

February 8, 2021



MAINE  
Unitarian Universalist  
State Advocacy Network

*"Giving voice to Unitarian  
Universalist values in the  
public arena through a  
statewide advocacy and public  
policy network anchored in our  
faith and animated by its  
principles."*

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Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

Thank you for this opportunity to introduce our organization to you. The Maine Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) is a statewide network anchored in our Unitarian Universalist faith and animated by its principles. We link our 25 Maine congregations and friends spread across all parts of the state in an active legislative and public policy ministry.

Unitarian Universalism calls us to work for policies and structures that promote human development, protect the environment, and support communities. Realizing we cannot respond to every issue and solve every problem, we have chosen four areas of public policy as our priority issues. They are:

- **Democracy in Action**, including efforts to strengthen our democracy by informing and engaging voters, protecting voting rights, promoting civil discourse, instituting Ranked-Choice Voting, supporting Clean Election laws and reducing the importance of money in campaigns.
- **Health Care**, including advocacy for universal health care, monitoring legislation that affects our healthcare system, and promoting public health interventions.
- **Climate Change**, including support for fossil energy conservation, development of solar and other renewable sources, and educating legislators and the public about the urgent call to slow climate change (with special attention to our own precious Gulf of Maine).
- **Racial, Native and Immigrant Justice**, addressing systemic oppression by advocating with and on behalf of racial, ethnic and indigenous populations and responding to the need to interrupt disparities in Maine's legal and economic systems.

At the start of each legislative session, each of MUUSAN's issue groups, often in collaboration our community partner organizations, identifies bills on which a faith-based voice may be helpful or meaningful to Maine's legislators. When appropriate, we reach out to the larger community about bills through letters to the editor or other education efforts. In the statehouse, we communicate with legislators through personal visits, phone calls or letters, and we speak out for social justice through public testimony before legislative committees such as this one.

You are most likely to meet members of our Racial, Native and Immigrant Justice issue group this session, as it will be focusing particularly on bills that impact those population groups in the areas of post-incarceration measures (such as re-entry and rehabilitation programs) and measures to avoid incarceration (such as restorative justice).

We look forward to working with you this session and hope our voice as a force for love and justice will be helpful to you in the vitally important work you do for all of Maine's people.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Ferland and Julia Fitz-Randolph, Co-Chairs of  
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network