

**AIW #C:
Affirming Congregational Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention**

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

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

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 numbering close to a thousand each month; and

WHEREAS, recent approved resolutions and statements of conscience in UU congregations will hopefully inspire other congregations to emulate our examples, initiating a wave of calls to action spreading across the UUA world, congregation by district by region; 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 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 data 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, each delegate at this GA has access to a faith community – 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: This AIW solicits an endorsement from this General Assembly 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. Urge the CDC to study and publish data on gun violence;
2. Work for gun safety, background checks and a ban on assault weapons on a national, state, and municipal level;
3. Reach out and partner with interfaith groups and community activists;

4. Dialogue with police, local public health professionals, elected officials and candidates for office; and
5. Speak 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, faith communities, established local groups and state legislatures.

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