

**PETITION TO SENATOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
New York**

Social Justice Council, First Unitarian Church, Ithaca
Congregation Members

23 January 2005

We, the undersigned Unitarian Universalists of the 24th District, petition Senator Clinton to introduce in the 109th Congress legislation that would nullify the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004", as a violation of our religious rights under the First Amendment and other constitutional rights enumerated in the 4th, 13th and 14th Amendments.

The "Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004" (H.R. 1997) defines the fertilized ovum (zygote), embryo and fetus as an "unborn child", as a "child *in utero*", that is "a member of the species *homo sapiens*, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb". This is a violation of the religious beliefs and principles of Unitarian Universalism that rejects any "theology of fetal personhood" and its legislation into civil law. See the UUA General Assembly Resolution of 1982 that affirms our religious faith principles, attached.

H.R. 1997 violates the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion".

This fetal personhood law violates the 14th Amendment, which defines citizens as "persons born" (not the unborn) that are entitled to the protection of the U.S. Constitution.

This fetal personhood law violates the 4th Amendment: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons", which is denied pregnant women where "fetal rights" are placed in conflict with maternal rights. Could the state seize the pregnant woman to protect fetal rights that are endangered by the mother, analogous to seizure of the child because of child endangerment?

This fetal personhood law violates the 13th Amendment: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude...shall exist within the United States..." where involuntary servitude to religious dogma and compulsory motherhood are imposed upon all expectant parents and where abortion denied becomes a sentence of compulsory motherhood and may risk the health and well-being of the mother.

We affirm that compulsory motherhood is as onerous as compulsory abortion and that no pregnant woman is a free woman under the Fetal Personhood Law (H.R. 1997).

We encourage you to co-ordinate this effort with Senator Schumer, whom we are also petitioning on this matter, and with the 38 other Senators who voted against H.R. 1997.

Your action on this matter is critical to protect our religious freedom and liberties and our other constitutional rights. We respect your efforts to protect our democracy.

Richard S. Gilbert
Interim Minister
First Unitarian Church, Ithaca

Martha Feger
Chairperson, Social Justice Council
First Unitarian Church, Ithaca

Members, First Unitarian Church, Ithaca, NY, 24th District, New York.

Name

Address

City, zip code