

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Messages and Talking Points for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act
(for more information - www.uusj.org - advocacy@uusj.org)

Sample message to Members of Congress
(as of December 8, 2017)

As the House and Senate seek to reconcile their versions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) urges you to **vote against the Act**. We support genuine, honest reform of our tax system to make it simpler, fairer, and a reliable source of revenue for critical programs that help all Americans, following the principles that produced the widely-praised, bipartisan Tax Reform Act of 1986. The proposed bill does not meet these standards.

This legislation will add to the challenge of growing economic inequity, which is damaging the social fabric of our country. In 2017 the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly passed a Statement of Conscience on “Escalating Economic Inequity” which states: “Challenging extreme inequity locally and globally is a moral imperative. As a pragmatic faith we are committed to working to change economic and social systems with a goal of equitable outcomes of life, dignity, and well-being experienced by all.” **The tax system should fight inequity, not enable it.**

We urge you to support a fairer tax system that ensures a budget adequate to meet the needs of those disadvantaged by our economic system, not just the favored few. The deep cuts to corporate taxes will increase our deficit and lead to pressure to immediately reduce federal spending on programs that help the poor and middle class. They could trigger an immediate cut to Medicare of \$25 billion in 2018. As Unitarian Universalists we believe it is immoral to take from the poor to give to the rich - we call for a fair tax system that protects the most vulnerable.

We urge Congress to keep the individual mandate for the ACA. The American people support fixing the problems in the ACA, not repealing it.

We believe budget decisions on defense spending should be based on a careful review of our real security needs in a dynamic, changing world, and not be dictated by budget shortfalls.

We want Congress to restore regular order and use the traditional democratic process to ensure transparency.

We ask you to oppose a number of damaging provisions that are in the Senate bill or could be added from the House bill during negotiations. Specifically:

- Taking the Child Tax Credit away from a million low-income working families by requiring taxpayers to have a Social Security number to be eligible.

- Reducing or eliminating deductions for State and Local Taxes, which would hurt the ability of states to fund critical programs and make up for any loss of federal revenues.
- Attempting to establish a legal basis for full personhood to begin at conception by allowing 529 college savings accounts to be opened at conception rather than at birth. This has no practical effect since benefactors can already open an account at any time in their own name and then change it to benefit the child; its only purpose is to try to restrict abortion rights.
- Eliminating tax deductions for very high medical expenses, a benefit that is used by more than 8 million filers, mostly low-income households who face catastrophic medical bills. Many elderly taxpayers rely on this deduction to help pay for long-term care.
- Repealing or weakening the estate tax, which currently affects only a small number of very wealthy individuals; repeal could cost the Treasury over \$150 billion over the next 10 years. This is not 'double-taxation'-- many assets are capital gains that have never been taxed.
- Repealing the Johnson Amendment, in place since 1954, to allow churches and other non-profit charities to legally engage in partisan political activity. A repeal would allow donors to use churches to support parties and candidates via tax-deductible donations, blurring the lines between religion and politics and costing the Treasury \$2.1 billion over 10 years, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

We urge members of both parties to put aside short-term political considerations and do what is right for all Americans, our economy and our country.