

UU Ministers Speak in Support of Labor

Note: The following two letters were recently drafted by Cassandra Howe, Consulting Minister in Portage, MI with input and agreement from several other Unitarian Universalist Ministers, in support of labor and worker's rights. The first has been sent to state legislatures in several Heartland states, while the second has been sent to labor organizations. Endorsed by the ministers listed at the bottom, these letters add more voices to the chorus of support for workers and their families.

Dear State Legislator:

As ministers in the Heartland District of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we are watching closely the unfolding debate that has spread across the middle of this country concerning workers' rights and the right to bargain collectively. We urge you to stand for justice and the rights of workers and lead other state leaders in a genuine conversation that will address the demands of the protestors.

As religious leaders, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and in justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Economic justice is a basic way we as a nation show human worth, and right now we need to know that our political leaders believe that every person -- no matter how rich or poor -- has the right to be heard and taken seriously.

What is happening in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere is no longer simply addressing an issue about balancing the states' budgets; it is about certain state leaders manipulating a grave national concern -- a budget deficit -- for their own political benefit. In Ohio, the sponsor of the anti-union Senate Bill Five, Senator Shannon Jones, was asked how much money this legislation would save the state. She did not know. When asked why, then, was it being introduced, she said, "It's my philosophy. We do not believe that public employees should have the rights that they have now."

We are in trying times in the Midwest. In the midst of limited resources, we are forced to decide what to hold onto and what can be discarded. The right to collective bargaining derives from the rights of assembly and free speech -- rights fundamental to the building of our nation. Please show us that you stand for the preservation of these human rights and lead us in a more genuine, open conversation.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Howe, Consulting Minister,
Portage, MI

Rev. Barbara Carlson, Minister Emerita
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, IN

Rev. Shelley Page, Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, MI

Rev. Gail Geisenhainer, First Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Ann Arbor, MI

Rev. Bill Neely
Interim Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Detroit

Rev. Dr. Nana' Kratochvil
Minister Emerita, Harbor UU Congregation,
Muskegon, MI
Consulting Minister, UUFCM,
Mount Pleasant, MI

Rev. Dr. Claudia A. Ramisch
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Owensboro, KY

Rev. Bruce Russell-Jayne
Minister, Northern Hills UU Fellowship
Cincinnati, Ohio

Rev. Loring Prosser
Indianapolis, Indiana

Rev. Yvonne Schumacher Strejcek
Parish Minister
Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton
Brighton, Michigan

Rev. Cathy Harrington
People's Church
Ludington, MI

Rev. Amy kindred
First UU Congregation
Terre haute, IN

Andrew L. Weber, Ann Arbor, MI

Rev. Kathryn A. Bert
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing
Lansing, MI

Rev Dr Claudene F Oliva, Unitarian Universalist Church of
Evansville

Rev. Barbara Child
Congregational Consultant
Heartland District of the Unitarian Universalist Association
Nashville, IN

The Rev. Jill K. McAllister
People's Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan

The Rev. Dennis McCarty
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus
Columbus, Indiana

Rev. Todd F. Eklof
Clifton Universalist Unitarian Church
Louisville, KY

Reverend Mary Ann Macklin and Reverend Bill Breeden
Co-Ministers
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington

Rev. Andy Burnette
UU Community Church of Hendricks County
Danville, IN

Rev. Amy Russell
Miami Valley UU Fellowship
Dayton, Ohio

Rev. Chip Roush
Traverse City, MI

Rev. Richard Venus

Rev. Bill Breeden

The Rev. Lynda Smith
All Souls Community Church
Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Bill Gupton
Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Local Union Leaders,

As ministers in the Heartland District of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we are watching closely the unfolding debate that has spread across the middle of this country concerning workers' rights and the right to bargain collectively. We are humbled and inspired by your courage and convictions in standing for justice and the rights of workers in this state and beyond.

As religious leaders, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and in justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Economic justice is a basic way we as a nation show human worth, and right now we are in a critical conversation around who is more valued by our political leaders -- the wealthy or the poor.

We want to offer our gratitude to you and your supporters for all that you are risking in the struggle for workers' rights.

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