

CSW Alert! For Off-Siters

SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • PORTLAND 2015
Friday, June 26, 2015

Today's schedule includes the Debate and Vote on the Reproductive Justice SOC.

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 – Reproductive Justice – 2012-2016

Draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) – Reproductive Justice – TODAY, General Session III - Debate and Vote on SOC – 8:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.– Friday, June 26

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

AIWs

Deadline 2—Friday, June 26, 5:00 PM Pacific time– GA Office,

The AIW forms with the onsite delegate signatures must be submitted to the CSW at the GA Office and to socialwitness@uua.org by the Friday deadline. Proposed AIWs must be submitted by this deadline to be considered.

AIW Vote 1—Saturday, June 27, General Session IV. Delegates select 3 proposed AIWs to admit to the agenda for consideration on Sunday.

AIW Mini-Assemblies, Saturday June 27, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m. Pacific time. There will be a virtual mini-assembly for off-site delegates. This are the only opportunities to suggest changes/propose amendments to the 3 proposed AIWs selected for consideration. Use the attached Amendment Form.

AIW Vote 2—Sunday afternoon, June 28, General Session VI. Delegates vote whether to adopt each of the 3 proposed AIWs.

*Questions? You can access CSW members via socialwitness@uua.org.
UUA Commission on Social Witness – www.uua.org/statements*

Proposed Statement of Conscious
REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

1 As Unitarian Universalists, we embrace the reproductive justice framework, which espouses the human right
2 to have children, not to have children, to parent the children one has in healthy environments and ~~the human~~
3 ~~rights~~ to safeguard bodily autonomy and to express one's sexuality freely. *The reproductive justice movement*
4 ~~emerged because~~ was founded at a time when the unique range of issues faced by women of color were not
5 addressed by ~~neither~~ the predominantly white middle class women's rights and reproductive rights
6 movements nor the predominately male civil rights movement. ~~addressed the unique range of issues that~~
7 ~~women of color faced.~~ Those issues have included forced sterilization, forced contraception, and higher rates of
8 removal of children from families due to accusations of abuse or neglect. These issues, coupled with systemic
9 racism, have frequently made parenting or co-parenting more difficult due to many factors, including but not
10 limited to, discriminatory and unequal implementation of laws and unequal incarceration rates, prohibitions
11 imposed on ~~ex-felons~~ people after incarceration, unjust immigration policies, and economic insecurity.

12
13 Reproductive justice is the term created by ~~black~~ women of color in 1994, to center the experience of the
14 most vulnerable, and to bridge the gap between reproductive rights and other social justice movements.
15 ~~Those women became~~ Some of these women helped to found SisterSong and have explained that the
16 reproductive justice framework “represents a shift for women advocating for control of their bodies -- from a
17 narrower focus on legal access and individual choice... to a broader analysis of racial, economic, cultural, and
18 structural constraints on [their] power. Reproductive justice addresses the social reality of inequality,
19 specifically, the inequality of opportunities that [women of color] have to control [their] reproductive
20 destiny.”¹ ~~To the Reproductive Justice framework,~~ We as Unitarian Universalists add declare that all people
21 have the right to self-expression with regards to gender and sexuality and the right to live free from sexual
22 violence, intimate partner violence, and exploitation including sexual and reproductive exploitation.

23
24 The reproductive justice movement envisions the liberation of people of all genders, sexual orientations,
25 ~~ability levels~~ abilities, gender identities, ages, classes, and cultural and racial identities. Such liberation
26 requires not only accurate information about sexuality and reproduction and control of personal
27 reproductive decisions, but also living wages, safe and supported housing, high quality and comprehensive
28 medical and reproductive health care, access to voting and the political process, affordable legal
29 representation, fair immigration policies, paid parental leave, affordable childcare, ~~and control of personal~~
30 ~~reproductive decisions as well as accurate information about sexuality and reproduction,~~ and the absence of
31 individual and institutional violence.

32
33 The world we envision includes social, political, legal, and economic systems that support everyone's freedom
34 of reproductive choice and expression of gender identity and sexuality, especially the most vulnerable and
35 marginalized. In such a world all communities are places of equality, abundance and safety, free from
36 violence, oppression, and hazardous environments. This world includes access to safe, affordable, and
37 culturally and developmentally appropriate, ~~and safe~~ child care and health care. In our vision everyone has
38 access to accurate information about sexuality and family planning, and safe, healthy, and culturally-
39 ~~appropriate~~ sensitive reproductive health services. ~~, and information about sexuality and family planning.~~

40
41 Our faith tradition has a long history of progressive witness for freedom and justice. Soon after the merger
42 of Universalism and Unitarianism, the new Association (1961) adopted statements in support of civil rights

¹ From “**Why is Reproductive Justice Important for Women of Color?**” [on the SisterSong website](#).

43 and the rights of women. In time, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations added advocacy
44 for those facing oppression based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. We have
45 offered sexuality education across the lifespan within our congregations, and have advocated for these
46 beliefs in the public sphere.

47
48 As participants in the reproductive justice movement, Unitarian Universalists commit to follow the lead of ~~take~~
49 ~~the lead from~~, act in solidarity with, and be accountable to communities of color and other marginalized
50 groups, using our positions of power ~~in~~ to support ~~of~~ those communities' priorities. Both those affected and
51 their allies ~~have~~ play important roles ~~to play~~. Unitarian Universalists are laying the groundwork for the
52 transformative power of multicultural organizing in partnership with reproductive justice organizations and
53 leaders, looking for leadership from ~~to~~ those most affected ~~for leadership~~. We will use our position to speak
54 loudly in the religious arena, as the religious voice has often been used to limit access to reproductive justice.

55 THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING

56 As Unitarian Universalists we covenant to uphold our seven principles. The first, second and sixth principles
57 are the most applicable to Reproductive Justice. We are all ~~sexual~~ relational beings with varying abilities,
58 preferences, and identities. Unitarian Universalism calls us to advocate for the positive expression of sexuality,
59 including choices about reproduction and nurturing, and for a culture of respect and empowerment. Our
60 commitment to our principles calls us to support and partner with ~~historically~~ oppressed communities as we
61 work together to build the world we dream about. In order to embody our principles, we as Unitarian
62 Universalists must listen to and follow the lead of those from the affected communities, especially women of
63 color, women from the affected communities and reach outside our cultural assumptions.

64
65
66 Unitarian Universalists support gender equity, positive sexuality, diverse sexual expression and the individual's
67 right to make reproductive choices. Such choices are influenced by social and political systems as well as by
68 factors such as racial/cultural identity, economic status, immigration/citizenship status, relationship with the
69 ~~criminal~~ justice system, health status, and ability. Our religious tradition directs us to respect the diversity of
70 faith traditions that surround us and insists that no singular religious viewpoint or creed guide the policies of
71 our governments.

72 Our pluralistic congregations include diverse beliefs, backgrounds, and personal stories. We do not agree on
73 many issues, including when life begins and the rights of the unborn. Yet we unite in striving to live out the
74 values and principles that call us to work for reproductive justice in spite of the complexities of the issues.

75 ACTIONS

76 We commit to putting our values into action, striving for equality and justice and honoring the rights, needs
77 and choices of ~~others~~ everyone. Affirming the interconnected web of life with justice for all people, we
78 commit to undertake actions that could include the following.

79 As individuals we can

- 80
81
82 ➤ Study reproductive justice issues, including sexuality, gender identity, classism, ~~ability level~~ ableism, sexual
83 violence, immigration, and racism.
84 ➤ ~~Acknowledge personal biases and stories.~~ Seek to understand and take responsibility for our personal
85 biases.
86 ➤ Risk telling our own stories, and be willing to truly hear and trust the stories of others.
87 ➤ Work to accept one's own body, sexuality, and abilities.
88 ➤ Adopt spiritual practices that contribute to self-care.

- 89 ➤ Advocate for reproductive justice and related issues through op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, letters and
90 visits to legislators, and direct action.
- 91 ➤ Volunteer with and/or provide financial support to organizations that provide reproductive health services
92 at little or no cost, abortion clinics, women’s shelters, and child and family community support centers.
- 93 ➤ Protest violations of basic human rights, including sexual trafficking and the inhumane treatment of sex
94 workers.
- 95 ➤ Support reproductive health/abortion clinics that are experiencing ~~demonstrations~~ intimidation and
96 spiritual or physical violence.
- 97 ➤ Effect positive change within our own social circles and professions.
- 98 ➤ ~~Join reproductive justice groups as a member or an ally member.~~ Support reproductive justice groups as
99 active participants or accountable allies.
- 100 ➤ Consider ~~candidates’ positions on~~ these issues when voting.
- 101 ➤ ~~Work to~~ Eliminate barriers (economic, educational, language, accessibility, etc.) to reproductive justice
102 services. ~~necessary to ensure reproductive justice.~~
- 103 ➤ Provide leadership in our congregation and community on these issues.
- 104 ➤ ~~Financially contribute~~ Contribute financially to organizations that advocate for reproductive justice issues,
105 including the social determinants underlying racism, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia,
106 transphobia, and other forms of oppressions.
- 107 ➤ Work to eliminate legal restrictions on adoption and foster care for LGBTIQ families.

108
109 In our relationships we can

- 110 ➤ Respect all people and their decisions regarding reproduction even those with whom we disagree.
- 111 ➤ Minister to one another around reproductive health and reproductive justice issues.
- 112 ➤ Be sensitive to others’ stories, respecting their life experiences and lived realities.
- 113 ➤ Accept people of all abilities, identities, orientations, and generations as sexual beings.
- 114 ➤ Accompany anyone wanting support (i.e. e.g. while seeking government assistance, in making decisions for
115 their families about pregnancy and adoption, during abortions, and during childbirth).
- 116 ➤ ~~Teach children and youth about and model healthy sexuality and relationships.~~ Engage children and youth
117 in dialogue and learning about sexuality and relationships in ways that respect their self-expression and
118 contributions.
- 119 ➤ Seek and accept leadership from people most affected by reproductive injustice.

120
121 In our congregations we can

- 122 ➤ Form a reproductive justice group, task force, ~~or~~ committee, or interfaith coalition.
- 123 ➤ Invite and consult with reproductive justice advocates and groups to share their understanding and
124 expertise, and/or conduct reproductive justice trainings.
- 125 ➤ Connect religious professionals and lay leaders with organizations and networks that promote
126 reproductive and economic justice and human rights.
- 127 ➤ ~~Expect~~ Encourage religious professionals and lay leaders to participate in reproductive justice-related
128 education and training.
- 129 ➤ Provide ministry and pastoral care that is inclusive of all people and reproductive justice issues.
- 130 ➤ Offer worship, discussion, and small group ministry on reproductive justice issues.
- 131 ➤ Develop and promote congregational statements on reproductive justice.
- 132 ➤ Provide spaces, programs, and teaching for community groups working on reproductive justice issues.
- 133 ➤ Provide education to children, youth and adults that are age, ability, and identity appropriate.
- 134 ➤ Engage children, youth, and adults in dialogue and learning about healthy sexuality and relationships in
135 ways that respect their self-expression and contributions.

- 136 ➤ Join with state legislative ministry organizations and interfaith networks in their advocacy for reproductive
137 rights or organize such advocacy.
138 ➤ Communicate reproductive justice information using the congregation’s virtual community networks,
139 newsletters, and orders of service.
140 ➤ Implement Safe Congregations guidelines and practices.
141 ➤ Continue Welcoming Congregation advocacy and education efforts related to gender and sexuality.
142 ➤ Reach out and participate in interfaith and secular work on racism, classism, gender and/or sexual health
143 issues.
144 ➤ Welcome breastfeeding in our shared spaces.

145
146 As an Association we can

- 147 ➤ Publicly witness for reproductive justice.
148 ➤ Advocate for just legislation and policies and the rights of families and individuals at the state and federal
149 levels.
150 ➤ Advocate for ~~the right to access~~ comprehensive reproductive health services, including contraception,
151 prenatal care, abortion, and infertility treatment. ~~information and services.~~
152 ➤ Advocate for the right to access comprehensive and medically accurate reproductive health information.
153 ➤ Support UU state legislative ministry organizations in their work that supports reproductive justice.
154 ➤ Provide curricula, resources, current information, and networking opportunities that congregations can
155 use in their reproductive justice education and advocacy efforts.
156 ➤ Collaborate with other faith-based and secular organizations working for reproductive justice and related
157 issues, in order to build a stronger, more intersectional justice movement.
158 ➤ Present reproductive justice workshops at district/regional, national, and international meetings.

159
160 With open minds, helping hands, and loving hearts, we work toward reproductive justice, and commit to
161 replacing insecurity with safety, fear with acceptance, judgment with love, and shame with compassion.
162

Unincorporated Amendments:

Unincorporated Amendment A: Lines 89 and 114: Add a new line: “Work to eliminate legal barriers preventing adoptees from getting information about their biological parents.” (CSW Reasoning: Requires further discussion.)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Lines 61-62: Delete the sentence “We do not agree on many issues, including when life begins and the rights of the unborn.” (CSW Reasoning: Requires further discussion).

Unincorporated Amendment C: Line 89: Add a new line: “Support all parents, regardless of age, race, income, or other factors, that can undermine access to support and resources.” (CSW Reasoning: Requires further discussion).

Unincorporated Amendment D: Line 98: Add a new line “Believe the survivors who share their experience of sexual and/or interpersonal violence. Listen with compassion, offer support, and avoid victim-blaming language.” (CSW Reasoning: Further discussion needed).

Unincorporated Amendment E: Line 46: Change the heading of the sub-section “Theological Grounding” to “Grounding Principles.” (CSW Reasoning: theological is appropriate in this context).

Unincorporated Amendment F: Line 123: Change to “Publicly witness and advocate for sexual and reproductive justice in the US and around the world.” (CSW Reasoning: Sentence changes the scope.)

Unincorporated Amendment G: Line 1: Eliminate the word “framework”. (CSW Reasoning: Framework espouses, RJ does not espouse.)

Unincorporated Amendment H: Line 13: Add “workplace systems” before “economic systems”. (CSW Reasoning: Economic systems include workplace systems).

Unincorporated Amendment I: Line 18: After “reproductive health services” add “comprehensive sexuality education, birth control, and abortion.” Delete the words “and information about sexuality and family planning.” The line now reads: “...culturally-appropriate reproductive health services, including comprehensive sexuality education, birth control, and abortion.” (CSW Reasoning: Addressed in already incorporated amendment).

Unincorporated Amendment J: Line 48: Change “sexual beings” to “human beings”. (CSW Reasoning: it changes the meaning of the sentence).

Unincorporated Amendment K: Line 60: Add the line: “True religious freedom benefits Unitarian Universalism and our greater culture, and must be respected by government and civil society.” (CSW Reasoning: too dogmatic).

Unincorporated Amendment L: Line 64: Add, “The foregoing worthy affirmations notwithstanding, this Resolution also affirms the worth to children and to society that parents create and to the best of their ability sustain a marital relationship within which to raise children in a stable and supportive manner.” (CSW Reasoning: too wordy).

Unincorporated Amendment M: Line 73-74: Combine these lines into one so they read: “Work to accept one’s own body, sexuality, and abilities, and adopt spiritual practices that contribute to self-care.” (CSW Reasoning: Lines need to remain separate because there are two distinct ideas).

Unincorporated Amendment N: Line 73: Add “...and the bodies, sexualities, and abilities of others.” (CSW Reasoning: this section is under “individual” and this statement is “relational”).

Unincorporated Amendment O: Line 85: Add text so it reads: “Work to oppose religious refusal laws and eliminate any other policies that create barriers to services ...” (CSW Reasoning: religious refusal laws are too topical).

Unincorporated Amendment P: Line 89: Change to: “Work to ensure equity and respect and eliminate discrimination and coercion for all participants in the adoption and foster care system.” (CSW Reasoning: Changes the context and meaning).

Unincorporated Amendment Q: Line 95: Change to: “Accompany anyone wanting support as they make decisions related to, or access, sexual or reproductive-health-related services.” (CSW Reasoning: Support is not only while one is making decisions).

Unincorporated Amendment R: Line 98: Add new line “Model healthy sexuality and relationships for our community.” (CSW Reasoning: Unclear what this would look like).

Unincorporated Amendment S: Line 113: Strike “legislative ministry” and replace with “statewide”. (CSW Reasoning: Changes the meaning of the sentence.)

Unincorporated Amendment T: Line 122: Repeat Line 89. (CSW Reasoning: Redundant to repeat a line).

Unincorporated Amendment U: Line 13: After “we” add “and the reproductive justice framework”, so it reads, “we and the reproductive framework envisions”. (CSW Reasoning: Grammatically unclear).

Unincorporated Amendment V: Line 15: Replace “abundance” with “true sufficiency of resources”. (CSW Reasoning: Too wordy).

Unincorporated Amendment W: Line 17: Add safe “contraception, health care, and child care.” (CSW Reasoning: specific location of this amendment proposal unclear).

Unincorporated Amendment X: Line 25: Change, “these beliefs” to “reproductive justice”. (CSW Reasoning: Beliefs refer to comprehensive sexuality education, not reproductive justice).

Unincorporated Amendment Y: Line 42: Change “laying” to “joining”. (CSW Reasoning: Grammatically incorrect).

Unincorporated Amendment Z: Line 56: Add “their own” reproductive choices. (CSW Reasoning: Grammatical number disagreement).

Unincorporated Amendment AA: Line 2: Change “not to have children” to “to **not** have children.” (CSW Reasoning: Grammatically incorrect).