

## **UUSJ Advocacy Program Guidelines**

Recognizing UUSJ's strategic location in the Nation's Capital we are compelled to give voice to our UU Principles on Capitol Hill. This document outlines how UUSJ determines its issue and legislative priorities. It is intended to provide guidance to UUSJ Board members and staff, issue committee members, and other interested parties. The UUSJ Board reviews and selects issue priorities every two years. Advocacy program detailed objectives, measures, operating and reporting procedures are covered in other documents.

### **Goal**

To convey to public policymakers and leaders our Unitarian Universalist social and economic justice concerns, why they are important to us, and what we believe should be done in response to these justice concerns. We will:

- Focus on root causes of injustice in order to create systemic change.
- Address the need for a more "...peaceful, just and environmentally sustainable world."  
(UUSJ's Vision Statement)

These concerns draw on our Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles, values and social justice statements.

### **Strategy (what we are trying to accomplish)**

Amplify our collective voices to advance our liberal religious values at the federal policy level. These efforts are primarily focused on national elected, appointed and career officials in federal government agencies, public policymakers, and corporate leaders.

Mobilize UUs for action to help create the public will for policy change.

### **Tactics (how we are going to carry out our strategy)**

- Partnership development (collaborate with UU, interfaith and other organizations that share our concerns)
- Educational programs on social justice issues
- Conference calls and webinars on key or fast-moving issues
- Direct advocacy - issue briefings and visits to Capitol Hill by the UUSJ Advocacy Corp
- *Write Here! Write Now!* letter writing campaigns at local congregations
- News media op-eds and social media postings
- Public witness events (e.g. demonstrations, marches - the spiritual practice of taking a public position in support of justice)

### **UUSJ Key Priority Issues and Concerns (July 1, 2016-18)**

- Escalating Inequality/Economic Justice
- Environment and Climate Change (Climate Justice)
- Immigration Reform and Immigrant Rights

Each issue working group includes advocacy on its agenda and selects key/relevant issue concerns for UUSJ. In addition to advocacy, the work includes education and public witness.

When setting priorities and planning for action, the issues should meet the following criteria.

**Criteria for selection of action issues: Grounding-Accountability-Fit-Opportunity:**

1. Is this issue **grounded** (is it aligned) with Unitarian Universalist principles and values? Is there historic or current engagement on this issue (rooted in our social justice positions: Statements of Conscience, Congregational Study Action Issues, Actions of Immediate Witness and Resolutions)?
2. **Accountability** - Is the issue of concern to marginalized groups in our congregations and/or community? Does this issue affect an area represented by more than one of our local congregations and are we accountable to them?
3. Is it a good **fit** for UUSJ based on its organizational capabilities (human and other resources)? Does it address a UUSJ priority issue? Is there significant interest in the issue within UU congregations and/or members?
4. Are there identifiable **opportunities** for UUSJ to have meaningful impact, and add value to efforts being taken by our partners? Are there reasonable actions for UUSJ to undertake?

