# UU Legislative Ministry of Rhode Island

# Semi-Annual Legislative Forum

# April 7, 2024

## *Now Let's Take Action!*



**Dear Friends,**

We are very thankful for your interest and support for the legislative forum held last Sunday. Over 100 active and engaged individuals joined together with our state officers, legislators, coalition partners and members of Rhode Island's press to learn, discuss and consider how they can work together to advance the common good of our community.

With the legislative session in full swing, we would like to build upon our momentum and put words into action. We heard from the speakers. They need and value our help to advance the bills that they are championing. We will move forward by focusing our efforts in a collaborative manner and working in our own communities and at the statehouse.

We have prioritized 7 bills for passage in this legislative session. You can find a link to the bills, information fact sheets and a video replay of the legislative forum here: Link to Priority Bills and Information Sheets; Link to Video of April 7th Forum

**Here are five ways that you can help:**

**Be an active citizen.** Recognize that there are important issues facing our state and recognize your responsibility to help by participating in our democracy.

- *Attorney General Neronha extolled us to know where our opportunities and challenges are and that our policies in healthcare and inaction on climate change represent a failure of leadership.* ***We need to vote for leadership change and also to ask our legislative representatives to their part and vote out their legislative leaders who bend to political donations and who don't allow them to hold a vote.***
- *Senator Tiara Mack, provided a complimentary message in empathetically human terms. Speaking about racial, economic and environmental injustice she reminded us that* ***"policy is our love language."***
- *Senator Knight was clear and direct:* ***"elections matter."***

**Speak to your local senator and representative.** Thank them for all of their efforts and also let them know the importance of these bills. Ask them where they stand and importantly how you can help them. Link to Bios and Contact Information

- *Representatives Alzate, Kizlak and Senator Kallman* ***shared their personal stories of how they are us****, deciding to step up and work for our communities. They noted how much* ***they want to engage and learn more from us.***

**Cards and Letters Matter:** Send letters to the legislative committees that are hearing your bills and then forward those those letters to your representatives. Explain why these bills are important to you and your community. Do the same for the House Speaker and Senate President.

- *Senator Lauria made a great point. Legislators hear a lot of complaints and criticisms. Take a moment to thank them and encourage them.* ***Send a short note to the members of The Senate Judiciary Committee thanking them for passing the Safe Storage Act and reminding them that we want the Assault Weapons Ban passed.***

**Make your voice heard:** speak up in your community, talk to people that you know and tell them why their voice needs to be heard. Consider writing a letter to your local paper;

- *Bob Craven, Chairman of The House Judiciary Committee reminded us that Rhode Island is a small state* ***"here we only have 2 degrees of separation and everyone knows someone." Personal outreach matters.*** *Despite his busy schedule he always finds time to speak with citizens who express a real need for action. Hand written notes show that you care and always get read.*
- *Antonia Noori Farzan (Providence Journal) and Ted Nesi (WPRI)* ***shared their commitment to fact based reporting on issues that are important to us.*** *They want to hear from the public and report on matters important to you.*
- *Steve Alquist is always present and always* ***providing us with the unvarnished but often inconvenient truth;*** *exposing issues other would prefer to bury.*

**Work with our Partners:** These special interest groups and NGO's represent a persistent and powerful point of focused policy insight and action. NGO's / Special Interest Groups.

- *Steve Aveson provided a necessary shout out:* ***"Thank them, support them and work along side them as a force multiplier****."*

- *John Marion demonstrates the **purposefully unbiased focus on improving our democracy t**hat builds credibility on all sides.*

*One theme that cut across all of the speakers was that they are dedicated and working in our public service and that they welcome and need our help.*

**Now is the time for us to also do our part.** Don't fall into the easy trap of failing to act and then cynically blaming our political system. Recognize your role and responsibility. Commit to exercise your democratic muscles; act this week and through the rest of the legislative session taking action on the items listed above. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

At the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of RI, we will be working shoulder to shoulder with our legislators and partners. We invite all others to join with us to advance inclusive social justice.

Thank you again for taking the time to come together to learn and discuss and plan a path forward.

**Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Rhode Island**

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