

POSITION OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION OF  
PUERTO RICO REGARDING P. S. 950 AND P. S. 1000



September 6, 2018

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Puerto Rico (UUPR) is a church in which we affirm our belief in the “inherent worth and dignity of every person”, the principles of “justice, equity and compassion in human relations”, and each person’s autonomy of conscience.

True to our principles, in 1987, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) approved a General Resolution in favor of women’s right to choose if they want to continue or terminate their pregnancy, giving them full information, complementing their choice with sexual education, and providing them access to contraceptives. We understand that these are fundamental rights derived from those stated by the United States Constitution, which is applicable to Puerto Rico.

The bill, P. S. 950, limits women’s access to a safe abortion in various ways:

- It establishes that, in less of forty eight hours before the abortion, the physician be required to tell women, as a clear emotional manipulation, that abortion will “end the life of an entire, separate, and unique being”, and the age of the fetus.
- The legislation is redundant when it asks physicians and health institutions to inform the patients about the place where the abortion is going to take place, the risks, and consequences, something that is already part of medical practice as part of a code of professional ethics. (It is already stated in the Professional Ethics code of the Physician Medical Tribunal of Puerto Rico, specifically in Canons 4, 5, and 6 regarding the duties to patients). If there is a failure in informing patients about the outcomes of abortion, a new legislation like this will not address the problem, but will aggravate it when it obliges physicians to promote a particular perspective in patients, that the fetus is an “entirely separate, and unique living being”.
- The stipulated penalties in the bill are directed to dissuade physicians and health institutions from helping women exercise their fundamental right to choose to continue their pregnancy or not.

- This bill is religiously motivated, which would constitute an undue intervention of a world-view of certain groups of people, and, therefore, could be a violation of the Separation of Church and State, which is stipulated in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, applicable to Puerto Rico, and it also appears in Section 3, Article 2, of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Regarding P. S. 1000, this bill forbids the so-called “conversion therapies” to young people who are not of heterosexual orientation. “Conversion therapies” constitute a violent act to human integrity, and a cruel, heterosexist, exercise. In general, such measures are carried out with the support of certain religious groups, which seek to impose their world-view regarding human sexuality in such a manner. For a very long time, scientific evidence has established that in most cases, “conversion thereapies” have been ineffective, add distress to LGBT+ children and teenagers, to the point of driving some of them to suicide. Non-heterosexual orientation, including transgenders and transexual, are no longer considered psychological or psychiatric illnesses from the standpoint of scientific medicine.

Given these facts, we express our position:

- We vehemently reject P. S. 950.
- We support the Governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló Nevárez, regarding his decision not to sign P. S. 950.
- We support the tri-partisan supported, P. S. 1000, which seeks to forbid the so-called “conversion therapies”, hence, broadening the rights of the LGBT+ community in Puerto Rico.