

**A Voice and a Vote:
Talking Points to advocate for Delegate Status for Religious Educators**

Religious educators are on the front lines of both our denomination and the changing nature of faith work in the 21st Century. The majority of religious educators make a significant investment in various forms of ongoing education, other than credentialing, and are knowledgeable and committed to our faith; we need their voices and perspectives as representatives of the congregations they serve. They work with populations that are often underrepresented in our national dialogue and our denominational business, and it is important to note that our UU RE classrooms are the most diverse places in our denomination. It is time to give religious educators a voice and a vote!

Religious educators have been silenced by a lack of delegate status. Religious educators have been called to or have chosen a profession whose mission is to foster the faith development of Unitarian Universalists of all ages. As Unitarian Universalists, we hold dear the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process. Yet, current practice silences the voices of professional religious educators. As professionals serving our communities and congregations, it is time to give religious educators a voice and a vote!

Religious educators serve our larger denomination at all levels. The UUA Board of Trustees is currently led by Co-Moderators who are religious educators. That same board has three more trustees who are religious educators. Religious educators volunteer on regional and national committees, organize social justice events and facilitate trainings. Religious educators lead our Association but have no formal path to participating in the our democratic process. It is time to give religious educators a voice and a vote!

The majority of people serving as religious educators are female-identified, which means our UUA bylaws effectively silence a large population of female-identified people--the very people serving our congregations and communities. In a society shaped by patriarchy, our denomination is not immune to practices that silence female-identified people. It is time to give religious educators a voice and a vote!

Religious Educators and LREDA have been leading institutional change in our faith for decades. We called for comprehensive sexuality education that led to AYS & OWL programs; our anti-racism/anti-oppression team began in the late 90's, other organizations followed suit; we introduced "Rise in Body or Spirit," which has been systematically embraced by our congregations; and LREDA was the first organization to be granted Welcoming status in the UUA. The UUA will benefit from our voices and votes at GA. It is time to give religious educators a voice and a vote!