

TITLE: "Education: Meet the Moment"

WHEREAS Seventeen historically Black colleges and universities received bomb threats at the start of the 2022 Black History Month; and

NOTING the violence, the censorship, and the other problems that Americans have seen in public education during recent months; and

NOTING national efforts to improve America's infrastructure after the COVID-19 pandemic;

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the 2022 General Assembly moves to identify some of its immediate concerns at the start of the academic year. The General Assembly calls upon the UUA and its member congregations to work with student organizations, school boards, labor unions, and other organizations and institutions to help build a better infrastructure and to reimagine lifelong learning.

The General Assembly asks all Americans to address four major concerns in education.

First: Make schools safe, healthy, and accessible for all students and employees.

Schools must be sanctuaries. Bullying and domestic terrorism are unacceptable. Peace and human rights education are essential. Health and safety must be protected and reducing unnecessary barriers is important. Schools must promote personal, social, and environmental wellness.

Second: Support early childhood development.

An individual's education begins at birth and it continues for a lifetime. Adequate government support for child care, preschool, and kindergarten programs is needed. A system of tax credits and other subsidies to assist child care and early education should be provided. Federally funded family and sick leave programs should be developed.

Third: Encourage postsecondary education for all age groups.

The student debt crisis has exposed major problems in postsecondary education. Create postsecondary education programs that are accessible, affordable, and productive, for all adults. Community college enrollment should be free for all qualified students. Work to reduce and limit student loan debt.

Fourth: Respect the needs of teachers and other workers in education.

Teachers and all other workers need adequate protection, compensation, and representation. We condemn politically motivated and religious censorship in public education. Academic freedom must be protected. The free and responsible search for truth is essential for all nations.

Unitarian Universalist congregations are on the frontlines in education.

The problems created by censorship, fake news, and disinformation campaigns continue. Unitarian Universalist congregations can educate communities about systemic racism, economics, war and the threat of war, and evolution and the environment, and congregations can affirm the importance of education and moral behavior. September is proposed as Unitarian Universalist History Month.

The General Assembly thanks the UUA for the support that it has provided to congregations as they encourage lifelong learning, critical thinking, mutual aid, and human rights education. We ask for a Congregational Study/Action Issue proposal that can address all of the major issues in public education. A major discussion about education is needed as Unitarian Universalists work to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression.