

Defend and Advocate with Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex Communities 2021

Action of Immediate Witness

WHEREAS, our faith has publicly called for transgender-affirming actions for over three decades and trans, nonbinary, and intersex people are a cherished part of Unitarian Universalism;

WHEREAS, in 2021 over 100 anti-trans U.S. state laws have been proposed, particularly targeting trans youth and trans people with the least power, enabling discrimination in sports, health care, education, birth certificates, and beyond, and at least eighteen bills have been passed in nine states;

WHEREAS, anti-trans bills use false notions of “religious freedom” and “protecting” women and children as an excuse for discrimination;

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalism supports human rights and dignity for all, including access to employment, education, public accommodations, housing, transportation, sports and recreation, health care, voting, and public services;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT We, the Delegates of the 2021 UUA General Assembly, call on Unitarian Universalists to:

1. Strongly condemn all anti-trans legislation, and demand the repeal of recently passed laws in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, and West Virginia, and work to block all additional such bills, particularly those targeting trans youth;
2. Support passage of the Equality Act, inclusive of gender identity protections;
3. Call on President Biden to issue an Executive Order that ensures access to an “X” marker and removes medical requirements for marker changes across federal records (passports, Social Security records, etc.);
4. Call for inclusive policies at all levels of government that remove barriers and binaries, and enact gender-neutral approaches in policy (e.g., airport screenings shouldn’t be gender-based, driver’s licenses shouldn’t need a gender marker); and
5. Work to pass laws that prohibit unnecessary medical interventions on intersex infants/children.

We further call upon the UUA and our congregations and affiliated organizations to:

1. Affirm that living one’s identity, in terms of gender identity/expression, sex characteristics, and affectional/sexual orientation, is part of our free exercise of religion, and that religious exceptionalism that promotes discrimination abridges human rights and our free exercise of religion;

2. Support, collaborate with, and increase material inclusion of trans, nonbinary, and intersex Unitarian Universalists by:
 - Giving power and resources to trans, nonbinary, and intersex youth, adults, and organizations;
 - Respecting all people’s self-identified names and pronouns, and all people’s privacy regarding trans, nonbinary, or intersex history/status;
 - Working to ensure accessible all-gender restrooms are available in all our spaces;
 - Ensuring all social and spiritual practices and communications use inclusive language; and
 - Offering rituals for name or pronoun changes and other important milestones;
3. Support local organizations led by trans/nonbinary/intersex people and efforts to defund police, decriminalize sex work, fund shelters for the unhoused, and other efforts that help trans/nonbinary/intersex people, particularly those who are low-income, BIPOC, and/or disabled;
4. Engage in regular learning about gender diversity, including the unique experiences/needs of intersex people, and help educate the broader public, particularly medical and mental health professionals; and
5. Build Beloved Community by engaging intersectional anti-racism and anti-oppression, deepening relationships across difference, sharing power equitably, and centering the leadership and needs of those targeted by multiple systems of oppression.

Footnotes:

1. For more on the record-setting number of anti-trans bills proposed in 2021, see “Pride: 2021 Has Set a Record in Anti-Trans Bills in America,” PBS News Hour, June 6, 2021, and “2021 Officially Becomes Worst Year in Recent History for LGBTQ State Legislative Attacks as Unprecedented Number of States Enact Record-Shattering Number of Anti- LGBTQ Measures Into Law,” Human Rights Campaign, May 7, 2021.
2. The Side with Love campaign has been supporting UUs in advocating for the Equality Act and is hosting an #EqualityTime Action Hour during General Assembly. For more on the Equality Act, see “It’s Time to Pass the Equality Act,” Freedom for All Americans.
3. For more on the campaign calling for an Executive Order addressing inclusive IDs, see “They The People: Accurate Gender Markers for All,” ACLU, last updated June 8, 2021.
4. For more on advocating for intersex rights, see “Intersex Legislation and Regulation,” InterACT.
5. For more on the tactics and hate-group background of many of the entities advocating for anti-trans legislation, see “The New Wave of Anti-Trans Legislation is Based on Very Old Arguments and Ideas,” The Washington Post, June 14, 2021; “State Anti- Transgender Bills Represent Coordinated Attack, Advocates Say,” NBC News, February 17, 2021; and “Lawmakers Can’t Cite Local Examples of Trans Girls in Sports,” AP News, March 3, 2021.
6. For more on the experiences of trans/nonbinary Unitarian Universalists, see “Report on the Experiences of Trans Unitarian Universalists,” TRUUsT, January 2019.