

Policy for AUUC Taking a Position on a Social Issue

Adopted on November 8, 2004

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure for AUUC to take a position on a social issue.
2. **BACKGROUND:** It is a generally accepted premise that an opinion expressed on behalf of an organization carries more weight than an opinion expressed by an individual or individuals within an organization. In this context there are occasions when it would be desirable to express the opinion of AUUC as a congregation.

However, it must be recognized that having the congregation take a position on a social issue is not without peril. Any position worth putting before the congregation may be both divisive and time-sensitive. It is far more important for the congregation to be satisfied that a position on a social issue was approved by an overwhelming majority of the congregation in an orderly and democratic manner than it is for the congregation to take a position at all.

This policy describes the procedure to be followed whenever a member of the congregation proposes to the Social Concerns Committee a position on a social issue for congregational approval.

3. **POLICY:** Any member of the congregation may present a written statement to the Social Concerns Committee for a position on a social issue they would like for the congregation to approve. The wording of the statement may be modified at any point during this process. The Social Concerns Committee must approve the statement by a vote of 80 percent of the members present in order for the statement to be accepted by the Social Concerns Committee. If not accepted by the Social Concerns Committee, the member may present the proposed position to the Board of Trustees.

Upon acceptance of the statement, the initiator of the statement, in conjunction with the Social Concerns Committee, shall insert an information item in the congregation's Newsletter. The information item shall continue to appear in the Newsletter as long as the statement is under consideration within this process. The accepted statement shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees and must be approved by 80 percent of the members present in order for the statement to be accepted by the Board of Trustees.

It is important that the minister express his or her opinion on the issue. Social issues may be divisive and the minister's opinion on an issue about to be brought before the congregation for approval should be an integral part of this process, whether by a sermon or any other form.

Upon acceptance of the statement, the Board of Trustees shall call a Special Meeting in order to determine whether or not the congregation endorses the proposed position on the issue. The same rules that apply for the Annual Meeting would apply for the Special Meeting, except that the statement must be approved by 80 percent of the members and proxies present.

[signed Anna V. Cochrane]

Recording Secretary