



# TXUUJM

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## Texas UU Justice Ministry

Universalists and Unitarians have been established in Texas since 1883. Our religion resonates deeply with the principles enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence and the Texas Constitution. Our faith calls us to honor the self-evident truth of equality for all and to work towards a state where freedom, justice and compassion become realities for all.

**The Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry was established in 2012 and currently has 34 congregations in our coalition.**

We're a statewide justice ministry giving voice to Unitarian Universalist (UU) values in the public arena. Guided by UU principles, our member TXUUJM congregations work to educate, organize and advocate for public policies that:

- Uphold the worth and dignity of every person
- Further justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- Ensure use of the democratic process
- Protect religious freedom
- Promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence
- Engage the sustaining power of worship, the arts, community building and friendship in the work of social justice
- Foster collaboration and civic engagement among Texas UUs and encourage close partnership with our interfaith allies
- Put our faith into practice in ways that address systematic injustice and create lasting, positive social change
- Provide UUs with information, education, training and opportunities for dialogue on pressing issues of public policy, legislation and ballot initiatives
- Engage our UU youth and young adults to learn about and participate in social justice work.

(over)

## **TXUUJM's Top Three Issues for the 2017 Legislative Session**

Guided by Unitarian Universalist principles that uphold and respect the worth and dignity of every person and seek justice, equity and compassion in human relations, we promote:

### **Immigration/Refugee Justice**

- Human rights and respect should be accorded to every person, regardless of national borders and country of origin.
- Incarceration of asylum-seeking women and children is fundamentally immoral. The for-profit prison system, including licensing of prisons as “child care facilities,” is spiritually and morally bankrupt and must be ended.

### **Income Inequality/Economic Justice**

- A core commitment of religious faith is to care for the “least” among us. In keeping with this teaching and value, we support:
  - a living wage,
  - equal pay for equal work for women,
  - appropriate and meaningful regulation of predatory lenders (including payday and auto title), and
  - renewal of the Adult Career Education Fund.
- In addition to the moral underpinning for this support, we would note that Texas ranks fifth in income inequality, resulting in a high cost in public assistance. The cycle of debt created through short term, high cost (e.g. payday) credit devastates families with moderate and low incomes.

### **Reproductive Justice**

- We believe Texans have the right to control their own bodies.
- Women should be able to exercise their own conscience and consult safely with their own doctor.
- Facts—not partisan positions—should guide legislation. Thus, peer reviewed medical science, input from professional organizations and guidance from the US Supreme Court should inform responsible decision-making.
- Poverty should not determine outcomes. Safe, legal abortions should be available to all Texas women. Unrestricted access to reproductive health care, including age-appropriate comprehensive sex education, birth control and proper care after sexual assault must be available to all.
- Transgender Texans must not be subjected to hateful discriminatory legislation.