

Taking the Inspiration Home: What To Do After The March

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations Washington Office for Advocacy



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Plan to act! Make a list of everyone from your congregation who attended the March who is committed to following up. Identity 2-3 people to take leadership and stay in touch with the UUA Washington Office, via Kierstin Homblette, Legislative Assistant for Women's Issues, khomblette@uaa.org; (202) 296-4672 x13. Please get everyone's mailing address and email and share it with us, as we are building a reproductive health action network!

Suggested Actions:

- **Advocate for the Putting Prevention First Act (PPFA), HR 4192 (see reverse).** Set up lobby visits with your Representatives during one of the upcoming district work periods, May 24-31 and June 28-July 5. See the activist resources section at www.uua.org/uuawo for help. Have one person take responsibility for making the appointment. Personally recruit a group of 4-8 interested people. Identify the main points you want to make and have each person take responsibility for making one. Kierstin can help you do this, and provide you with fact sheets and other information to leave with your Representative or staffperson. **In-person lobbying is by far the most effective form of advocacy, and well worth the time!**
- **Share the inspiration and excitement of the March with your fellow congregants, and give them an easy way to take action—such as by sending a letter in support of the Putting Prevention First Act.** Talk about the new, proactive direction of the movement—focusing on prevention, and talking about women's issues in a broader context. Emphasize the need for action and the power of Unitarian Universalists to make a difference. Policymakers and the general public need to know that there are religious people who support reproductive health and freedom. Speak about how your opinions are informed by your Unitarian Universalism. Meet with your minister(s) and encourage them to get more involved, such as by joining the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice's Clergy Network. Educate your congregation with summaries of the PPFA, statistics, and stories.
- **Write a letter to the editor about your experience**, also talking about the new direction and your religious values.
- **Talk with youth, parents, and other interested people about the state of sex education in your local public schools.** See <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/sexeducation.htm> for advocacy resources.
- **Form a task force in your congregation to sustain action.** Network with other groups in your area, including the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Planned Parenthood, and other congregations. See http://www.rcrc.org/get_involved/organize/index.htm. Learn about local and state issues and take action on them. Most groups place too little focus on these levels, so you could have a huge impact by making them a priority. Considering collaborating with other UU congregations in your area or state on advocacy campaigns, including by meeting with elected officials.

Summary of HR 4192 – the “Putting Prevention First Act”

The “Putting Prevention First Act” is an omnibus family planning initiative that seeks to expand access to preventive health care services and education programs that help reduce unintended pregnancy, infection with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and the number of abortions.

Title I: Title X of the Public Health Service Act

Increases the authorization for the national family planning program (Title X of the Public Health Service Act) to \$643,000,000 for FY 2005 and such sums as necessary in subsequent years. Title X was funded at \$278 million for FY 2004. Title X clinic services prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce the number of abortions, lower rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, and detect breast and cervical cancer at its earliest stages. The Title X statute prohibits the use of program funds to pay for abortions.

Title II: Family Planning State Empowerment

Allows states to expand Medicaid family planning services to women with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, without having to apply to the federal government for a waiver. The provision would give states the *option* to expand services; states would not be *required* to do so. Currently 18 states have been granted Medicaid family planning waivers.

Title III: Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraceptive Coverage

Requires private health plans to cover FDA-approved prescription contraceptives and related medical services to the same extent that they cover prescription drugs and other outpatient medical services. The provision seeks to establish parity for prescription contraception within the context of coverage already provided by health plans.

Title IV: Emergency Contraception Education and Information

Provides \$10 million to implement important public education initiatives about emergency contraception (EC) and its benefits and uses to both women and medical providers.

Title V: Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies

Requires that hospitals receiving federal funds promptly provide EC upon patient request, in addition to medically, factually accurate and unbiased written and oral information about EC to women who survive sexual assault.

Title VI: Family Life Education

Provides \$100 million in annual funding to states to support comprehensive sex education that includes information about both abstinence and contraception.

Title VII: Teenage Pregnancy Prevention

Provides \$20 million in annual funding for competitive grants to public and private entities to establish or expand teen pregnancy prevention programs.