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Reflection on Justice by Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

Today I speak to you not only as a minister, but as a mother of three – two daughters and a son – 21, 18, and 13. I speak on behalf of my children and all children. All three of my children have had comprehensive sexuality education and it has given them all resources to make wise choices in their lives and relationships. I speak here today on behalf of my children and all the children and young people of Indiana.

We gather, brothers and sisters, in this great house of the state of Indiana – this house of law makers. As weighty in our lives as are our houses of worship -- are these halls – they govern our lives from waking to sleeping. Therefore it is upon us – the citizens of a democratic society – and upon our lawmakers – to shape our laws and therefore our lives with wisdom and understanding. This is justice. On seals and symbols you can see the image of justice as a woman with eyes bound as she holds the scales at balance in one hand and often a sword in the other. The figure of justice was not always blind – in ancient times she was able to see having the power of prophecy. Today the blindfold is said to represent the ability to pass judgment without prejudice or favor. And it is true – that the law must be without prejudice or favor – it must mete out to the people justice that comes down with even hand. In fact in the atrium of this State House Justice is not blindfolded. The simple blindfold no longer serves justice in this land – for two reasons.

First, we must be educated to be able to shape laws which are grounded in the realities of human life and the best of the new frontiers of health and science. We must not make our laws unseeing of the best that our society and humanity has learned and the best that we are capable of. We must not make our laws unseeing of the conditions of suffering in which our people live. And we can no longer pretend that our laws – which are shaped by human hands and minds -- are without favor or prejudice – a mere blindfold will not accomplish this – only education and understanding, grounded in compassion will make wise lawmaking possible. It is both cruel and unjust to pass laws that govern women's bodies and lives without seeing the great advances in women's health care that have freed women from forced servitude and unplanned pregnancies. It is vital to pass laws that recognize that women and girls are still and too often at the mercy of men stronger than they. It is imperative that laws act to serve those women whose bodies are fragile and lives are in jeopardy. It is a failure of sight and a great injustice to withhold from women the medical information that can make women able to shape lives without endangering others.

The laws that govern the bodies of women must do so in full light of both moral and scientific knowledge – as I said – grounded in compassion for, as the great poet Walt Whitman said: If any thing is sacred, the human body is sacred.

Second – once Justice had the power of prophesy and today her blindfold must be removed so that she can regain that prophetic sight – so that she is inspired by the visionaries who looked forward and by the prophetic voices that have called out to include the powerless, the marginalized, the weak, the hungry, the beaten – the victimized. In our nation those are women and children first. It is for women and children that we are here today – to petition our lawmakers to come out of a night without vision and into the light of a wiser day. I ask that lawmakers like Representative Souder cease to distort all that is right. We come here to prevent suffering, to alleviate ignorance – to ask that the lawmakers here open their eyes to see and ears to hear and to therefore pay attention to the real and solid research that will make our teenagers truly safe and women truly respected. For this we work and for this we pray. This is a justice issue for it addressed the rights and basics needs of women and of children to health care and education about their bodies and relationships.

The scales of justice hold many things – our various faiths, our scientific knowledge, our understanding of the human condition, the precious value of all life, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, the world in which we work to live in harmony and generosity. It is no easy work to keep these scales balanced – but in these halls – in this house – that is your work – this is our work. We have come to the city to speak for women, for children, for families – the future. We have come to city to speak for prevention of suffering and for education. We have come to the city to call for justice.

I hear her call back to us – here – no matter how tall these columns or hallowed and historic these walls we are called in all places to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly – in this place to walk humbly is to listen and to learn and then to make law.

The sages say that the world stands upon Truth, Justice and Peace. It is truth that will bring healing and a loving answer to these challenges of our time.

The voice of justice -- a prophetic voice calls to the city – to respect the many religious paths gathered here, to honor the many life affirming cultures that create our American society – to hear the voices of the oppressed and to bring justice, health, and education to those who need it – to prevent suffering – here in this state – here on this sacred ground – the ground of our common good.