

AIW 2022:

We Do Not Consent: Rejecting Legal Challenges to Abortion

As people who have had abortions, as co-conspirators and allies for Reproductive Justice, and as thoughtful advocates for family well-being, UUs have a moral responsibility to demand and ensure that abortion protections are codified into law. Given the Supreme Court's anticipated overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, now is the time to revitalize the commitment we made to reproductive justice in our 2015 Statement of Conscience (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/reproductive-justice>)

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms that all of our bodies are sacred, and that we are each endowed with the twin gifts of agency and conscience. Each of us should have the power to decide what does and doesn't happen to our bodies at every moment of our lives because consent and self determination are holy. In the words of SisterSong, the Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, we unequivocally support every person's right

- To maintain personal bodily autonomy
- To have children
- To not have children
- To parent children in safe and sustainable communities

Disparities in resources or freedoms make it more difficult for certain groups of people to exercise autonomy over their own bodies. Although the legal right to abortion has been present, there has not been sufficient, consistent access to these services. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), people of low financial resources, those with disabilities, and those in the LGBTQI+ communities are most harmed by legal and systemic barriers to comprehensive reproductive health care. Our faith compels us to take liberatory action in response to oppression.

Controlling people's bodies during pregnancy is about enforcing white supremacy, patriarchy, and ruling-class power. Historically, those most affected by reproductive oppression have not been centered. Again, as advocated by SisterSong, we must:

- Analyze power systems
- Address intersecting oppressions
- Center the most marginalized
- Join together across issues and identities

Resolution: We, the delegates of the 2022 UUA General Assembly, call on Unitarian Universalists to:

1. Make a personal commitment to this work:

Educate ourselves and reflect on our personal connections to reproductive health, rights, and justice, reflecting on our values and how to act in accountable, sustainable ways. But don't stop with education and reflection — the purpose of this first step is to deepen our commitment for action in ways that don't cause further harm to affected people.

2. Organize:

- Within our congregations: begin small group conversations or a Reproductive Justice team (join the Side With Love three-session Congregational Reproductive Justice Organizing Series).
- Build relationships between our congregations and other faith activists, and then with local health clinics and organizations;
- Connect to SACReD, the Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity, which is building a multi-racial, multi-faith movement of congregations (<http://www.sacreddignity.org/>) ;

3. Advocate:

Advocate for Reproductive Justice through op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, letters and visits to legislators, and direct action. Find legislators at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.

4. Witness:

- Speak publicly as people of faith whose UU theology compels us to work for Reproductive Justice and abortion access for all.
- Turn out for protest events and rallies such as Bans Off Our Bodies, Rally for Roe, etc.
- Wear UU Side With Love logo to witness that there is support from faith and religious communities.

5. Build Networks of Support for Abortion Seekers:

- Map the human, financial, and infrastructural assets of our congregations and have shared conversations about what each congregation is ready to do to directly support those who need abortions, whether located in a high-access or low-access state.

- Support community trainings on Self-Managed Abortion (SMA), and encourage clergy to get trained in all-options pregnancy counseling.
- Create networks with other local congregations and connect directly with local abortion funds and providers.
- Engage with national networks that are creating infrastructure to support accessing abortion in both high-access and low-access states.
- Discern the level of risk your congregation and its members are ready to take to support abortion access.

6. Education:

- Work to assure congregations provide Our Whole Lives education programs for all ages;
- Consider talking to your minister about telling your abortion story from the pulpit or in other settings;
- Work with your minister to create a Reproductive Justice Sunday Service;
- Educate yourself at sites such as Faith Choice Ohio <https://www.faithchoiceohio.org/> for training.

7. Fundraising:

- For reproductive justice groups led by women of color, like SisterSong <https://sistersong.nationbuilder.com/donate> and SisterReach <https://www.sisterreach.org/donate.html>
- For abortion access such as National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF) <https://donate.abortionfunds.org/give/323375/#!/donation/checkout>

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This AIW is endorsed by:

- The Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
- Unitarian Universalist Class Conversations
- Black Lives UU
- Church of the Larger Fellowship