

CSW Alert!

SPEAK OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • COLUMBUS Sunday, June 26, 2016

Actions of Immediate Witness

Debate and Vote on Three Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) – General Session V – 1:15 p.m. – 3:45 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: Build Solidarity With Our Muslim Neighbors

AIW-B: Some Guns, All Guns: Legislating Appropriate Restrictions

AIW-F: Stop The Hate: Protect and Support our Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Family

FUTURE ACTIONS

Congregational Study/Action Issues

Engage in study and action related to Escalating Inequality and The Corruption of Our Democracy.

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 2016 Action of Immediate Witness A:
Build Solidarity with our Muslims Neighbors

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3 BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist Association’s Principles call us as member congregations to
4 affirm and promote “The inherent worth and dignity of every person” and “The goal of world
5 community with peace, liberty, and justice for all”;

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7 WHEREAS our living tradition draws from many sources, including “Wisdom from the world’s
8 religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life” and “Jewish and Christian teachings
9 which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves”;

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11 WHEREAS the United States Constitution is founded in part on the freedom of religious belief
12 and practice;

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14 ~~WHEREAS the vast majority of American Muslims are peaceful and denounce terrorism and~~
15 ~~violence;~~

16
17 WHEREAS the histories of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism affirm the
18 importance and centrality of freedom of religious belief and practice in this country;

19
20 WHEREAS Muslims and others perceived as Muslims in the United States have faced increased
21 levels of discrimination and hate crimes since 9/11;

22
23 WHEREAS an additional layer of fear, prejudice and xenophobia have arisen following the Paris
24 and San Bernardino terrorist attacks in 2015 and the Belgium and Orlando attacks in 2016; and
25 some politicians have been calling for a ban on immigration and increased (unnecessary)
26 surveillance for all Muslims following these events;

27
28 WHEREAS the refugee crisis in Syria has become a target of this fear, prejudice and
29 xenophobia;

30
31 WHEREAS Muslim leaders ~~in the Detroit area and elsewhere~~ have reached out to Unitarian
32 Universalists asking for our partnership to combat Islamophobia, ~~and subsequently the~~
33 ~~MidAmerica Regional Assembly overwhelmingly voted at its Regional Assembly to ask~~
34 ~~MidAmerica congregations to support these actions; and congregations have responded with~~
35 support;

36
37 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2016 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist
38 Association expresses its love, respect and support for Muslims in our communities and
39 encourages its member congregations to:

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- 41 • build bridges of partnership with Muslim neighbors in our local areas;
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 - 43 • increase understanding of Islam within and beyond our local congregations especially in
 - 44 this political moment;

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- learn more about and act on the realities of religious discrimination and the Syrian various ongoing refugee crisis crises and support refugees (Syrian and other) within our communities;
- challenge acts and words of Islamophobia in solidarity and coordination with Muslims;
- proactively advocate against Islamophobic bills and actions in our local and national governments, paying particular attention to increased surveillance and anti-immigration efforts; and
- work in this election cycle to foster greater inclusion of all peoples, regardless of their religious, ethnic, national, or racial identity(ies).

Unincorporated Amendments

- a. Line 8 – delete and “Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by” and add “...” before “loving”

[as is, the language is from our UU sources and is relevant grounding for the statement]

- b. Line 47 – substitute “including the Syrian crisis and the Palestinian occupation” for the language starting with “and the various...”

[an alternative incorporated amendment was accepted]

- c. Line 1 – replace title with “Build Solidarity with the Muslim Community”

[an alternative incorporated amendment was accepted]

Proposed 2016 Action of Immediate Witness B:
Some Guns, All Guns: Legislating Appropriate Restrictions

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3 As the United States continues a national discussion on ending gun violence, tragedy continues.
4 The recent attack at the Pulse nightclub, taking the lives of 49 people and injuring 53 more,
5 highlights an epidemic that claims 89 lives a day across the nation. While some aspects of gun
6 violence are complex and systemic, there is immediate action that we can take.

7
8 We can ensure responsible gun ownership with laws that keep **some guns** out of the hands of all
9 people, and **all guns** out of the hands of some people.

10
11 First, we call upon state and federal legislators to make it a crime for civilians to knowingly
12 import, sell, manufacture, retrofit or transfer, ~~or possess~~ a semiautomatic assault weapon or large
13 capacity ammunition feeding device. There is simply no reason for private citizens to have
14 access to weapons like the MCX Carbine firearm used to murder the 49 people in the Pulse
15 Night Club in Orlando on June 12, 2016. These weapons are military weapons, have immense
16 destructive power and do not belong in civilian hands. Specifically, we call on legislators to
17 follow the lead of the seven states – California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Maryland,
18 New Jersey and New York – that already ban assault weapons and to join those seven states plus
19 Colorado ~~In addition, join the eight states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii,~~
20 ~~Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York, that already prohibit~~ in prohibiting large
21 capacity ammunition feeding devices that hold over 10 rounds.

22
23 Second, we call upon the states and the federal government to implement comprehensive,
24 universal background checks. Legal access to guns is still too easy – and this recent tragedy is
25 only the latest in a long line of examples. In particular, the states should enable and require all
26 ~~private parties (those who are not federal or state licensed dealers (private or licensed))~~ to conduct
27 a background check before selling any firearm. Simultaneously, ~~the state of Florida~~ all states
28 that do not currently do so should ensure that all relevant records are provided to the FBI's
29 National Instant Criminal Background Check (NICS).

30
31 Policies such as expanding background checks to cover all gun sales would help keep guns out of
32 the hands of criminals, felons, domestic abusers, and others already deemed illegal purchasers.
33 Background checks are supported by 90 percent of Americans, including the vast majority of gun
34 owners, because they make us all safer. Since 1994, the Brady law has blocked over 2.4 million
35 purchases.

36
37 These regulations will not finish the task of building the world we dream of, but they will keep
38 innumerable people safe as we continue to address broader issues of hate rhetoric, cultural
39 violence, suicide and access to mental health care.

40
41 As Unitarian Universalists we affirm the worth and dignity of all people, and promote justice,
42 equity, and compassion in human relations. This General Assembly calls on Unitarian
43 Universalists to work together and in collaboration with others to ensure that the states and

44 federal government create safe and responsible gun ownership legislation and a more just and
45 compassionate world.

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Unincorporated Amendments

a. Line 39 – remove “mental health care”

[already accepted other wording]

b. Line 30 – add “furthermore, we support dialogue with lobbying institutions such as the
NRA and encourage research on this issue”

[does not meet criteria of immediacy]

c. Line 9 – Insert “The US Constitution states in article 2 ‘a well- regulated militia being
necessary’; we suggest documentation as to which militia the buyer belongs”.

[awkward phrasing]

d. Line 27 – add “and ban gun ownership from anyone on the no fly list of having a history
of mental illness as diagnosed by a credentialed medical professional”

[concerns about justice issues with this language]

e. Line 11 – Replace the words “for civilians” with “any person or entity” and add on Line
18 “for any purpose other than military or law enforcement”

[overly wordy]

f. Line 13 – add “and work to clarify the definition of assault weapon”

[relevance is unclear]

g. Line 16 – replace “in civilian hands” with “in our communities”

[vague]

h. Line 36 – add “whereas strict laws which are not enforced are virtually worthless”

[Superfluous]

i. After final paragraph – “be it resolved that the laws pertaining to purchase of guns must
be strictly and timely enforced”

[Superfluous]

j. Line 1 – replace title with “Require Background screening for all gun sales and ban sales
of semi-automatic assault weapons”

[too wordy]

1 **Proposed 2016 Action of Immediate Witness F:**
2 **Stop The Hate: Protect and Support our Transgender and Gender**
3 **Non-Conforming Family Brothers and Sisters**

4 BECAUSE – “Injustice at Every Turn,” a 2011 nationwide survey of transgender and gender
5 non-conforming people, detailed overwhelming discrimination across multiple major areas of
6 their lives: education, employment, health, family life, housing, and public accommodations;

7 BECAUSE – Equality in all these areas is a fundamental human right;

8 BECAUSE – Transgender and gender non-conforming people are routinely mistreated while in
9 law enforcement custody;

10 BECAUSE – Transgender and gender non-conforming people ~~often have great difficulty in~~
11 ~~obtaining~~ face obstruction, harassment, and abuse in attempting to obtain identity documents in
12 their preferred true gender. This serves to increase the social isolation transgender and gender
13 non-conforming people experience and diminishes their ability to participate fully in society;

14 BECAUSE - Transgender and gender non-conforming people are ~~often~~ frequently isolated
15 socially as a result of hate and discrimination, which leads to a general lack of understanding in
16 our society concerning transgender and gender non-conforming people;

17 BECAUSE - This leads to transgender and gender non-conforming persons being at substantially
18 increased risk of violent attack;

19 BECAUSE – All of the discrimination, ~~poor treatment~~ harassment and increased risk of physical,
20 sexual and psychological violence that transgender and gender non-conforming people suffer
21 contribute to a shockingly high rate of attempted suicide - a rate ten times higher than the
22 average for the general population; and

23 WHEREAS – It is in keeping with our First Principle - The inherent worth and dignity of every
24 person; our Second Principle - Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and our Sixth
25 Principle - The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; ~~and our Seventh~~
26 ~~Principle – Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and~~

27 WHEREAS – The following actions are immediately needed to improve the life situations and
28 safety of transgender and gender non-conforming persons

29 BE IT RESOLVED - We, the Delegates of the 2016 UUA General Assembly call on Unitarian
30 Universalists to:

- 31 1. Strongly condemn the anti-transgender legislation recently passed in North Carolina,
32 known as HB-2, in Tennessee as HB-1840, and Mississippi as HB-1523, and call for their
33 immediate and full repeal;
- 34 2. Make a strong statement against the passage of any further bills targeting transgender and
35 gender non-conforming persons in other states where they are pending;

- 36 3. Support passage of The Fairness Act (which provides protection based on gender identity
37 and sexual orientation) and similar federal anti-discrimination legislation so that
38 transgender and gender non-conforming persons might have their ability to fully
39 participate in society affirmed and protected;
- 40 4. Pledge to educate health care professionals and law enforcement officers about
41 transgender and gender non-conforming people’s needs;
- 42 5. Pledge to educate legislators and other government officials about the need for
43 transgender and gender non-conforming people’s needs for proper identification
44 documents; and
- 45 6. Pledge to educate employers, agencies, and institutions about the needs of transgender
46 and gender non-conforming people who might be employees, students, clients and
47 customers, and encourage these companies employers, agencies and institutions to adopt
48 transgender-friendly affirming policies.

Unincorporated Amendments

- a. Insert after Line 39 - Pledge to educate ourselves and our faith and civic communities in order to provide ever safer, more inclusive, and potentially healing spaces for transgender and gender non-conforming people
[adds significantly to AIW]
- b. Insert after line 39 - Pledge to educate social workers and educators about transgender and gender non-conforming people’s needs
[adds significantly to AIW]
- c. Delete lines 36-39
[subtracts significantly from to AIW]
- d. Line 36: Insert definition of Fairness Act “The Fairness Act amends existing state or local civil rights laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Typically, this will prohibit discrimination in employments, public accommodations, education, credit or lending, and housing; create a private right of action for aggrieved individuals and provide for enforcement through a government agency.”
[offers legal interpretation]
- e. Line 13 – insert “allowing them to be affirmed and protected”
[cumbersome language]