



Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Write Here! Write Now! February 12, 2019 Advocacy Day

Issue: Tell Your U.S. Representative What's On Your Mind!

New Congress! New Opportunities for Social Justice Advocacy

Focus: U.S. House of Representatives

www.uusj.org click on Advocacy

Contact: advocacy@uusj.org or 703-786-5206

Tell Your U.S. Representative What's On Your Mind! Background and UU Grounding

Background: On Feb. 12, 2019, since it's a new 116th Congress, the UUSJ Advocacy Corps will introduce UUSJ to new members of the U.S. House of Representatives, new House Committee and Subcommittee leaders, and renew contacts with returning members we've worked with in the past.

A new Congress provides hope for a "fresh start" with new opportunities to advocate for our UU values and promote bipartisan forward movement for social justice. That's why **this is the perfect time for us to write letters and take our UU values and hopes for the nation to Capitol Hill.**

In meetings with House members, we will share the UUSJ priorities (**Immigration Reform, Escalating Economic Inequity, Environmental and Climate Justice, and Defending our Democracy**). We will express our hope that in their public service they will work with colleagues across the aisle for bipartisan solutions to address these and other important issues.

Americans want bipartisanship and are tired of dysfunctional government. Last fall, 50 percent of those responding to a Gallup poll called "for political leaders to compromise in order to get things done," and an additional 27 percent saw compromise as an acceptable legislative strategy.

NOTE: We encourage members of your congregation, issue and/or youth groups to discuss and identify a specific social justice issue or concern to write about. Our 5th Principle calls on us to use the democratic process. This is an opportunity to exercise your democratic rights and connect with your member of Congress to share your concerns and hopes for the 116th Congress. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, thank your Representative for some action or position taken if appropriate - let's demonstrate some UU gratitude.

UU Grounding: Our Seven Principles give us spiritual grounding to put our faith into action. Our 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our 5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process...in society at large. Our 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. "[Democracy Uncorrupted](#)" 2016-20 Congregational Study Action Issue.

Instructions for Writing Your Letters:

- **Focus on the topic** – Thank your Representative for an action or position you appreciate and urge your member to seek bipartisan solutions to issues you care about.
- **Be original and speak from the heart.** If possible, describe a personal experience or story, or include 1-2 talking points (see page 2), **in your own words**, to support the main message.
- **Include a clear and specific action request.** "I urge you to..."
- **Include your name and full mailing address.**

Instructions for Delivery of Letters -- Congregation Organizer: Email a PDF of all scanned letters by 12 noon ET Feb. 11 to advocacy@uusj.org. Subject line WHWN Feb. 12 name of congregation & state. It will help us very much if you tally the number of letters for each U.S. House member. And check that all writers have included their mailing address so offices can ensure they are constituent. Same instruction for individuals who email letters.

(See other side for Issue Ideas and a Sample Letter)

Need some suggestions?

Here are some ideas for issues based on UUSJ's priorities and the UUSJ's [Guide for Questions for Candidates 2018](#), or go to www.uusj.org (Pull down menu Advocacy/UUs Mobilizing for the Midterm Elections - the second bullet). You can adapt the questions for your message.

Immigration Reform (stop drastic caps on refugees; stop family separation; don't fund the border wall)

- **Work for comprehensive immigration reform.** Support humane treatment and clear paths to permanent residency and citizenship for all immigrants, especially those seeking asylum and those with DACA and TPS status.

Economic Security (support a living wage, equal pay for equal work, tax code reform)

- **Protect vital social safety net programs** including SNAP, Medicaid, and affordable healthcare that covers pre-existing conditions and must remain available for low and moderate income Americans.

Environmental and Climate Justice (fee on carbon; Paris Agreement; Green New Deal; sea level rise)

- **Take action to protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of climate change.** Support legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Protecting Our Democracy (campaign finance reform; end corporate personhood; gerrymandering)

- **Take action to protect and expand voting rights, and get dark money out of politics.** Voter empowerment and campaign finance reform are fundamental to our democracy.

Sample Letter to your New or Returning Member of the U.S. House of Representatives

[Use your own words this is only a sample letter]

[Today's date]

Dear Representative _____ :

I am a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*. As a person of faith, I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people, respect for the interdependent web of all existence, and the importance of the democratic process.

Thank you for... *[or]* I am grateful for *[If your Representative is new or returning adapt the message. Name a position or past vote or action that reflects our UU values or that made a difference to you, your family, or your community.]*

As the 116th Congress gets underway, I urge you to seek bipartisan solutions on *[add an issue or concern of importance to you]*. *[Include in your own words a personal experience, story, concern, or pick a talking point related to the issues you name. Is there a way this issue affects you, your family, your community?]*

[adapt a closing such as...] I look forward to hearing from you about my hopes for the 116th Congress and learning about your legislative priorities.

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

(See other side for Instructions on Background & Writing and Delivering Letters)