

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS, ACADEMIC
FREEDOM, AND EQUITY EFFORTS IN SCHOOLS**

A Resolution of Witness

TEXT OF THE MOTION

1
2
3 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ was founded by denominations with education as a
4 central aspect of our identities and has always been a firm advocate for education, with the
5 Church having had a hand in the founding of many colleges and universities, including ~~Harvard,~~
6 ~~Oberlin, Carleton, Doane, and others, as well as~~ many Historically Black Colleges and
7 Universities, which grew from the hundreds of schools founded by the American Missionary
8 Association after the Civil War;ⁱ and
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10 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has been committed to being an Open and Affirming,
11 Anti-Racist, Environmental Justice, Just Peace denomination;ⁱⁱ and
12

13 **WHEREAS** we in the United Church of Christ believe there is “ever more truth and light to be
14 brought forward” from our scriptures, as well as from our world and our people;^{iii, iv} and
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16 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has claimed to be a thinking church as well as a feeling
17 and believing church;^v and
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19 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has demonstrated its commitment to learning about the
20 sins and legacies of slavery, segregation, Jim Crow laws, immigration quotas, internment camps,
21 boarding schools, anti-miscegenation laws, sodomy laws, discriminatory housing policies,
22 discriminatory healthcare policies, and other practices that have contributed to ongoing
23 disparities of resources and opportunities for oppressed peoples, without fearing the discomfort
24 that can accompany such learning;^{vi, vii, viii} and
25

26 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the
27 sins of violence and oppression experienced by women, LGBTQ+ people, people with
28 disabilities, people of religious minorities, immigrants, refugees, Native American/Indigenous
29 people, Black people, Latinx people, Asian people, and all others who have suffered oppression
30 in this country;^{ix, x, xi, xii, xiii} and
31

32 **WHEREAS** students benefit greatly from the study of literature and art that addresses the full
33 range of being human;^{xiv} and
34

35 **WHEREAS** proposals to ban discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools
36 send a profoundly negative message of non-acceptance to students whose romantic attraction
37 does not conform to heteronormative assumptions, and to students who may be experiencing
38 gender dysphoria or who have already realized that their real gender does not match that which
39 was assigned at birth and by socialization;^{xv}

40
41 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United
42 Church of Christ declares that it is vital for every person, of every race, skin color, culture,
43 religion, language status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, income, and/or family
44 background to be given an opportunity to see themselves and their neighbors represented, to
45 access truthful information, and to learn from our past; ~~learn about who they are and where they~~
46 ~~came from; and so that~~ students are better equipped to advocate for, and to reach, their full
47 potential as critical thinkers in school environments that continually strive for equity in all
48 aspects of schooling, from academics and curriculum to extra-curricular activities and school
49 culture;^{xvi}

50
51 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
52 Christ affirms support of our public education systems and public school educators, as well as
53 academic freedom, and the right of educators to make decisions that are in the best interest of
54 ALL students, consistent with peer-reviewed research and best practice;

55
56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United
57 Church of Christ declares that on-going thoughtful evaluation of teaching methodology and
58 content is a necessary part of strengthening our public-schools, but harassment of teachers,
59 administrators, and school board members is harmful to them, to the schools and educational
60 systems they represent, and, most especially, to the students they serve.

61
62 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
63 Christ stands against efforts to inflame the public with hateful rhetoric against toward educators;
64 to censor or ban what is taught in public school classrooms; to censor or ban books and media in
65 school libraries; to deny the histories of oppression experienced by marginalized groups; to deny
66 racism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, ableism, and other forms of prejudice,
67 bias, and hate; and to impose burdensome disclosure mandates related to classroom lessons,
68 assignments, and activities;

69
70 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
71 Christ encourages all settings of the Church as well as lay members to use this resolution for the
72 development of talking points for presentation in public arenas where such matters are being
73 dealt with, including state legislatures, local school boards, parent-teacher associations,
74 ministerial associations, community groups, and the like.

75
76 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance
77 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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79 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries
80 or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

ⁱ United Church of Christ: *History*: <https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>

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- ⁱⁱ United Church of Christ: *We are People of Extravagant Welcome*: https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/general-synod/general-synod-resolutions-regarding-environmental-justice/vitality/vitality_boost-your-vitality/vitality_what-matters/vitality_what-matters_we-are-people-of-extravagant/
- ⁱⁱⁱ United Church of Christ: *We Listen for a Still-speaking God*: https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/general-synod/general-synod-resolutions-regarding-environmental-justice/vitality/vitality_boost-your-vitality/vitality_what-matters/vitality_what-matters_we-listen-for-a/
- ^{iv} United Church of Christ in New Brighton: *Our Values and Beliefs*: <https://uccnb.org/who-we-are/our-values-and-beliefs>
- ^v United Church of Christ: *Not Mutually Exclusive*: https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/general-synod/general-synod-resolutions-regarding-environmental-justice/not-mutually-exclusive_index/
- ^{vi} United Church of Christ: *White Privilege: Let's Talk – A Resource for Transformational Dialogue*: <http://privilege.uccpages.org/>
- ^{vii} United Church of Christ: *Sacred Conversations to End Racism*: <https://www.ucc.org/sacred-conversations-to-end-racism/>
- ^{viii} United Church of Christ: *Our Whole Lives*: <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/health-and-wholeness-advocacy-ministries/our-whole-lives/>
- ^{ix} United Church of Christ: *A Summary of General Synod Actions 1957-1999*: <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/summary-of-gs-actions-1957-1999.pdf>
- ^x United Church of Christ: *United Church of Christ Called to be an Anti-Racist Church, Adopted 2003 General Synod Multiracial/Multicultural Addendum to 1993 Pronouncement and Proposal for Action*: https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/faithful-action-ministries/racial-justice/justice_racism_anti-racist-church/
- ^{xi} United Church of Christ: *Social Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns*: https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/health-and-wholeness-advocacy-ministries/lgbtq-ministries/lgbt_statements/
- ^{xii} United Church of Christ: *Doctrine of Discovery*: https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/faithful-action-ministries/racial-justice/justice_racism_doctrine-of-discovery/
- ^{xiii} United Church of Christ: *General Synod Resolution Calls the church to More Disability Justice*: https://www.ucc.org/general_synod_resolution_calls_the_church_to_more_disability_justice/
- ^{xiv} Gay, G. (2003). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *The Importance of Multicultural Education*: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-importance-of-multicultural-education>
- ^{xv} Parris, D., Fulks, E. & Kelley, C. (2021). Child Trends: *Anti-LGBTQ Policy Proposals Can Harm Youth Mental Health*: <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/anti-lgbtq-policy-proposals-can-harm-youth-mental-health>
- ^{xvi} Bloomberg, L.D. (2022). Teachers College Press Blog. *Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy: Empowering Responsive and Reflective Educators*: <https://www.tcpress.com/blog/culturally-inclusive-pedagogy-empowering-responsive-reflective-educators>