

# 2016/2017 Social Justice Action Proposal

Proposals will be used to drive action and create community among Unitarian Universalist at the 2016 Oregon UU Voices for Justice annual meeting. At the meeting we will be choosing which issues to pursue in the coming year. Create a proposal here to make a case for why the issue is important.

\* Required

## Creating an Oregon UU Voices for Justice Proposal

Please read "Criteria for Choosing Social Justice Issues" at [www.uuvoicesoregon.org](http://www.uuvoicesoregon.org) before you write a proposal. You might want to have a copy of it sitting in front of you while you answer the questions. Some questions refer to a section of the criteria document. Read that section through before answering the question.

Anyone can write up a proposal including a congregation or congregational group.

Answer the questions honestly and with heart. Try and write something that will draw in others who may want to work with you. Although we are using criteria, they are flexible criteria. There is no right, or wrong, answer to any of these questions.

Creating this proposal is the first step to gathering a State-wide team and working on the issue. Your proposal will be posted on-line with other proposals on [www.uuvoicesoregon.org](http://www.uuvoicesoregon.org). We are posting them to build excitement and commitment and make sure we don't duplicate each other. Your proposal needs a certain amount of support to become a Oregon UU Voices for Justice Campaign Issue. That support can come from your own efforts, from proposal sharing on-line at [www.uuvoicesoregon.org](http://www.uuvoicesoregon.org), and from support picked up at the Annual Meeting.

Before we post them we will ask your permission and allow you to review your work.

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Who is responsible for this proposal (can be a collection of people, a person, a social justice team or a congregation.) ? \*

Victor Reppeto, Rick Davis, "Bridging the Gap", "Partnership for Safety and Justice"

What is the Issue? \*

Criminal Justice Reform - reducing the use of incarceration, conditions for inmates, especially children and the disabled, accountability for officers of the court.

## Why do you want to work on this issue? \*

Several reasons: 1. In spite of decades of recovery the courts have subjected my family to an extraordinary rendition. 2. My children are at risk of being subjected to this violence in their adult lives due to mental well being challenges and socioeconomic class. 3. This is an issue that unites several groups including but not limited to people of color, consumers of mental health services, the homeless and the LGBTQ community. 4. My personal mission is to live my life with honor "above all else". This issue provides an opportunity to live this principle authentically.

## How is this issue grounded in Unitarian Universalist values? (See Grounding) \*

1. Covenant to affirm and promote The inherent worth and dignity of every person; Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

Most of the strategies for Criminal Justice Reform will encompass these principles. In particular will be our effort to promote L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion). This will divert many clients from being charged and prosecuted to community resources for meeting basic needs, treatment, job search and support.

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;  
The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

In order to affirm and promote this principle we must take action on issues such as this. With action, only if we do something to prevent this perpetual violence does this principle have life.

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;  
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

This is a key issue for promoting and affirming principles 6 and 7. People who are incarcerated are separated from their children and families, particular destructive thing to do not only to the individual but to ourselves as a community. This is especially true since there is ample evidence that we are incarcerating many innocent people as political prisoners. Children serve long mandatory sentences with no limit on how much time in solitary confinement they can be subjected to. Even those who are truly guilty of a crime are destined to reenter our communities, diversion and/or education will bring us one step closer to the more perfect union these principles represent.

## Who are potential partners? (See Allies) \*

Allies. Who can we partner with to work on the issue? How can affected groups be included?

- Are there potential partners in Oregon working on this issue?
- Do we have relationships with these potential partners?
- Can we be a respected partner in the public dialog on this issue?

The Partnership for Safety and Justice, Mid-Willamette Community Action Agency, Bridging the Gap, Oregonians for Peace, The Racial Justice Organizing Committee, NAACP (need to confirm), Black Lives Matter, Voz Hispana Cambio Comunitario.

These are just some of the partners who are already taking real action in the community to pursue reform on and around the issue of criminal justice reform. The Social Justice Action Team of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem is already working with these particular partners on

## Does this have an Oregon focus and Oregon UU interest and support? (See Fit) \*

Talia, please comment on you relationship with Portland UU Congregations.

Fit. Is there a match between our resources and aspirations, and an ability to make a real difference? Yes

- Is there a group of people who want to work on the issue? Yes, but is the question about UU's or people in general?
- Was this issued ranked high in Oregon UU Voices for Justice Spring Survey?
- Is there money available? I am willing to try. Share the plate at UUCS may be possible. Fundraising will be more successful with so many partners involved.
- Does the UUA have any resources around the issue?

(Copied from <http://www.uua.org/liberty/disability>)

<The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has always understood that people with physical, mental, and sensory disabilities face discrimination and barriers. Our social justice commitment to disability rights can be documented as early as 1961, when a social justice resolution at the time of our consolidation asked Unitarians and Universalists to “influence public opinion and government agencies on behalf of the needs of people with mental illness.”

In 1997, the UUA made an historic social justice commitment to racial justice and, aware of continuing discrimination despite the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, made a similar commitment to disability justice—promising that the Unitarian Universalist Association would act “as an advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities both within its own association and globally.”

In 2009, a new interfaith organization formed to work for disability rights and disability justice. The Unitarian Universalist Association is joining the new Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition, a part of the American Association of People with Disabilities. We will work collaboratively with

Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and other religious organizations. Together, we are resolving to bring the power of our collective prophetic voices to the struggle for disability rights nationally and globally.

### For More Information about Disability Rights

Contact [access@uaa.org](mailto:access@uaa.org).

Join Equal Access, an affinity organization of Unitarian Universalists (UUs) with disabilities, allies, friends working toward the goal of complete accessibility.

Express your opinions on Access-L, a subscriber-only email list for UUs who are interested in accessibility.

### Resources

Black Lives Matter and Building a Movement for Racial Justice  
Racial profiling, police brutality, and mass imprisonment of are examples of how African Americans and other people of color suffer at the hands of today's legal system. Join the movement to end these systems of racial injustice. See our map (<http://www.uaa.org/multiculturalism/new-jim-crow/black-lives-matter-banners>) of UU congregations with Black Lives Matter banners and learn more about building a movement for racial justice.

### UU sermons on mental health

Starting a mental health ministry.

Mental Health Ministry program at Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The Caring Congregation Program is a congregational program of seven workshops focused on welcoming and supporting people with mental disorders and their families into our congregations.

Mental Health Information for Ministers (PDF, 35 pages) a document written for ministers to help in their interactions with parishioners with mental health challenges.



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- Are there Unitarian Universalist leaders who are or could publicly

represent a UU perspective on the issue and whom we could recruit? yes

- Is the issue an Oregon or Northwest issue, as opposed to a national or exclusively local issue? Both.

If a national issue, is there an Oregon focused portion we could work on, e.g. Health Care for All Oregon rather than national single payer healthcare? yes

- Does it fit within our Campaigns: Yes, Human Rights are about threats to human dignity, especially when focused on those with less power and subject to racism, sexism and homophobia. Issues would include:

What Campaign is this a part? \*

- Environmental Justice
- w Democracy
- Human Rights
- Economic Inequality

What makes this an issue to work on NOW? (Opportunity) \*

1. L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) is gaining traction in Marion County, Portland, Dallas (Dallas, Or) and across the nation (leadbureau.org). America's addiction to incarceration is a hot topic right now.
2. It is even a topic of debate in the presidential election.
3. Over incarceration has been recognized as a an issue and has been on the decline since 2009.
4. With the U.S. representing 5% of the population and 25% of the incarcerated on the planet, reducing incarceration is still in the early stages of development.
5. If we can promote and maintain momentum on this issue abolishing prisons altogether is back on the table.



The faster this proposal comes in the more interest you will get. However, The latest you will want to create a proposal is Oct.1, 2016.

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