



General Board of **CHURCH & SOCIETY** of The United Methodist Church

Affirmation of human rights for all people

As United Methodists, we believe:

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons. We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened (§162, *The Social Principles of the 2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*).

The inherent dignity of human beings is the foundation of all human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," and "governments are bound to protect them." The declaration specifies that everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law, and that everyone has the right to security of the person and to protection against violence or bodily harm.

Legislation that denies the human rights of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender is being deliberated and enacted in states of the United States and countries around the world. Such legislative actions that discriminate, abuse and commit violence against persons on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression violate human rights and should be condemned. Religious and cultural traditions do not excuse any form of discrimination, abuse and violence.

We celebrate United Methodist Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata's prophetic leadership and the people of faith across the theological spectrum who "choose to stand against this and all legislation that promotes discrimination under the guise of religious freedom." We commend this statement to United Methodists around the world and pray that we will all work to uphold the human rights and sacred worth of all people.

—Issued by the Board of Directors
of the General Board of Church of Society
of The United Methodist Church
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