



Justice Kennedy's Retirement a Grave Threat to the Human Rights of Women

(July 5, 2018) -- Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) joins a number of interfaith and secular human right organizations in declaring that the stakes of the Supreme Court vacancy following the resignation of Justice Anthony Kennedy are enormously high for the future of civil and human rights. Our highest court plays a critical role as a backstop when other institutions fail to provide basic protections.

All of our rights and freedoms are on the line. Whether access to healthcare, immigrant justice, LGBTQ rights, or criminal justice reform, the fate of all of these hang in the balance. The issue most immediately under threat is access to health care, especially for women. During his political campaign, President Trump asserted that he would only appoint judges who would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion nationwide. He also wants justices who would rule against the Affordable Care Act. While claiming he will not use judicial positions on these as a litmus test for his nominee, he is using groups for whom opposing abortion and dismantling the national health insurance program are imperative. Trump could not be clearer in his intentions.

The broad civil and human rights coalition is united in its commitment to fight for our rights. We are mobilizing to protect the integrity of the Supreme Court from extremists who would turn back the clock. We are asking that the Senators who have the power to confirm this appointment put country over party and act as an independent check on this president. There is simply too much at stake to rush through such a consequential confirmation, one that will impact the course of history for the next 40 years.

The UUWF is one of two associate member organizations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, whose policy about reproductive choice affirms the worth and dignity of every person and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Thus we support access to family planning and reproductive health care, including birth control, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, and abortion. We oppose any attempt to enact a position on private morality into public law.

UUWF is a national membership organization working to advance justice for women and promote their spiritual growth. Inheritor of a proud tradition, UUWF was formed in 1963 through consolidation of the Association of Universalist Women (founded in 1869 and believed to be the first organization of lay church women in the United States) and the Alliance of Unitarian Women (1890).