incarcerated ~~by~~ because of police action;

11 **WHEREAS** thousands of people, ~~Asian, Latin, Black and White, have been involved in mass~~
12 ~~demonstrations~~ have participated in mass multi-racial and multi-ethnic demonstrations
13 seeking the ending of this racist mistreatment and violence by police;

14 **WHEREAS** we, as Unitarian Universalists have principles that provide us a clear mandate to
15 protest such treatment;

- 16 • Unitarian Universalist principles affirm the goal of a just community, representing unity
17 in our multi-racial world;
- 18 • Unitarian Universalist principles affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person;
19 and

20 **WHEREAS** the “Stop and Frisk” practice mainly targets young ~~men~~ people of color and
21 treats them in a racist manner that negates their inherent worth and dignity and leads to mass
22 incarceration at tremendous social cost.

23 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly of the Unitarian
24 Universalist Association affirms to uphold our principles and condemn racist practices
25 displayed in what Michelle Alexander described in her book as “the New Jim Crow” and calls
26 upon member congregations to:

- 27 • Condemn the practice pattern of mistreatment through ~~programs~~ practices such as
28 “Stop and Frisk,” which mainly targets young ~~men~~ people of color in our society,
29 which negates their inherent worth and dignity and continues the mass practice of
30 institutional racism within our society.

31 We also call upon our member congregations to:

- 32 • Petition local, state, and federal representatives to demand an end to ~~the practice of~~
33 institutional racism in the form of ~~programs~~ practices like “Stop and Frisk” and
- 34 • Actively demonstrate alongside others who are fighting to change the laws that allow
35 police harassment, which results in violence against communities of color.

Unincorporated Amendments

Unincorporated Amendment A: Line 5-6: Delete “and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.” (I) (CSW Reasoning: Part of quotation)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Lines 28-30: Delete after “mainly targets” and replace with “targets young men of color in our society, thereby negating their inherent worth and dignity

and continuing the mass practice of institutional racism within our society.” (I) (CSW Reasoning: Already replaced with similar language)

Unincorporated Amendment C: After line 35: Insert “Ending Mass Incarceration Charting a New Justice Reinvestment” as a resource. (I) (CSW Reasoning: Resources are not part of an AIW)

Unincorporated Amendment D: Line 1: Insert “(and mass incarceration)” after “mistreatment.” (I) (CSW Reasoning: Not in the title of the original AIW)

Proposed AIW 3:

Consider Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry

1

2 **BECAUSE** the Sources of Unitarian Universalism counsel us to heed the guidance of reason
3 and the results of science;

4 **BECAUSE** Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant, in their Seventh Principle,
5 to respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and member
6 congregations have demonstrated their commitment to this principle in various ways
7 including by Green Sanctuary Certification;

8 **BECAUSE** the 2006 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Statement of Conscience calls
9 on Unitarian Universalist Congregations to “[u]se congregational financial resources to
10 positively address the global warming/climate change crisis,” and

11 **BECAUSE** the “UUA Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines” (2008) state that
12 investments in companies engaged in negative global impact activities are to be avoided;

13 **WHEREAS** we understand our lives are tied up in the consumption of energy;

14 **WHEREAS** the fossil fuel industry currently controls fossil fuel reserves that, if burned, will
15 produce more than five times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions required to raise global
16 temperatures beyond 2°C, the level that leaders of 167 countries including the United States
17 have agreed represents a threshold beyond which civilization cannot survive without
18 enormous suffering;

19 ~~**WHEREAS** these reserves are built into the share price of these companies, and therefore~~
20 ~~responsible climate policy—to leave most of the reserves in the ground—would lead to a~~
21 ~~sharp drop in the market value of Fossil Fuel Company (FFC) shares;~~

22 **WHEREAS** a growing and global movement “350.org” is calling upon universities, pension
23 funds, public entities and religious institutions to divest their investments in 200 fossil fuel

24 companies; FFCs, and Unitarian Universalists’ participation in this campaign — or refusal to
25 participate — will define us to the public now and for generations to come;

26 **WHEREAS** further information and discussion regarding the divestment movement in UUA
27 congregations is available at divestfossilfuels.wordpress.com or by e-mail at
28 divestment@uumilwaukee.org; and

29 **WHEREAS** passively profiting from business as usual in carbon-intensive fossil fuel
30 companies given the reality of climate change is an abdication of our responsibility and thus
31 morally wrong.

32 ~~**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** profiting from investments in the fossil fuel industry is~~
33 ~~morally wrong and violates our Principles and Sources,~~

34 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly of the Unitarian
35 Universalist Association calls upon delegates to begin a denomination-wide conversation
36 within their congregations about divesting from fossil fuels or exercising shareholder
37 influence. Congregations might discuss the following.

- 38 1. Stopping any new direct investments in fossil fuel companies as listed in
39 Carbon Tracker’s reports;
- 40 2. Divesting of all direct securities holdings in fossil fuel companies within the
41 next 5 years;
- 42 3. Investing in diversified, socially responsible, and climate-friendly securities,
43 and securities in the renewable energy and efficiency sector;
- 44 4. Investing in making their own facilities more energy efficient, make
45 widespread use of renewable energy, adopt conservation and efficiency
46 measures;
- 47 5. Evaluating the effectiveness of shareholder advocacy; and
- 48 6. Retaining the option for owning the minimum number of shares to be an
49 activist shareholder. These shares are to be “influence payments” and not
50 “investments.”

Unincorporated Amendments

Unincorporated Amendment A: Line 38 and line 47: Delete items 1 and 5. (I) (CSW Reasoning: Changes the intent of the AIW.)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Line 23: Delete the number “200” and replace it with the word “all.” (I) (CSW Reasoning: Number is specific to named organization)

Unincorporated Amendment C: Line 13: Insert as a footnote “Bill McKibben, 2012, <http://math.350.org>; <http://gofossilfree.org/faq>. (G) (CSW Reasoning: Footnotes are not part of an AIW)