

2025 – 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES THE CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS PORTFOLIO

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The Civil and Human Rights Portfolio is a collection of significant issues that affect the improvement of the quality of life, and the rights and dignity of all persons. As these issues have been adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, the General Board of Church and Society upholds the mandate of the Social Principles and advocates in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism

“We condemn racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism, and any ideology or social practice based on false and misleading beliefs or ideologies that one group of human beings is superior to all other groups of human beings. Additionally, we utterly reject laws, policies and social practices that marginalize, discriminate and/or encourage the use of violence against individuals, communities or other social groups based on perceived racial, ethnic or tribal differences.” (The Social Community, The Nurturing Community, Section L)

Indigenous Peoples

“We support the rights of indigenous, native, and aboriginal communities and affirm that like all people they must be afforded the basic rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We condemn acts of genocide against indigenous peoples and call for government treaties and contracts with native and aboriginal peoples to be honored and enforced.” (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, F. Indigenous, Native, and Aboriginal Communities)

Voting Rights/Free and Fair Elections

“We affirm that both church and state have vital and distinct roles to play in relation to the larger society. Though the formal relationships between religious communities and governments vary from country to country, we generally affirm the independence and integrity of both institutions, and we advocate for a relationship of mutual respect in which neither institution seeks to dominate or unduly influence the other.” (The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, Section A)

Restorative Justice

“We, therefore, urge governments to develop systems that emphasize restorative justice, which requires people who have committed crimes to make amends for their offenses, and allows victims, if they elect to do so, to share with offenders how they have been

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harm. Restorative justice seeks to prioritize the victim and the victim's family. It also seeks to repair damages, right wrongs, and bring healing to the victim, the offender, families and the community." (The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, Section C)

The Death Penalty

"Our commitment to the inherent dignity and worth of every person and our historic stance as United Methodists compels us to oppose capital punishment and the imposition of the death penalty. The death penalty is a sentence of execution imposed upon a legally convicted individual." (The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, Section D)

Criminal Justice

"We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures that prevent, deter or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those who are imprisoned. We strongly support programs in prisons designed to promote rehabilitation and restoration of inmates. We do not believe that prisons should be for-profit enterprises." (The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, Section E)

Immigration

"We affirm the dignity, worth and rights of migrants, immigrants and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. In so doing, we acknowledge that the world today is facing an unprecedented crisis related to the displacement of vast numbers of people due to such factors as ongoing wars and other hostilities, foreign interventions, widespread famine and hunger, global warming and climate change, and the failure of nation-states to adequately protect and care for their people." (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section G)

Disability Justice

"We affirm the full humanity and acknowledge the gifts of people living with disabilities. We call for the elimination of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in the life of local congregations and the broader society." (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section H. People with Disabilities)

LGBTQIA+ Justice

"Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity." (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section I. Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities)

Religious Nationalism

"We affirm the rights of religious minorities to worship in peace and to exercise their faith free from fear of discrimination or persecution. We condemn actions by any individual, group or organization that denigrate or demean those belonging to another faith. As Christians, we consider such attitudes and actions to be antithetical to Jesus's command to love one's neighbor." (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section J. Religious Minorities)

Education Reform

"We call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people and for their safety, nurture, agency, education, and participation in church and community life." (The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section B. Children and Young People)

