

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington – Position Statement on Gun Violence Prevention

The Board of Trustees of First Unitarian Church of Wilmington stands in support of the

2014 UUA General Assembly Action of Immediate Witness, which states:

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of each person—an unshakeable conviction calling us to respect ourselves and others;

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, pointing us toward the larger community and a collective responsibility for one another;

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists are committed to the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; and

WHEREAS, we have witnessed recent mass tragedies at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, Virginia Tech, Aurora, Tucson, Newtown, the Washington Navy Yard and the University of California at Santa Barbara—and the scourge of individual gun homicides total close to a thousand each month; and

WHEREAS, recent resolutions and statements of conscience in UU congregations will hopefully inspire other congregations to emulate our example, initiating a wave of calls to action spreading across the UUA world; and

WHEREAS, the scourge of gun deaths in the US continues unabated, reaching levels where no one is immune to one of America's greatest public health epidemics; and

WHEREAS, national polls repeatedly validate that vast majorities of citizens—including individual members of the NRA—want sensible legislation requiring expanded background checks restricting availability of certain firearms and large-capacity ammunition clips to people with documented impairments of judgment and anti-social behavior; and

WHEREAS, it is regrettably clear that federal and state legislators have so far found insufficient citizen support to offset the divisive leverage of the NRA and the even more virulent opposition forces to such legislation; and

WHEREAS, while the public may assume that advancing Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) initiatives is futile—that will only be the case if we fail to persist; and

WHEREAS, public advocacy for socially-conscious change is most successful when it is based on solid evidence—and grounded in faith community principles and commitment; and

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalist congregations and affiliates and community resources, experienced with both the process and content of developing Gun Violence Prevention commitment resolutions, stand ready to assist and guide congregations in undertaking this worthy and much needed statement of commitment; and

WHEREAS, delegates at this GA have access to faith communities—our respective congregations—representing thousands of fellow members across the US, whose

personal involvement can be activated by engagement in dialogue focused on considering passage of their own Congregational Resolution.

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the 2014 General Assembly endorses renewing the focus and call for congregational commitment to work for gun violence prevention initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the 2014 General Assembly encourages member congregations to take action, such as:

1. Urging the Center for Disease Control to study and publish data on gun violence;
2. Working for gun safety, background checks and a ban on assault weapons on a national, state, and municipal levels;
3. Reaching out to partner with interfaith groups and community activists;
4. Speaking with police, local public health professionals, elected officials and candidates for office; and
5. Speaking out in local forums, town meetings and media.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

Take this charge back to your home congregation.

Begin a dialogue toward forming your Congregational Resolution Against Gun Violence.

Reach out for guidance and resources from the UUA, other faith communities, and established local groups and state legislatures.

And, say to yourself – “NOT ONE MORE”!

For more information contact socialjustice@uua.org.

Last updated on Monday, October 27, 2014.

We resolve to join with other Unitarian Congregations to reduce gun violence throughout the US; and local organizations such as our social justice partners from Wilmington Peacekeepers, Pacem in Terris, One Village Alliance, the Delaware Coalition Against Gun Violence, and the Movement for a Culture of Peace to reduce gun violence in the Wilmington area.