

## Planned Parenthood National Convention July 27-29, 2018

Since I have been a lifelong advocate for the rights of all people, as soon as I joined our church, I joined our Social Justice Coordinating Team. This led me to becoming our representative to the Interfaith Reproductive Justice Coalition through MUUSJN (Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network). Almost immediately I was given the most auspicious opportunity to attend the Planned Parenthood National Conference in Detroit, and I'd like to share a few highlights.

There was one recurring theme that was brought up at every meeting - "*Assume best intentions (or positive intent), but honor impact.*" This resonated with me and our UU Covenant.

Some new terms that have been entered into the LGBTQ terminology are QPOC and QTPOC. These stand for Queer People of Color, and Queer Trans People of Color, pronounced Que-poc, or Q-T-poc (as in pock-et). The LGTBQ community, especially the QTPOC community, is the most marginalized community still at the highest risk of having their reproductive rights ignored and illegalized.

In this weekend's scenario, **Reproductive Health** was defined as "*A direct service framework that focuses on providing services for historically marginalized communities.*" The definition of **Reproductive Rights** was given as "*A policy framework that focuses on keeping abortion legal and increasing access to family planning services.*" Finally, **Reproductive Justice** was defined as "*The right to have children, the right to not have children, and the right to raise children.*" It's all about dismantling historical thinking, not ending the policing of our own bodies, and uplifting chosen families.

**Global Gag Rule**—The United States government has what we call the Global Gag Rule that simply states if *any entity is receiving funding from the US it cannot talk about abortion in any form.* This must be stopped and we sent mass texts to voice our opinion.

The **American Medical Association** states, in writing, that *if a baby is born with the genitals of both genders, the doctor alone can determine the sex of the baby and perform surgery WITHOUT parental consent.* By decolonizing the movement against marginalized people, and abortion in general, we are trying to reverse this to let the child and the parents decide together.

One speaker stated in a whole group meeting that she had heard a Christian minister say "*Nowhere in scripture is abortion condemned.*" One in every four women has had an abortion. However, Planned Parenthood also includes: having the right to receive reproduction education for all people with a female body so we can make informed choices (including teens), have overall reproductive health, not just those who can afford a mammogram, examination, abortion, birth control, etc. Planned Parenthood is about reproductive rights and reproductive justice.

People with **HIV** may also receive care from Planned Parenthood. There is now a form of a "birth control" pill that a person can take before sex that is designed to *prevent HIV—PrEP pill or PEP pill.* Also, the most recent information on HIV is "*if you take your meds, and your viral load goes down, you cannot transmit the disease!*" per Alejandra Garcia, a graduate student intern with Unified in Detroit.

I met many wonderful people. We all shared our stories, and there was so much love felt between everyone. One of the National PP workers told me she was going to miss me. ☺ I became ill Saturday morning and one of the Michigan PP people ran out to a convenience store for me. I met some of the MUUSJN members, and was privileged to work our table for a few hours that enabled me to meet even more people. Such wonderful people and such a beautiful

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experience! I brought back some 'souvenirs' I will share at a later date, and if you have any further questions, please ask me.

Thank you for this moving experience!

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