

Dear Iowa Legislators & Governor,

As Iowans of faith, reason, and conscience, and also as citizens you have sworn to represent, we ask you to please hear us. Please consider our concerns and guiding principles as you deliberate about and craft legislation in our state. We are Unitarian Universalist Iowans, and the principles of our faith build upon those of our nation's founders and first presidents, many of whom were also members of our faith and/or whose personal religious beliefs aligned greatly with it. These include John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Abigail Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine, among many others.

Our principles call us to strive for justice, equity, and compassion in human relations for everyone. They also call us to work toward creating a world community of peace, liberty, and justice for all. Institutionalized structures of racism violate these principles and should call us to the vital work of dismantling and replacing those structures. Failing to advance legislation that works to end racial profiling turns away from these principles. Instead advancing legislation that would block local control and restrict or punish local efforts to restructure and reform law enforcement and judicial practices to better embody these principles is an affront to them.

Our principles uphold the exercise of the democratic process within our own congregations and for everyone in society at large as well. Indeed, this is a core principle upon which our nation is founded. All citizens have a right to participate in that process, and when more of them are able to freely exercise their voting rights, we only move closer to upholding and strengthening that foundational principle. Laws that shorten early voting periods and voting day poll hours and that put in place additional barriers and restrictions on voting procedures only work against that principle. This is because they make voting harder for those who are disabled, older, communities who have historically been disenfranchised or struggled to vote, those who travel for any period of time during the shortened absentee ballot

time period, those who work long hours or multiple jobs, and many other citizens. On the other hand, there is no credible evidence of widespread voting fraud in Iowa, let alone in the nation. Therefore, laws that make voting more difficult cannot be justified on the basis of resolving a problem that does not actually exist.

Our principles uphold the ideas that each person has the right to freely and responsibly search for truth and meaning in life in their own way and to exercise their own conscience and choices accordingly. The only arguments against reproductive healthcare, including abortion, are based on individually-chosen religious and moral beliefs. We believe that each person has the right to make their own healthcare choices based on their own beliefs. However, in a nation founded on the principle of religious freedom, it is wrong to impose one's personal religious beliefs on others and make those choices for them through laws and constitutional amendments that elevate one set of religious views above all others.

As you carry out your legislative duties, we ask you to not ignore these principles. Please remember that they also echo the voices and intentions of many of the founders of this nation to which we all belong. When crafting any new law or when modifying or repealing an existing one, please ask yourself does this pull us further away from or bring us closer to these ideals to which our founders continue to call all of us.