

CSW Alert!

SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • PORTLAND Sunday, June 28, 2015

Actions of Immediate Witness

Debate and Vote on Five Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) – General Session VI – 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

In the Sunday afternoon General Session, you'll have the opportunity to debate and vote on each of the three proposed AIWs added to the agenda on Saturday. All three may be adopted if each receives the required two-thirds vote.

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. The three revised AIWs are:

AIW-A: Support the Black Lives Matters Movement

AIW-B: Support a Strong, Compassionate Global Climate Agreement in 2015. Act for a Livable Climate

AIW-E: End Immigrant Child and Family Detention Now

FUTURE ACTIONS

Congregational Study/Action Issues

Engage in study and action related to Escalating Inequality.

Engage in actions to implement the Statement of Conscience: Reproductive Justice and other previously adopted SOCs, available at www.uua.org/statements.

Propose New Congregational Study/Action Issues by October 1. See the Proposer's Guide – Part I, available at www.uua.org/statements/process/guide

Actions of Immediate Witness

Use adopted AIWs to advocate in your congregations and districts. 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.

The social witness process is our communal process.

Implementation of our adopted statements is everyone's responsibility.

Join the CSW list serve by going to www.uua.org/lists.

**Proposed 2015 Action of Immediate Witness A:
Support the Black Lives Matter Movement**

1 **Because** Unitarian Universalists strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

2 **Because** Unitarian Universalists have a goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice
3 for all; and

4 **Because** Allowing injustice to go ~~unanswered unchallenged, when we (UUs) have the power to~~
5 ~~stand up and protest unfair and unjust circumstances, is not an effectual embodiment a violation~~
6 of our principles;

7 **Whereas,** The Black Lives Matter movement has gained ~~a powerful amount of~~ traction in
8 conjunction with recent tragic events involving, in particular, police brutality and
9 institutionalized racism that targets the black community;

10 **Whereas,** Tanisha Anderson, Rekia Boyd, Michael Brown, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux,
11 Shelly Frey, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Kayla Moore, Tamir Rice, and Tony
12 Robinson are just a few names of people who were recently killed ~~fatally affected~~ by the racism
13 that exists in the United States today;

14 **Whereas,** People of all ages and races are killed by law enforcement, yet black people ages 20-
15 24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement; ~~than the average of all races and~~
16 ~~ages;~~

17 **Whereas,** Mass incarceration fueled by for-profit prisons and racially biased police practices are
18 driving the disproportionate imprisonment of black and brown Americans;

19 **Whereas,** The school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of black students are
20 expelled from US public schools and one out of three black men are incarcerated during their
21 lifetime; and

22 **Whereas,** ~~The importance of Black Lives Matter movement and Black-led racial organizations~~
23 ~~must always continue to be supported;~~ We must continue to support the Black Lives Matter
24 movement and Black-led racial justice organizations;

25 **Therefore, be it resolved**

- 26 • That the 2015 General Assembly ~~urges calls~~ member congregations ~~to consider this~~
27 ~~situation a call to action,~~ in order to become closer to a just world community, and in
28 order to prevent future circumstances of this nature; and
29 • That the 2015 General Assembly urges member congregations to engage in intentional
30 learning spaces to organize for racial justice with recognition of the interconnected nature
31 of racism coupled with systems of oppression that impact people based on class, gender
32 identity, sexual orientation, ability and language; and

- 33 • That the 2015 General Assembly encourages member congregations and all Unitarian
34 Universalists to work towards ~~making~~ police reform and prison abolition a ~~tangible~~
35 ~~presence in America~~; and
36 • That the 2015 General Assembly recognizes that a system that allows oppression to
37 thrive is not a system that can successfully undergo reform, and therefore should be
38 abolished altogether and replaced with a system of transformative justice; and
39 • That the 2015 General Assembly recognizes that the fight for civil rights and equality is
40 as real today as it was decades ago, and urges member congregations to take initiative in
41 collaboration with local and national organizations fighting for racial justice ~~and fight~~
42 ~~against the harsh racist practices many black people are exposed to.~~ ~~including working~~
43 ~~with local and national organizations fighting for racial justice.~~

44 No matter who you are, black lives matter, and a system of fair, transformative, and restorative
45 justice that is accountable to communities is something ~~you have~~ each of us has a right to.
46 Unitarian Universalists and our greater society have the power to make this happen. Let's do it!

Unincorporated Amendments

Unincorporated Amendment A: Line 24: Insert: “Whereas, a hate-filled individual massacred nine innocent black individuals at a bible study class at Emanuel AME Church in Charlestown, SC, shortly before we convened this General Assembly. (CSW Reasoning: Warrants further discussion.)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Delete line 44-46 “That the 2015 General Assembly encourages member congregations and all Unitarian Universalists to work towards a police reform and prison abolition a tangible presence in America” (CSW Reasoning: Warrants further discussion.)

Unincorporated Amendment C: Delete line 47-49 “That the 2015 General Assembly recognizes that a system that allows oppression to thrive is not a system that can successfully undergo reform, and therefore should be abolished altogether and replaced with a system of transformative justice;” (CSW Reasoning: Warrants further discussion.)

Unincorporated Amendment D: Replace Line 45 “...Universalists, to work making police reform and prison abolition a tangible presence in the United States” with the following: “...Universalists, to work for police reform to eliminate racial profiling, harassment, and excessive use of force. We also call for reform of our justice system to increase support and rehabilitation services, to explore transformative justice, and to make incarceration a last resort” (CSW Reasoning: Changes meaning)

Unincorporated Amendment E: Edit Line 45- change “abolition” to “reform” (CSW Reasoning: Changes meaning)

Unincorporated Amendment F: Line 32: Change to “The Black racial justice organizations are working to right the above wrongs;” (CSW Reasoning: Changes the meaning.)

Unincorporated Amendment G: Line 28: "...are expelled for marginal offenses." (CSW Reasoning: Requires Documentation)

Unincorporated Amendment H: Delete lines 16-19. (CSW Reasoning: Diminishes the context.)

Unincorporated Amendment I: Edit Line 32 to read "The black racial justice organizations are working to right the above wrongs;" (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Unincorporated Amendment J: Edit Line 56 to read "The UUA and Unitarian Universalists have the power to move our country to justice for all, to insure that black lives are as valued and protected as much as everyone else in this country." (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Unincorporated Amendment K: Line 56: Change to, "No matter who you are, you have a right to a system of restorative justice that is accountable to communities and we have the power to make that happen." (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Unincorporated Amendment L: Line 57: Change to, "Something to which you have a right. We have the power to make that happen." (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Unincorporated Amendment M: Line 56: Change to, "The UUA and Unitarian Universalists have the power to move our country to justice for all, to ensure that black lives are as valued and protected as much as everyone else in this country." (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Unincorporated Amendment N: Line 8: Insert: "Whereas, the Black Lives Matter movement and black-led organizations must always be supported." (CSW Reasoning: similar edits already accepted)

Proposed 2015 Action of Immediate Witness B
Support a Strong, Compassionate Global Climate Agreement in 2015
Act for a Livable Climate

- 1 **BECAUSE:** Global climate change is fundamentally a moral and ethical crisis induced and
2 exacerbated by human activity that can and must be modified to maintain a livable world for
3 ourselves, our descendants, and other species;
- 4 **BECAUSE:** Looming ecological catastrophes impacting food, water, and disease threaten
5 the vulnerable and our descendants with mass suffering;
- 6 **BECAUSE:** *The crisis of climate change is the gravest threat facing our world today,*
7 recently wrote Peter Morales (UUA President) and Bill Schulz (UUSC President and CEO);
- 8 **BECAUSE:** We can act to limit the harmful consequences of climate change by ~~building~~
9 ~~strength for~~ effective risk-management (adaption and mitigation, including emission
10 reductions, development of renewable energy, etc.), with sufficient motivation, persistence,
11 optimism, and will;
- 12 **BECAUSE:** Our Principles impel us to act on climate change. The web of life is threatened;
13 climate catastrophes (in near and long term) disproportionately impact the poor,
14 disadvantaged, elderly, women, and children; issues of equity, justice, democracy, speaking
15 truth, and defending the right of conscience are associated; and our descendants are
16 threatened, raising intergenerational equity issues;
- 17 **BECAUSE:** Unitarian Universalists overwhelmingly voted to adopt a Statement of
18 Conscience on the Threat of Global Warming and Climate Change in 2006, calling
19 Unitarian Universalists into action to mitigate climate change;
- 20 **BECAUSE:** There can be no long-term solution to many social justice issues with which
21 Unitarian Universalists are concerned without a viable solution to the climate problem; and
- 22 **BECAUSE:** We are responsible as people of faith to mitigate, avert, and limit the potential
23 catastrophes of climate change, standing with other faith traditions caring for our common
24 home;
- 25 **WHEREAS:** Unitarian Universalists have made a commitment to climate justice and stand
26 in solidarity with first nation peoples, who are disproportionately affected by climate
27 disruption;
- 28 **WHEREAS:** An international climate agreement is critical for reducing risk of the myriad
29 severe climate impacts and also increasing positive opportunities for all people;
- 30 **WHEREAS:** In December 2015, many nations of the world will gather in Paris for their last
31 opportunity to negotiate the most important climate agreement in history;

32 **THEREFORE: BE IT RESOLVED**, that the 2015 UU General Assembly calls for
33 Unitarian Universalists to unify and provide ethical and moral leadership for climate action
34 and to do so within our congregations and within our multi-faith communities;

35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Unitarian Universalists will support local actions
36 such as the Lummi Nations opposition to the Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal on sacred
37 lands;

38 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Unitarian Universalists will participate in and support
39 mobilizations nationally such as the Moral March for Climate Justice in September 2015
40 during the Papal visit to Washington DC, pressing our government to act urgently and
41 responsibly;

42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, this General Assembly endorses a Unitarian Universalist
43 delegation to the UN Climate Agreement Talks in December 2015 in support of ~~to bring~~
44 ~~our strong clear voice, working with others, to lead and conclude with~~ a strong,
45 compassionate, fair, ambitious, binding, and enforceable international climate agreement.
46 Without a global climate agreement, the climate crisis will not be sufficiently addressed and
47 many social justice issues will continue to magnify.

Unincorporated Amendments:

Unincorporated Amendment A: Line 19: Add BECAUSE our seven UU principles are drawn from many sources, including humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science. (CSW Reasoning: Many of our Sources support working to mitigate climate change.)

Unincorporated Amendment B: Delete lines 10-12 and 22-26. (CSW Reasoning: Requires more discussion)

Unincorporated Amendment C: Line 4: Add “unchecked population growth and activity”. (CSW Reasoning: Requires more discussion).

Unincorporated Amendment D: Line 26: Add “BECAUSE” we are in the midst of the sixth great extinction event, which is this time human-caused. (CSW Reasoning: Requires more discussion).

Proposed 2015 Action of Immediate Witness C:
TITLE: End Immigrant Child and Family Detention (~~Prison Camps~~) Now

1 **BECAUSE** our Unitarian Universalist values call on us to honor the inherent worth and dignity
2 of every person;

3 **BECAUSE** the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) of Congregations affirmed in their
4 2013 Statement of Conscience on Immigration as a Moral Issue that a moral immigration policy
5 would provide alternatives to detention for those not considered a threat to society and humane
6 treatment for those being detained; and

7 **BECAUSE** the recently-enacted practice of family detention is inconsistent with our Unitarian
8 Universalist values;

9 **WHEREAS** thousands of children and their mothers have been coming to the United States
10 during the past two years to escape violence in their Central American home countries;

11 **WHEREAS** these women and children are treated without dignity, without access to sanitary
12 conditions, clean water, healthy food, and are forced to wear prison clothes;

13 **WHEREAS** immigrants imprisoned in detention centers, (including, but not limited to, former
14 prisons and for-profit-detention-centers operating under deplorable conditions), often experience
15 permanent psychological damage, physical violence, and emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse
16 during their incarceration;

17 **WHEREAS** these women and children are generally not considered to be a threat, nor do they
18 meet the Department of Homeland Security priority categories; and

19 **WHEREAS** there are many other ways, with documented success, that the government can
20 ensure that immigrants show up at their hearings, such as non-profit shelters and family or
21 community placements, that can connect them with needed services and US relatives (when
22 applicable).

23 **THEREFORE:**

24 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the UUA urge the US government to treat all immigrants humanely,
25 and in particular to use alternatives to incarceration humane approaches to ensure that
26 immigrants show up at their hearings;

27 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the UUA call on President Obama, Congress, and US
28 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to close the family detention centers and
29 immediately release those detained who do not meet priority criteria;

30 **AND FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2015 General Assembly encourage member
31 congregations to take actions, such as:

32 1. Educating ourselves and others about the family detention centers (“UU World”, May 8,
33 2015);

- 34 2. Signing the UUSC petition calling on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and
35 the White House to end family detention;
36 3. Reaching out to and partnering with community organizations in their area working to
37 end family detention, including connecting with groups organizing visits to detention
38 centers;
39 4. Contacting elected officials and encouraging them to stand on the side of love and end
40 family detention by closing family detention centers; and
41 5. Connecting with and supporting Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services
42 and Education (UURISE) in their work connecting and supporting UUs, member
43 congregations, and state advocacy networks in their work for immigrant justice.
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Unincorporated Amendments

Unincorporated Amendment A: Change the Title: Change the word “Detention” to
“Incarceration”. (CSW: Changing the title warrants further discussion.)