

Pride In Action: Coffee & Comments: Advocacy Toolkit for Congregations

Campaign Dates: Monday June 1st – Sunday, June 28th, 2026

The UU Service Committee (UUSC), the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Trans Religious professional UUs Together (TRUUST) invite you to join our national comment campaign addressing an anti-trans rule proposal from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This guide provides everything you need to host a public comment drive during your weekly coffee hours. By combining fellowship with civic engagement, you can make a meaningful impact on federal policy and oppose this administration's efforts to enact this rule that would make domestic violence and homeless shelters more dangerous and less accessible for trans, two spirit, gender expansive and intersex people.

First, we want to acknowledge the organizations, groups, and individuals that have enabled us to pull this campaign together so quickly and who are tirelessly working for trans liberation and social justice. So much of organizing is built on and in collaboration with others that we cannot name everyone here but wish to lift up two organizations in particular.

[Advocates for Trans Equality](#) (A4TE) tracked and planned the comment campaign for the proposed HUD rule, and we are using their expert language and guidance as part of this toolkit. We are grateful for all they are doing and have done for the trans community and hope that this guide can help many UUs join them advocating for trans equality now and in the future.

The [UU Solidarity Initiative](#), which is a collaboration between UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ), UU Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education (UURISE), The UUA, UUSC, BorderLinks and the UU Minister's Association (UUMA), created a guide like this for a comment campaign in March and April of this year to protect the right of Asylum seekers to work while pursuing their cases. This guide uses the template they created together to engage UUs across the country to resist injustice and we are grateful not only for their work on the predecessor to this document, but also for their modeling of collaborative justice making.

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Background Information on the Proposed Rule

Use this section to educate your volunteers and create fact sheets for the coffee hour tables.

- **The Proposed Rule:** [FR-6518-P-01](#) Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Revisions
- **The Agency:** Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Deadline for Comments:** Monday, June 28th, 2026
- **What this rule does:**

On April 28th, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) proposed a rule revision aimed at removing critical protections meant to ensure the safety of any trans person in need of HUD-funded programs. According to A4TE “The Equal Access Rule's protections against discrimination are critical to ensure safe access to shelter for transgender and intersex people experiencing homelessness, survivors of violence, and those fleeing disasters. This proposed rollback would encourage widespread discrimination when trans people need help the most, when facing the loss of their housing. The current regulations provide safety in HUD-funded programs, and Trump's proposed rule change would only leave trans and intersex people less safe and more at risk.”

Key proposed changes include:

- Removal of protections against housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity
 - Allowing providers to demand “evidence to confirm the sex of an individual seeking service”
 - Redefinition of “sex” to enable discrimination against trans, gender expansive and intersex people
 - Attempts to override state, local and tribal protections
 - Imposition of requirements that make it difficult for providers to do their jobs and serve the people they are committed to supporting
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Why UUs must act: Unitarian Universalists (UUs) proclaim that embracing transgender, nonbinary, intersex and gender diverse people is a fundamental expression of UU religious values. In 2024, the UUA's General Assembly passed a resolution – which is the primary mechanism by which UUs express our religious values – that asserts that “being transgender or identifying with any gender other than the one assigned at birth, is a beautiful and divine manifestation of humanity; as is being intersex, or having sex characteristics that vary from what is considered typical.” UUs believe that the ability to live ever-more authentically as one's true self is central to a lifelong journey towards spiritual fulfillment and that our covenant as a faith inescapably binds us to affirm and protect our transgender and intersex members and kindred, in faith and in practice.

These changes to the Equal Access rule would make it more difficult and, in some cases, unsafe for transgender and intersex people already facing challenges including homelessness and domestic violence from accessing safe and welcoming housing. We as UUs know that everyone has equal worth and dignity and these rule changes directly betray those deeply held values.

The Campaign Strategy

We are realistic that the likelihood of public comments changing the course of this administration's cruelty are slim. The purpose of this comment campaign is to DELAY and FIGHT, and set conditions for future engagement.

Delay - Because federal agencies are legally required to read and respond to every unique and substantive comment before finalizing a rule, the more comments that are submitted, the longer we can delay the implementation of this rule.

Fight - These comments provide needed content for fighting this rule in court. Failure of the government to adequately address comments is one of several grounds for litigation, and when that happens the court will not be able to take into account protests outside of or materials beyond the filings. Several partner organizations are already preparing for litigation, and they need us to help them make their case!

The fact that this administration often tries to subvert typical, established, lawful policy channels shows that they do not want people using the tools of our democracy to voice and document opposition.

Let's use this tool, this opportunity, to stop them! Let's intervene here and now.

The Importance of Submitting Comments

Many congregants may not know how the Federal Register works. Use these talking points to explain why their voice matters.

Why Comments Matter	The Explanation
<i>Comment Review is Required by Law</i>	<p>Federal agencies are legally required to consider every <i>unique</i> and substantive comment before finalizing a rule. Failure of the government to adequately address substantive comments sets the ground for litigation.</p> <p>This administration has been avoiding the public comment process wherever possible.</p>
<i>Quality and Quantity</i>	<p>Form letters and those with a high degree of substantively identical language are grouped together as a single comment. Our campaign focuses on helping congregants write personalized comments, which carry more weight. We need a lot of these comments to slow the government down.</p>
<i>They Shape Reality</i>	<p>Public comments can force an agency to reconsider a bad policy in the face of massive opposition, provide on-the-ground perspectives the government hadn't considered, and create a legal record that can be used when the rule is challenged in court.</p>

Setting Up the Public Comment Campaign

A successful advocacy campaign requires a bit of prep work before your launch. Follow this timeline to ensure your team is ready to go. Items in *italics* are described in more detail in the resources section.

1. Secure Leadership Support (ASAP)

- **Talk to the Minister/Social Justice Chair:** Ensure your congregational leaders are on board with the campaign. Ask if they would be willing to make a brief announcement from the pulpit on the launch day and the final day if you're able to do this on multiple Sundays.
- **Reserve the Space:** Check with your facilities manager or hospitality team to reserve a highly visible table in the fellowship hall during coffee hour.
- **Set a Campaign Goal:** You want your goal to be realistic, but ambitious. This could be a certain number of comments submitted or a certain percentage of your congregation that commented. Consider a fun "reward" for the congregation if they reach the goal.

2. Assemble Your Team

- **Recruit "Comment Champions":** Find 3-4 outgoing volunteers who are comfortable approaching people.
- **Designate a Tech Lead:** Assign one person to be in charge of the laptops/tablets, ensuring they are charged, connected to the Wi-Fi, and loaded to the UUSC Comment page each Sunday morning. www.UUSC.quorum.us/pride
- **Brief the Team:** Hold a 15-minute huddle to review the "Background Information" section so everyone feels comfortable answering basic questions about the proposed rule.

3. Prepare Your Materials (Week Before Launch)

- **Create a Thermometer:** Draw a *goal thermometer* on a large poster board. Write your goal at the top.
- **Print Handouts:** Print a stack of the "*Prompt Menu*" pages for people to reference when writing their comments. Print the *FAQs* for volunteers to carry. Print flyers to post and to add to tables or print just the QR code for people to scan at their tables. Print out a sheet to tally comments submitted.
- **Submit the Bulletin Blurb:** Send the *blurb* to your church administrator so it runs in the bulletin.

4. The Tech Rehearsal (Week Before Launch)

- **Test the Wi-Fi:** Bring the actual laptops or tablets you plan to use and test the connection at your designated table.
- **Bookmark the Page:** Open the browser on all devices and bookmark the specific comment

submission page so it is easy to refresh after each person finishes.

www.UUSC.quorum.us/pride

5. Launch Day

- **Set the Stage:** Arrive before the service to set up the *tech table*, lay out the *prompt menu sheets*, and hang the *thermometer* and *flyers*.
- **Celebrate the First Comment:** Have one of your volunteers submit the very first comment to break the ice, color in the bottom of the thermometer, and show the congregation how easy it is!

6. Mid and Post-Campaign (if you're collecting comments on more than one Sunday)

- **Send us weekly number updates:** report the number of weekly comments submitted to the national campaign at <https://tinyurl.com/CongregationalPrideInAction>
- **Mid-campaign Email:** Halfway through your campaign, send a campaign update email.
- **Post-campaign Email:** After June 28th, send a follow up email to the congregation. Visit www.UUSC.org.pride-in-action for updates on how many people commented through our portal and how many congregations participated!

Strategies for Recruiting Commenters

To make the most of the June 1st through 28th timeframe, use a multi-pronged approach:

- **The Tech Table:** Set up 2-3 laptops or tablets at a highboy table near the coffee station. Have the UUSC comment page already open and ready to go. www.UUSC.quorum.us/pride
- **QR Code and Flyers:** Hang flyers and place some on tables or just print outs of the QR code in your coffee hour space that links directly to the comment submission page, allowing people to comment from their smartphones.
- **"Comment Champions":** Recruit 3-4 outgoing volunteers to wear special nametags (e.g., *"Ask me about the HUD's anti-trans rules and how you can resist!"*). Have them actively walk the room with tablets, FAQ doc, and menu of prompts.
- **Pulpit Announcements:** Have your minister or other leader mention the campaign briefly at the end of the service, specifically pointing people toward the coffee hour tech station.
- **Provide a "Menu" of Prompts:** *Provide prompt menus with starting sentences to help people overcome writer's block and ensure their comments are unique.*

Goal Tracking

Visualizing progress is a great way to build momentum. Draw a thermometer on a large poster board and place it prominently next to the coffee station. Have volunteers color it in with a red marker at the end of each coffee hour. Report your progress each week so we know what comments are coming from each congregation using the form at <https://tinyurl.com/CongregationalPrideInAction>

Milestones to mark on your thermometer could include:

- 100% - Our Goal! [Insert Goal Number] Comments
- 80% - Almost there! Keep it up!
- 60% - Passing the halfway mark (Week 3)
- 40% - Gaining momentum (Week 2)
- 20% - Off to a great start!
- 0% - Campaign Launch: March 29, 2026

Resources & Templates

A. Bulletin Blurb

Run this in your weekly bulletin or email newsletter throughout June. Feel free to customize the announcement based on your dates.

Grab a Coffee, Leave a Comment!

Between June 1st and June 28th, we are celebrating Pride in Action and using our coffee hour to take action! Pride has always been about more than celebration. It is also about resistance, solidarity, survival, and public witness in the face of political hostility and erasure. Participating in this comment campaign is a way communities can move beyond symbolic inclusion and into concrete action and harm-reduction for transgender people.

Join us by submitting unique comments to the Department of Housing and Urban Development saying we will not let them harm our trans, nonbinary, two spirit and intersex beloveds!

B. Flyer Template

Print copies of the Coffee and Comment Flyer of your choice on standard 8.5x11 paper and post it on bulletin boards and fellowship hall doors. Consider placing them on tables as well so people can scan the QR code.

[Full Color](#)

[Light Color](#)

[Black and White](#)

C. Prompt Menu Sample – Next page

Prompt Menu

Pick a prompt to jumpstart your public comment!

Instructions: The government groups identical "form letters" together as a single submission, so unique comments make the biggest impact. Choose one of the starters below and finish the comment in your own words or write your own. Please include the rule or docket number in your comment.

Option 1: The Community Impact

"At a time when homelessness is increasing and affordable housing is scarce, we cannot afford to exclude anyone from shelter..." (Hint: Think about how this change would affect the unhoused population in your community, examples of how providing safe shelter and housing supports all, etc. Please, do not play into stereotypes portraying unhoused people as a threat while doing this.)

Option 2: The Faith Perspective

"As a person of faith, I am leaving a comment opposing this rule because..." (Hint: Think about what our core values say about transgender and intersex people, showing compassion, or honoring the inherent dignity of all.)

Option 3: The Values Appeal

"I believe the Department of Housing and Urban Development should withdraw this rule because making it more dangerous for transgender, nonbinary and intersex people to seek shelter goes against the value of..." (Hint: Focus on concepts like equal protection, protecting the vulnerable, or human rights.)

Option 4: The Personal Connection

"I know a transgender person that has recently needed access to a HUD funded shelter. If this new rule goes into effect, they would be too scared to access this vital resource and..." (Hint: Share a brief, generalized story about how someone you know has needed shelter or housing services. Please protect their privacy by not using full names.)

Thank you for using your voice today! When you are finished, don't forget to hit "Submit" and tell a Comment Champion volunteer so we can update our goal thermometer!

D. Comment Champion Quick-Reference FAQ

Here is a quick-reference FAQ sheet. You can print this out and attach it to clipboards your "Comment Champions" will be carrying, so they always have the answers right at their fingertips.

Q: What exactly are we commenting on?

A: We are submitting public comments on a proposed rule from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that could make housing and shelters less safe for trans and nonbinary people.

Q: Do these comments actually make a difference, or is this just going into a black hole?

A: They really do matter! By law (the Administrative Procedure Act), federal agencies *must* read, categorize, and consider every unique, substantive comment before making a final decision. A massive wave of public opposition can force agencies to change or drop a proposed rule entirely.

Q: Can I just copy and paste someone else's comment? It's faster.

A: Please don't! The government groups identical "form letter" comments together and counts them as a single submission. To make the biggest impact, your comment needs to be unique. That's why we have our "Menu of Prompts" to help you write 3 or 4 original comments in your own words.

Q: I'm not an expert in transgender issues or in housing needs. What do I say?

A: You don't need to be an expert! The most effective comments speak from personal experience or deep moral values. You can simply state that as a person of faith, you believe in the dignity of all people and that no one should be excluded from safe housing or shelter.

Q: Will my name and comment be public?

A: It depends. When you submit a comment on Regulations.gov, it becomes part of the official public record. Your name and the text of your comment will be visible online. You can also submit your comment anonymously. Because comments with names provide more weight, we highly suggest commenting with your name. This is an act of allyship since many members of the trans and queer community may not feel safe providing their names.

Q: Do I have to be a registered voter or a U.S. citizen to leave a comment?

A: No! Anyone can leave a public comment on the Federal Register. You do not need to be a citizen, and there are no age limits. Children and non-citizens in our congregation are absolutely welcome

and encouraged to participate.

Q: I submitted my comment! What now?

A: Thank you! Let's add a tally to our sheet to track our progress, and then please grab a treat and tell a friend at the next table how easy it was.

F. Pulpit Announcement Script

To be read by a minister, worship associate, or campaign organizer at the end of the service, just before the congregation is dismissed for coffee hour.

"Good morning, everyone. Happy Pride Month! Pride has always been about more than celebration. It is also about resistance, solidarity, survival, and public witness in the face of political hostility and erasure.

That is why, starting today and running through June 28th, we are launching our '**Pride In Action: Coffee & Comments**' campaign. When you head into the fellowship hall today, you will see our Social Justice Table and a giant thermometer. We have a goal of submitting [Target Number] official comments to the Department of Housing and Urban Development which has submitted an anti-trans rule proposal that fly in the face of everything Pride stands for.

We have laptops ready, QR codes on the tables, and volunteers wearing 'Comment Champion' badges who can help you. It only takes about three minutes. So please, grab your coffee, find a volunteer, and help us fill that thermometer today. Thank you."

G. Mid-Campaign Email Update Template

Send this to your congregation's email list midway through the month or include it in your weekly e-newsletter.

Subject: ☕ We are [Insert %] to our goal! Help us cross the finish line.

Dear [Congregation Name] Family,

Three weeks ago, we launched our **Pride in Action: Coffee & Comments** campaign with a simple but powerful goal: to submit **[Target Number]** unique comments to the Department of Housing and Urban Development fighting for the dignity of our transgender, nonbinary and intersex beloveds.

We are thrilled to share that as of this past Sunday, our thermometer in the fellowship hall is at **[Current Number] comments!** Thank you to everyone who has already taken three minutes to make their voice heard.

Why we are doing this: The government is proposing a new rule in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that would negatively impact transgender, nonbinary and intersex people. It would make shelters and housing less safe and accessible for the community at a time when costs are rising, housing is scarce and the LGBTQIA folks across the spectrum are experiencing threats of violence.

As a community of faith, we believe in the inherent dignity and worth of all people and know that gender is a spectrum not a binary!

We need your help to reach our goal by June 28th! If you haven't submitted your comment yet, you have two easy ways to do so:

1. **Join us this Sunday:** Grab a cup of coffee after the service and visit our Advocacy Table. Our "Comment Champions" will have laptops ready and can help you write your comment in less than three minutes.
2. **Do it right now from home:** You don't have to wait until Sunday! Click the link below to go directly to the official UUSC comment page and submit your comment today.
www.UUSC.quorum.us/pride

Let's fill that thermometer to the very top this Sunday. Thank you for putting your faith into action!

With gratitude,

[Your Name]

H. Post-Campaign "Thank You" Email Template

Send this to your congregation's email list or include it in your bulletin the week after the June 28th deadline.

Subject: We did it! 🎉 Thank you for siding with transgender, nonbinary and intersex people.

Dear [Congregation Name] Family,

For the past four [or insert number of weeks] weeks, we transformed our Sunday coffee hour into a hub for advocacy and action. We set a goal to submit [Target Number] public comments to the Department of Housing and Urban Development fighting for the dignity of our transgender, nonbinary and intersex beloveds

Today, we are thrilled to announce that we didn't just meet our goal—we reached a final count of [Final Number] **unique comments!** To every person who took three minutes at the Advocacy Table, scanned a QR code from their phone, or submitted a comment from home: **Thank you.** Because of you, [Final Number] original, heartfelt messages from our community are now part of the official federal record. You spoke up for the dignity of all people. You put our faith into action in a very real, tangible way.

What happens next? The public comment period is now officially closed. By law, both departments must read and review every unique comment submitted before they issue their final rule. We will keep you updated if and when the agencies announce its final decisions.

Until then, thank you to our amazing "Comment Champion" volunteers, our tech setup team, and everyone who participated in this **Coffee & Comments** campaign.

With deep gratitude,

[Your Name]