

## Minutes of a Special Congregational Meeting: November 7, 2021

Forum: Zoom meeting

Board of Trustees President Darcy Pollock convened the meeting at 11:01 a.m. She explained that the specific purpose of the meeting was to elicit congregational support for a resolution regarding equitable state funding of public schools. The morning's preceding church service was devoted to information about this issue.

Beth Reeves of the Education Justice committee of the POWER Interfaith group of Lancaster, with whom UUCL member Marianne Smith is working, had presented information in the service about Pennsylvania's extremely low position in national ranking for its support of public education. A lawsuit supported in part by POWER Interfaith and the School District of Lancaster as litigants would require that the PA General Assembly be mandated to provide fair and adequate funding to all 500 school districts in the state. There was an opportunity for questions and answers about the litigation, as well as personal accounts by UUCL members whose children have attended SDoL schools.

The UUCL BoT had voted unanimously on October 27, 2021, to endorse the litigation. The BoT felt, however, that it spoke for itself, and wanted a larger endorsement from the UUCL body as a whole.

**Elizabeth Shuba moved, and Heather Gehron-Rice seconded, that the text of the resolution (below) be endorsed. The endorsement was passed unanimously.**

**WHEREAS education in Pennsylvania is a constitutional right, articulated in Article III, Section 14 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It states that "The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth"; and**

**Whereas there is substantial evidence that both individual health and economic well-being are tied to educational outcomes;**

**Whereas there is ample evidence that community prosperity is related to the quality of education;**

**Whereas when the state fails to adequately fund education, it puts an unfair responsibility on local taxpayers, which cannot be met in low-wealth districts even when paying higher tax rates;**

**Whereas the General Assembly has defined what a thorough education is by identifying educational standards (the standards used in PSSA and Keystone exams) that all PA students are expected to meet; and**

**Whereas the current school funding system in Pennsylvania results in grossly different amounts of money spent on children in different districts in violation of the equal protection provisions of the state Constitution; with much less money spent on children in low-wealth districts even though their students have additional educational needs; Pennsylvania results in grossly different amounts of money spent on children in different districts in violation of the equal protection provisions of the state Constitution; with much less money spent on children in low-wealth districts even though their students have additional educational needs;**

now, therefore be it Resolved, that the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster supports the parents of individual children, the school districts, the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, and the PA NAACP State Conference in their suit to enforce Pennsylvania's constitutional guarantee of "a thorough and efficient system of public education" and urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to provide a fair, adequate, and predictable funding system that enables all children to meet state academic standards and does not discriminate against low-wealth school districts; and

Further resolved, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the governor's office, the PA Secretary of Education and to state senator Scott Martin and state representative Michael Sturla, state legislators who represent our school district.

This action being the sole business of the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 11:18.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Chappell