

1 The Executive Council recommends this resolution be sent to a committee of the General Synod

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3 **RESISTING ACTIONS SEEKING TO UNDERMINE THE STATUS**
4 **OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

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6 **Submitted by The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ**

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8 **A Resolution of Witness**

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10 **SUMMARY**

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12 This resolution is in response to increasing legislative activity that has taken place in states
13 across the country and at the national level, which is aimed at undermining women’s rights
14 gained over the past thirty years. Systematic attempts to undermine the status of women can be
15 seen in: efforts to deny women reproductive rights which are the law of the land, the passage of
16 legislation that inserts government into health care choices which should be personal and private;
17 state legislation which overturns equal pay laws, failure at the national level to renew equal pay
18 laws. All of these issues are issues on which previous Synods have taken stands. This resolution
19 asks the Twenty-ninth General Synod to reaffirm those positions and values and to draw upon
20 them in resisting social and political actions that lead to the subjugation of women.

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22 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

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24 In the Creation story, scripture affirms that all people are created in the image and likeness of
25 God, that male and female, God created them establishing a partnership of equality between
26 them (Genesis 1:27-28). The United Church of Christ has demonstrated an understanding of this
27 biblically established partnership of equality to mean that societal distinctions which create an
28 inferior-superior relationship between genders is contrary to the will of God.

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30 **BACKGROUND**

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32 Since 1969 General Synods of the United Church of Christ have studied social issues that led to
33 and maintained gender inequality. As a result previous Synods have passed resolutions calling
34 for equality in educational opportunities, equal pay, reproductive rights, and end to domestic
35 violence. Consistently Synod resolutions have acknowledged that matters of reproductive health
36 are matters of conscience and therefore personal decisions. Now, political conversation and
37 legislation actions taking place across the country have led to the loss of basic health care
38 services for women of limited means, have intruded in doctor/patient relationships and have
39 interfered with women’s ability to make their own health care decisions. Organized efforts are
40 underway to undermine the equality for women achieved over the past 30 years.

41 In a recent op-ed article in the New York Times that outlines the consequences of this activity,
42 columnist Gail Collins notes that this activity “...is basically about imposing one particular
43 theology on the rest of the country.” (The Woes of Roe; www.nytimes.com; January 9, 2013).

44 We believe it is important for the United Church of Christ to again bear witness to the presence
45 of another theological perspective on these issues – one that challenges the assumption of
46 inferior-superior relationships between genders.

48 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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50 WHEREAS previous General Synods of the United Church of Christ have affirmed the value
51 and dignity of women in the church and society and called for an end to sexism and the
52 consequences of patriarchy (1969, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1995) and

53 WHEREAS recent and ongoing political conversation and legislative action across the country is
54 leading to the loss of many of the significant advances toward full equality for women;

55 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
56 Christ calls on National Staff of the United Church of Christ, Conferences, Associations, and
57 Congregations to reaffirm the belief that societal distinctions which create an inferior-superior
58 relationship between genders is contrary to the will of God; to bear witness to that belief by
59 standing vigilant with and actively supporting women; to resist the reemerging cultural forces
60 working to subjugate women.

61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recognizing that the political conversations and legislative
62 actions often begin with groups that attribute their attempts to subjugate women to Christian
63 beliefs, the Twenty-ninth Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the National staff of the
64 United Church of Christ, Conferences, Associations and Congregations to

- 65 • publicly challenge such attributions
- 66 • proclaim the biblical vision of partnership and equality
- 67 • work with other denominations, ecumenical, and interfaith partners to do the same
- 68 • empower conference, state and national UCC policy advocates to ensure legislation
69 which assures women a full range of health care choices and services, including Title X
70 and Planned Parenthood, and recognizes a woman's right to make decisions about her
71 own reproductive health.

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73 **FUNDING**

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75 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
76 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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78 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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80 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the
81 United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.