

Unitarian Universalist
LEGISLATIVE MINISTRY OF NEW JERSEY
A PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK



PROMOTING UU MORAL VALUES IN SOCIETY

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, WITNESS



SEEKING LONG RUN SOLUTIONS
TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS



UU LEGISLATIVE MINISTRY OF NEW JERSEY - OUR STORY

The 21 UU Congregations in New Jersey are about to launch a state-wide advocacy and education network to witness for UU values in public policy deliberations. Our faith calls us to challenge and change policies and structures that inhibit human development, destroy the environment, and destroy communities. UU public policy networks already exist in a dozen states. UULMNJ will gladly share its experience with New York and Connecticut UUs to encourage them to form advocacy networks or join interfaith networks.

BACKGROUND

The UULMNJ Steering Committee has been meeting for a year, as a result of an initial idea from a UU Congregation of Princeton Social Outreach Committee. In addition to setting up the organizational structure, the steering committee has conducted a survey of New Jersey UUs to prioritize issues. It has communicated with all 21 congregations to enlist their future participation in public policy advocacy. Our three selected issues are Economic Justice, the Environment, and Health Care.

Issue Task Forces have begun to define potential State legislation and administrative actions which match our UU values. Although there will be significant volunteer participation in the public policy advocacy, we envision a professional advocate to articulate our issues and organize response. The professional staff person will educate congregations and lead them in speaking out for justice.

VITAL SUPPORT FOR START-UP

UULMNJ is asking the Spring 2009 Chalice Lighter Campaign for start-up support so we can hire a part-time advocate in June 2009 and demonstrate to our constituency the effectiveness of the structure. The paid staff person will enhance all aspects of the program by defining the role of congregants and empowering them in building coalitions and making contact with officials to influence public policy. During the church year 2010-11, UU congregations will support UULMNJ in their budgets. Individual contributions will also be important.

The legislative ministry expects greater success in fundraising to come after a demonstration period of action. Congregations and individuals in the Metro New York District, via the Spring 2009 Chalice Lighter Campaign, can support this witness for UU values in its early stages. UULMNJ greatly appreciates encouragement, support, and a shared commitment to justice by the district.