

1 **RESOLUTION: SAFEGUARDING OF CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE**
2 **WAKE OF SEPTEMBER 11TH**

3
4 WHEREAS creation of humankind in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) endows every
5 person with worth and dignity regardless of race, national origin, or
6 religion; and

7
8 WHEREAS in the quest for security people of faith must never forget that our ultimate
9 trust is in God (Psalm 4:8) and that reliance on earthly power and human
10 instruments is misplaced (Isaiah 31:1; Jeremiah 17:5-8); and

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12 WHEREAS we live in a broken world where false prophets offer easy solutions and
13 promise what they cannot deliver, “saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ where there is
14 no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14); and

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16 WHEREAS Paul warns, “When people say, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden
17 destruction comes” (1 Thessalonians 5:3); and

18
19 WHEREAS Christians are called to “pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up
20 building” (Romans 14:19; cf Luke 19:42); and

21
22 WHEREAS Jesus calls us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us
23 (Matthew 5:43ff) and John assures us that there is no fear in love, for
24 perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18); and

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26 WHEREAS, “it is not right to be partial in judgment” (Proverbs 24:23 Jewish
27 Publication Society), for God’s justice in impartial (Malachi 2:9), and

28
29 WHEREAS God’s impartial justice extends to all, including the alien, whom we are to
30 love and treat justly (Deuteronomy 10:19; Ezekiel 22:7); and

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32 WHEREAS General Synod 20, adopted a resolution “Affirming the Dignity and Self
33 Worth of Immigrants,” warning against intolerance directed at “non-
34 European” immigrants, affirming the dignity and self worth of all people,
35 and deploring any attempt to blame immigrants for social ills in this
36 country; and

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38 WHEREAS “God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness
39 declared through prophets and apostles” (UCC Statement of Faith, Moss
40 adaptation); and

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42 WHEREAS fundamental civil rights reflecting human worth and dignity are embodied
43 in such principles as the right of habeas corpus, the presumption of
44 innocence, freedom from self-incrimination, freedom from unreasonable
45 search and seizure, and freedom of speech and association; and
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47 WHEREAS the terrorists attacks of September 11, 2001, by their indiscriminate and
48 brutal nature have created an atmosphere of distrust and fear in which our
49 government is expected to take steps to reduce the risk of future attacks
50 and enhance security; and
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52 WHEREAS legislation has been introduced in the Congress for the purpose of giving
53 law enforcement agencies broad new powers to combat terrorism; and
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55 WHEREAS preserving the principles of a democratic society that are at the core of the
56 American way of life and that are guaranteed by our Constitution requires
57 that the requirements of security be reconciled with the demands of liberty
58 and justice; and
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60 WHEREAS fear is never a sound basis for making public policy and our own recent
61 history (e.g. the internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry
62 during World War II and the ruining of lives and reputations during the
63 anti-Communist witch hunts of the 1950s) has shown what can happen
64 when fear leads us to abandon democratic principles; and
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66 WHEREAS thousands of innocent persons could be affected by legislation intended to
67 counter terrorism; and
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69 WHEREAS law enforcement agencies already have substantial powers to investigate
70 acts of terrorism and persons reasonable suspected of planning or carrying
71 out such acts; and
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73 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED
74 that we the delegates to the 134th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut
75 Conference of the United Church of Christ affirm our commitment to our
76 democratic system and to our Constitution and affirm our belief that
77 legitimate security needs of our country can be achieved without eroding
78 the liberties and freedoms that are at the heart of the American way of life;
79 and
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81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED
82 that we encourage our churches, our legislators, and our Public Policy
83 Advocate to support only those legislative proposals that are consistent
84 with democratic principles of fairness and due process for all persons
85 regardless of race, religion, ethnic identity, or national origin; and
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87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED
88 that we encourage our churches, our legislators, and our Public Policy
89 Advocate to oppose any proposals that would (for example):
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- 91 •Permit indefinite detention of non-citizens without probable cause to
- 92 suspect that they might be involved in criminal activities and without the
- 93 right to judicial review of the detention;
- 94
- 95 •Permit the use of wire tapping and electronic surveillance without the
- 96 normal safe guards that ensure privacy;
- 97
- 98 •Permit law enforcement officials to conduct secret searches;
- 99
- 100 •Create a new crime of “domestic terrorism” that could be used to
- 101 prosecute protestors whose acts present no threat to national security; and
- 102
- 103 THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED
- 104 the office of Justice and Witness and the Justice Witness Ministry team be
- 105 requested to provided resources to clergy and congregations.