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

RESISTING ACTIONS SEEKING TO UNDERMINE THE STATUS
OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Submitted by The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

A Resolution of Witness

SUMMARY

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

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FUNDING

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

IMPLEMENTATION

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