

1 **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING WORKING**
2 **TOGETHER TO END BULLYING**

3
4 Submitted by fifteen delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the
5 United Church of Christ

6
7 **WHEREAS**, Jesus taught, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39); and

8
9 **WHEREAS**, there should be no fear in the Church’s love, “There is no fear in love, but perfect
10 love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached
11 perfection in love.” (1 John 4:18); and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, many people are hurting from the effects of bullying in the forms of physical and
14 verbal harassment, oppression, and exclusion; and

15
16 **WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, “Compared with other
17 students, negative attitudes toward LGB persons may put these youths at increased risk
18 for experiences with violence. ‘Violence’ can include behaviors such as bullying, teasing,
19 harassment, and physical assault.
20 10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
21 34% were bullied on school property
22 28% were bullied electronically
23 23% of LGB students who had dated or went out with someone during the 12 months
24 before the survey had experienced sexual dating violence in the prior year
25 18% of LGB students had experienced physical dating violence
26 18% of LGB students had been forced to have sexual intercourse at some point in their
27 lives.”¹

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29 **WHEREAS**, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) reports that 75% of
30 transgender youth feel unsafe at school, and those who are able to persevere had
31 significantly lower GPAs, were more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety,
32 and were less likely to plan on continuing their education. Along with, 59% of trans
33 students have been denied access to restrooms consistent with their gender identity.
34 Rather than focusing on their education, many students struggle for the ability to come to
35 school and be themselves without being punished for wearing clothes or using facilities
36 consistent with who they are. Some are denied opportunities to go on field trips or
37 participate in sports. Together with bullying and victim-blaming, these conflicts can lead
38 to disproportionate discipline, school pushout, and involvement in the juvenile justice
39 system.²

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41 **WHEREAS**, the 27th 2017 General Synod of the United Church of Christ resolved that it

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “LGBT Youth,” Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health, <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm> (Accessed June 23, 2017).

² Nation Center for Transgender Equality, “Youth & Students,” <https://transequality.org/issues/youth-students> (Accessed November 17, 2017).

- Supports the efforts of organizations, especially public school districts, to develop programs that promote anti-bullying, safe schools, age and family structure acceptance of wide-ranging diversity;
- Affirms that diversity/multi-cultural education should embrace people of all races, ethnic origins, genders, faiths, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic classes, countries of origin, and their families;
- Decries organized and systematic efforts to cast diversity/multi-cultural education in negative terms using fear and intimidation;
- Affirms and supports congregations, church leaders, and public school districts that are playing a prophetic role in the encouragement of diversity/multi-cultural education in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the delegates to the 127th 1994 Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference UCC resolved to call upon the members of our congregations, to respond to issues that make this world unfit for children, most particularly those issues related to the occurrence of violence and its effects on the lives of children; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ call upon the churches of the Connecticut Conference UCC to speak the value of each and every life, and to that end, boldly proclaim our opposition to the practices of bullying in all its forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge our churches, committees, and camping retreat ministries to create safe space for each and every child of God, without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, socio-economic status, gender identity, physical or mental ability, and sexual orientation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED in the spirit of advocating for safe sanctuary, we call upon every United Church of Christ member to respond to acts of bullying with acts of compassion, and to take a public stand against speeches of hate, harassment and acts of violence filled with long-held prejudices against all persons; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we call upon the Church and society to intentionally validate, support, and empower persons being injured by bullying behavior in workplaces, in schools, and in all environments.

Signed:

Rev. Greg Gray, Thompson Congregational, UCC, Windham Association
Rev. Jonathan Chapman, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association
Rev. Dr. Susan Foster, East Woodstock Congregational Church, Windham Association
Rev. Kristen Provost Switzer, Newtown Congregational Church, UCC, Fairfield East Assoc.
Rev. Shea Zellweger, Bethany First Church of Christ Congregational UCC, New Haven Assoc,
Waterbury South Congregational Church, Inc., Naugatuck Valley Assoc.
Rev. Rachel J. Bahr, First Congregational Church of Southington, CT, Central Association
Rev. Shawn Fisher, Groton Congregational Church, New London Association
Kat Voght, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association

- 88 Rob Voght, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association
- 89 Susan Waldron, ONA Ministry Team, Windham Association
- 90 Rev. Christa D. Swenson, Mystic Congregational Church, UCC, New London Association
- 91 Rev. Larissa Forsythe, The Congregational Church, UCC, South Glastonbury, Hartford East
- 92 Rev. Jack Perkins Davidson, Spring Glenn Church, UCC, New Haven Association
- 93 Rev. Matthew Emery, Storrs Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Windham Assoc.
- 94 Rev. Jill Olds, United Congregational Church of Tolland, UCC, Tolland Association