

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis
ADVOCACY & SPONSORSHIP POLICY
Adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 11, 2017

Purpose

Unitarian Universalists are committed to living our values and to promoting social justice through advocacy and witness. Because our movement gives authority to the members of each congregation, no individual can speak for the Church as a whole until the membership has been consulted. This restriction includes the minister, who has the freedom to express individual convictions but cannot speak on behalf of the congregation. This policy sets forth the democratic process to be followed by Church leadership groups or by the Church as a whole in making decisions about public advocacy. It also sets forth the process for making decisions about Church sponsorship of the work or activities of an outside organization (a group not affiliated with Unitarian Universalism).

Advocacy by a Church Leadership Group

A Church leadership group may decide by majority vote to take an advocacy position on a social justice issue only if that issue falls under the mission or purpose set forth in its Board-approved leadership group charge. Such advocacy should be attributed to the leadership group only, not to the Church as a whole. For example: “The Social Justice Coordinating Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis advocates that”

Advocacy by the Church as a Whole

A majority vote by Church members is required for the Church to take an advocacy position on a social justice issue. This vote shall take place at a membership meeting called and conducted according to provisions in Article 5 of the Church’s Bylaws. Therefore, written statements of *congregational* support for action on a social issue must relate to actions approved in advance by the membership; such advocacy statements must signed by the Board Chair.

Action Alerts by Social Justice Groups

Bold and rapid action on behalf of relevant legislation and policy signals our congregation’s commitment to social action. An “action alert” is an effort to inform people and gather signatures in support of or opposition to local, state, or federal legislation or policy. An action alert must support UU principles and must be approved by a majority vote of a social justice leadership group or the Social Justice Coordinating Committee. Promoters of an action alert may solicit signatures, in a respectful manner, at tables in the Social Hall or by circulating in or outside the Social Hall (but not in the Sanctuary).

Sponsorship of an Outside Organization by a Church Leadership Group

A Church leadership group may decide by majority vote to sponsor an activity of an outside organization if the sponsored activity supports the mission or purpose set forth in its Board-approved leadership group charge. Such sponsorship should be attributed to the leadership group only, not to the Church as a whole. For example: “The Uniting for Racial Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis will sponsor”

Sponsorship of an Outside Organization by the Church as a Whole

Board approval is required for Church sponsorship of events or activities of an outside nonprofit organization. Such sponsorship might include co-sponsoring an event, providing rent-free space for an outside organization’s event, staging or hosting a fundraiser to benefit an outside organization, or providing Church volunteers to carry out an activity of an outside organization. For the Board to approve solicitation of funds for a special collection or other “pass-through” collection, the organization must be a 501(c)(3) organization.

A sponsorship proposal to the Board (about a page in length) should:

- Briefly describe the activity, including date(s), time(s), site(s), audience(s), etc.
- State how the activity supports the Church’s mission.
- Estimate staff and/or volunteer time required.
- Estimate the cost to the Church.
- Indicate the duration of the sponsorship requested.
- Note any potential for financial loss or other liability.

Priority will generally be given to outside organizations whose mission is congruent with the Church’s mission and whose programs serve historically marginalized persons in Yolo, Solano, and Sacramento counties.

General Considerations

No advocacy or sponsorship of activities in support of political candidates or parties is permitted.

If sponsorship of an activity of an outside organization involves a contractual agreement, Board approval is required. Leadership group chairs and co-chairs are not authorized to sign sponsorship contracts with outside organizations.