

Statement of Witness in Opposition to Kansas House Bill 2466

before House Judiciary Committee Hearings on 3 February 2016

from the Social Action and Social Justice Team of

the Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence, Kansas

The Social Action and Social Justice Team of the Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence, Kansas, as part of the stand taken by the Unitarian Universalist Association of the United States in support of "Standing on the Side of Love" expresses its opposition to House Bill 2466 as an unnecessary assault upon the right of sanctuary by Kansas counties, cities, and towns.

The Unitarian Universalists have, like many other religious denominations, supported the "modern sanctuary movement, which emerged in the 1980s in conjunction with the flight of refugees from war-torn Central America. As statements of witness, the UUA strongly supported that movement: three General Assemblies of the UUA endorsed sanctuary for refugees (1980, 1984, and 1985), and a 1986 Board Resolution established a Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary Fund to support individuals seeking sanctuary and to aid churches providing sanctuary.

A resolution of immediate witness was passed in 1995 for humane treatment of immigrants, and in 2006 the General Assembly voted for an Action of Immediate Witness to support immigrant justice. Many among us are immigrants and integral members of and contributors to our communities and our congregations; many of us witness to the impact of the current unjust immigration system on families and communities around us. For these reasons, we Unitarian Universalists join people of many faith traditions in supporting the rights of our brothers and sisters who are recent immigrants to the United States of America. Most recently, at the 2007 General Assembly, delegates passed an Action of Immediate Witness to Support Immigrant Families.

We oppose the involvement of local and state police in supporting ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Raids as such support undermines successful community policing.

We call for an immediate moratorium on all inhumane raids and resulting deportations until Congress has enacted a truly comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill to deal with what is a national problem and national tragedy.

Kansans have a tradition of supporting freedom and granting mercy where it is most needed. That was the tradition of the "Free Soilers" who came here, those who risked their welfare and lives to support the Underground Railroad, and made Kansas a state. Our religious community finds its roots in that tradition and it defines where we stand on the right of sanctuary in Kansas.

