

UMC Social Principles

Advocates for Social Justice

May 18, 2025

Speaker Introduction: Scott Gray

- Married to Janet
- Father to Joshua and Annie
- Lifelong United Methodist
- Have been Lay Leader, Certified Lay Speaker et al
- No special authority or training



Why Study the Social Principles?

- Worth studying in their own right
- Ramp to Book of Discipline which is a . . .
- Ramp to Holy Conferencing which is a . . .
- Ramp to connectional ministry, especially int'l . . .
- Ramp to church outside of church . . .
- Ramp to UMC history (with many comings & goings)

Social Issues & Church Impact

Episcopacy
/ Polity

Race /
Slavery

Temperance



Role of
Women

1889 United Brethren ordained women

1892 Methodist Protestant Lay delegates

1904 Methodist Episcopal Lay delegates

1920 19th Amendment US Constitution

1922 MEC, South Lay delegates

1924 MEC ordained "local elders"

1956 Methodist Church full clergy

The Social Principles

- What are they?
- Why do they exist?
- Where do you find them?
- Who creates them?
- Are they church law?

The Social Principles

5 Paragraphs

56 topics

42 pages (105-147)

About 15,000 words

The Social Principles

Preface & Preamble

160. Community of All Creation

161. The Economic Community

162. The Social Community

163. The Political Community

164. Our Social Creed

160. Community of All Creation

Preface

Creation in Peril

- A. Destruction of Ecosystems
- B. Global Warming and Climate Change
- C. Dependence on Fossil Fuels

Stewardship of Creation

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| A. Environmental Racism | D. Caring for All Creatures |
| B. Sustainable Policies and Practices | E. Protecting Space |
| C. Food Justice | F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom |

161. The Economic Community

Preface

Economic Challenges

- A. Globalization
- B. Poverty and Income Inequality
- C. Human Trafficking and Slavery
- D. Graft, Bribery and Corruption

Economic Justice

- A. Responsible Consumerism
- B. Farming and Agricultural Production
- C. The Dignity of Work
- D. Sabbath and Renewal Time
- E. Corporate Responsibility

162. The Social Community

Preface

The Nurturing Community

A. The Family

B. Single People

C. Human Sexuality

D. Marriage

1. Child Marriage

2. Polygamy

3. Divorce

Other Social Issues

A. Substance Abuse, Alcohol and

Tobacco

B. Bullying and Other Forms of Violence

C. Colonialism, Neocolonialism and Their Consequences

D. Death with Dignity

1. Faithful Care for Dying People

2. Euthanasia and Suicide

E. Gambling

F. Gender Equality and Diversity

G. Media and Communication Technologies

H. Pornography

I. Medical Experimentation and Research

J. Organ Donation and Transplantation

K. Reproductive Health and Abortion

L. Racism, Ethnocentrism and Tribalism

M. Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Assault

163. The Political Community

Preface

Government Responsibilities

A. Church and Governments

B. Civil Disobedience

C. Restorative Justice

D. The Death Penalty

E. Criminal Justice

F. War and Military Service

Basic Rights and Freedoms

A. Health Care

B. Children and Young People

C. Elders and the Aging

D. Women and Girls

E. Men and Boys

F. Indigenous, Native and
Aboriginal Communities

G. Migrants, Immigrants and
Refugees

H. People with Disabilities

I. Sexual Orientations and Gender
Identities

J. Religious Minorities

The Social Principles, Example

Example: The Death Penalty

Our commitment to the inherent dignity and worth of every person and our historic stance as United Methodists compels us to oppose capital punishment and the imposition of the death penalty.

BOD, ¶ 163. Government Responsibilities.D (page 137) selection

The Social Principles, over-generalized

For:

- Sustainability
- Food justice
- Responsible consumerism
- Sabbath & renewal time
- The Family
- Restorative justice

Against:

- Child marriage
- Polygamy
- War
- Sexual assault
- Human Trafficking & Slavery
- Graft, Bribery & Corruption [OR?]

Social Principles 2016 v 2020/2024

2016:

Preface & Preamble

- I. The Natural World
- II. The Nurturing Community
- III. The Social Community
- IV. The Economic Community
- V. The Political Community
- VI. The World Community

2020/2024:

Preface & Preamble

- 160. Community of All Creation
- 161. The Economic Community
- 162. The Social Community
- 163. The Political Community

Social Principles 2016 v. 2020/2024

2016 Removed (Partial list)

- Population
- Genetic Technology
- Food Safety
- Science and Technology
- Public Indebtedness

2020/2024 Added (Partial list)

- Destructiveness of ecosystems
- Caring for All Creatures
- Sabbath and Renewal Time
- The Dignity of Work
- Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities
- Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism

Social Principles 2016

Example: Gambling

Gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive to good government and good stewardship. [1st sentence only.]

BOD, ¶ 163.G (page 134) selection

Social Principles 2020/2024

Example: Gambling

We reject the practice of gambling because it focuses society's attention on the acquisition of monetary goods at the exclusion of all else and enriches a small minority at the expense of the larger majority. For too many people, gambling becomes a devastating and addictive practice that jeopardizes the economic well-being of both gamblers and their families.

BOD, ¶ 162. Other Social Issues. B (page 126) selection

Social Principles 2016

Example: Bullying

Bullying is a growing problem that contributes to other problems like suicide and violence. We affirm the right of all people . . . to be free of unwanted aggressive behavior and harmful control tactics.

We encourage churches to adopt a zero tolerance policy for bullying, including cyber-bullying, within their spheres of influence; we stand with persons being bullied; we take a leadership role with schools and communities to prevent bullying.

BOD, ¶ 161.R (page 119) paraphrase

Social Principles 2020/2024

Example: Bullying

We decry all forms of bullying, which consists of unwanted and aggressive behavior toward children, youth and adults, including verbal taunts, physical violence, emotional manipulation and social intimidation . . .

We support the enactment of policies aimed at safeguarding . . . from bullying. In situations involving minor children and youth, we urge the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies that take into consideration the ongoing maturational processes of both the victims and perpetrators of bullying.

BOD, ¶ 162. Other Social Issues. B (page 126) paraphrase

Tobacco

Should tobacco (smoking, vaping, dipping, chewing and such) be consumed?

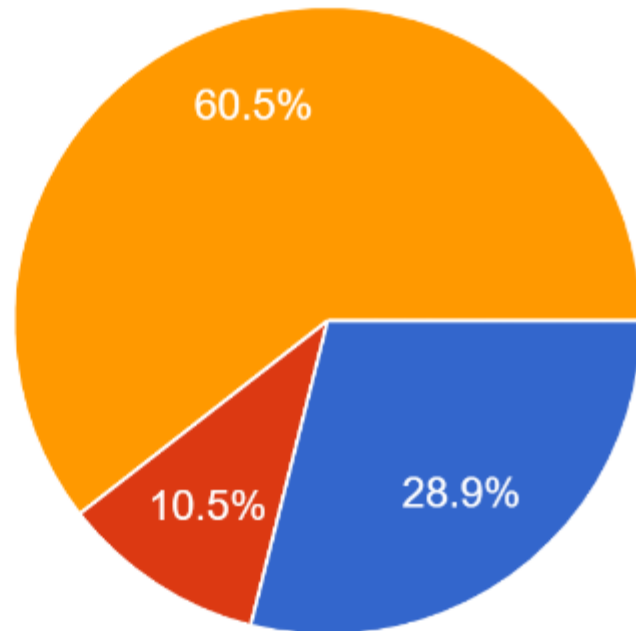
162.OSI.A

- ☐ Sure, your body, your choice.
- ☐ In moderation. Tobacco is bad for you.
- ☐ Not at all. Tobacco is hazardous to your health and anyone around you.

Tobacco

Should tobacco (smoking, vaping, dipping, chewing and such) be consumed?

38 responses



- Sure, your body, your choice.
- In moderation. Tobacco is bad for you.
- Not at all. Tobacco is hazardous to your health and anyone around you.

Tobacco

“Due to the mounting medical evidence regarding the highly addictive nature and serious health consequences of direct or indirect ingestion or inhalation of nicotine or other chemicals found in commercial tobacco products, **the church recommends complete abstinence.**”

Global Warming and Climate Change

When will global warming and climate change create extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth?

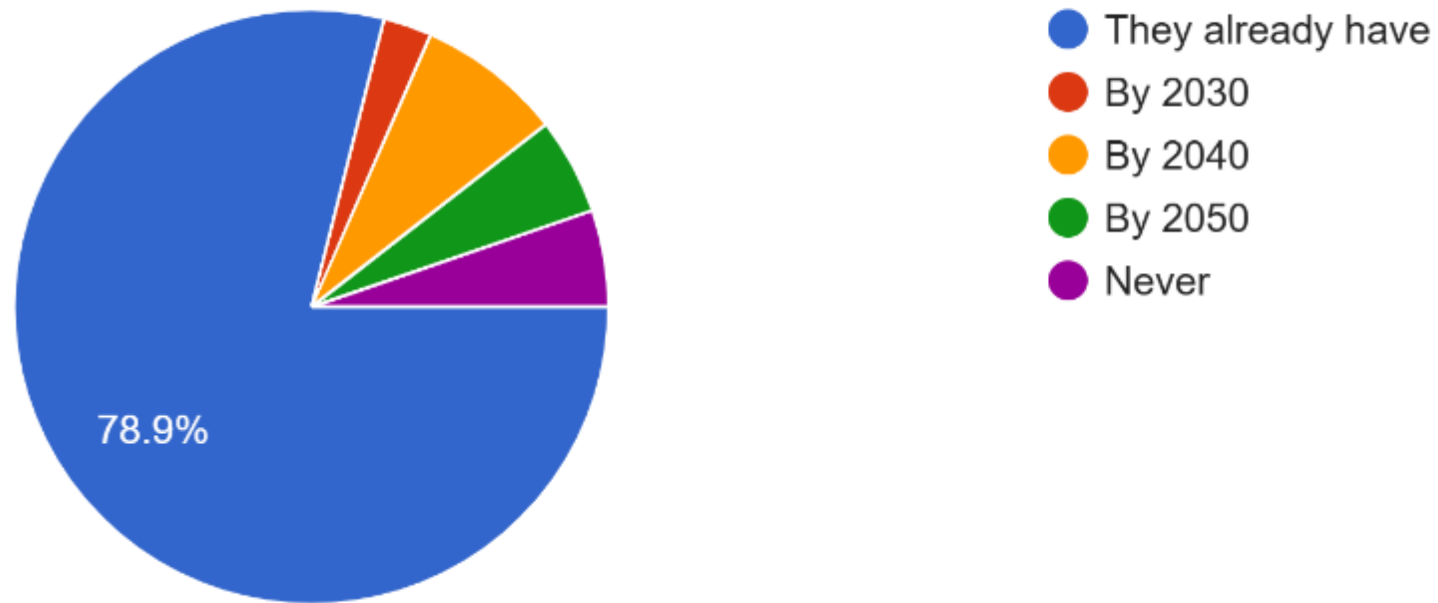
160.CIP.B

- ☐ They already have
- ☐ By 2030
- ☐ By 2040
- ☐ By 2050
- ☐ Never

Global Warming and Climate Change

When will global warming and climate change create extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth?

38 responses



Global Warming and Climate Change

“Global warming and climate change **are already** creating extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth.”

BOD, ¶ 160.CIP.B (page 110)

Organ Transplantation and Donation

When you die, would you want your organs to be donated to someone in need?

162.OSI.J

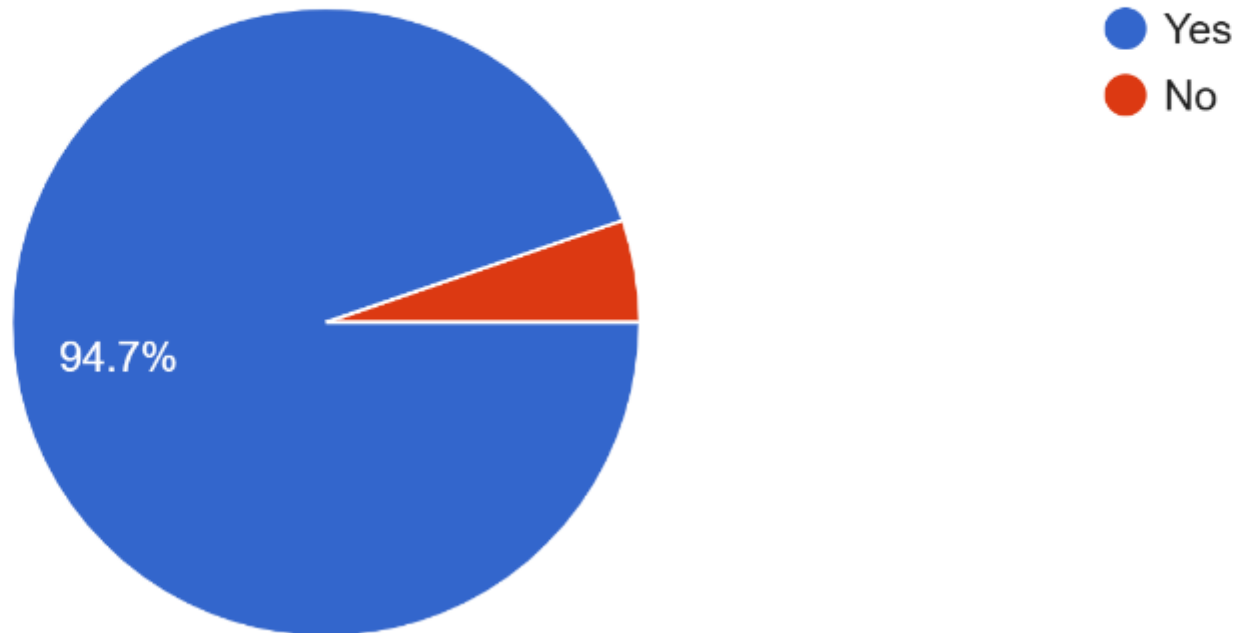
☐ Yes

☐ No

Organ Transplantation and Donation

When you die, would you want your organs to be donated to someone in need?

38 responses



Organ Transplantation and Donation

“We **strongly support organ donation** as an expression of Christ’s admonition to love one’s neighbor . . . United Methodists who are willing and able to participate are encouraged volunteer through organ donation registries.”

Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees

Who should provide concrete support (food, housing, education, employment, etc) to migrants, immigrants and refugees?

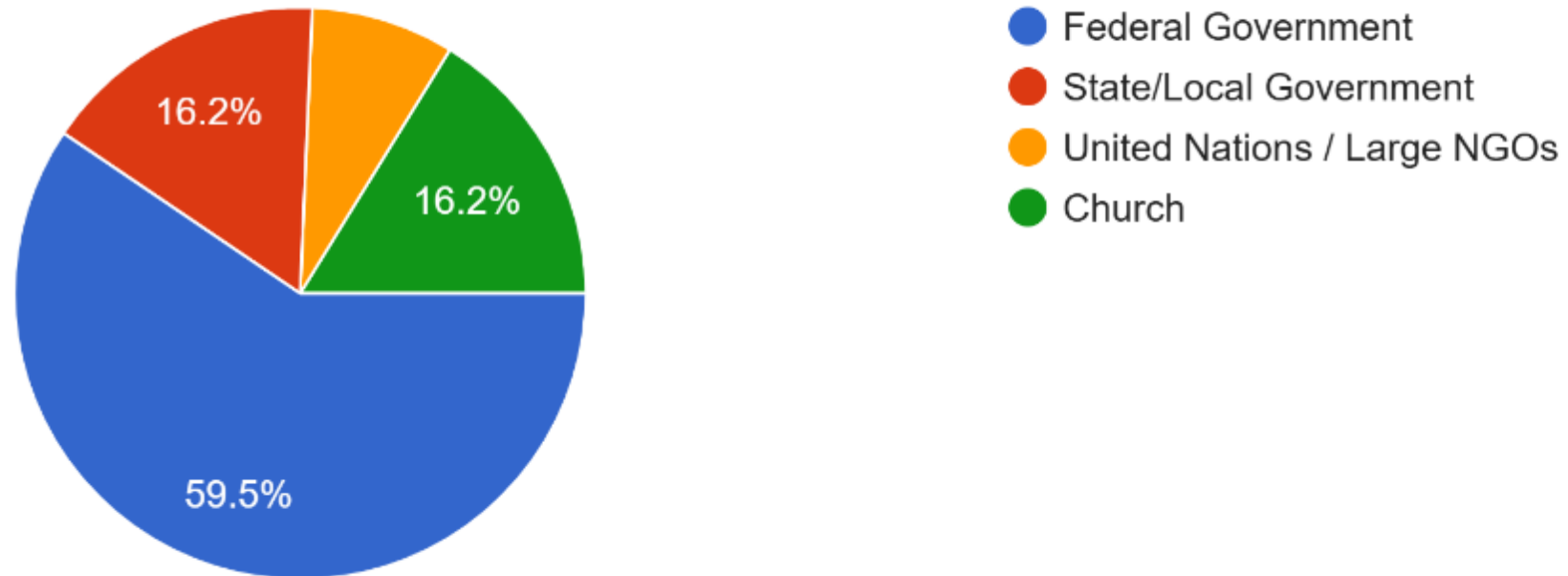
163.BRF.G

- ☐ Federal Government
- ☐ State/Local Government
- ☐ United Nations / Large NGOs
- ☐ Church

Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees

Who should provide concrete support (food, housing, education, employment, etc) to migrants, immigrants and refugees?

37 responses



Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees

“We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees and immigrants into their congregations and **to commit themselves to providing concrete support**, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment and other kinds of support.”

Sexual Abuse, Harassment and Assault

Should the church have a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment?

162.OSI.M

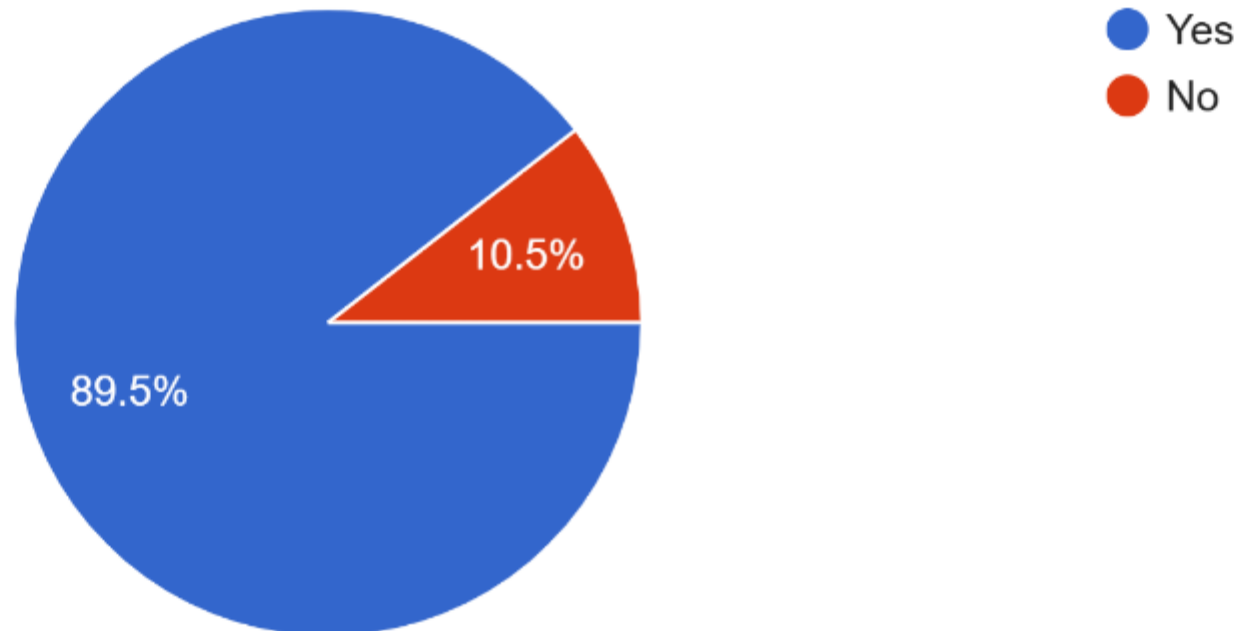
☐ Yes

☐ No

Sexual Abuse, Harassment and Assault

Should the church have a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment?

38 responses



Sexual Abuse, Harassment and Assault

“We urge pastors, congregations and other church bodies to adopt clear policies and practices to prevent or address instances of sexual harassment. These policies and practices should include required training for all clergy and staff, printed guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment, a safe and confidential reporting method and a clear process for resolving grievance complaints, **including escalating penalties** that end with dismissal for repeat offenders who fail to correct their behavior.”

Civil Obedience and Disobedience

Do you support individuals who resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or immoral?

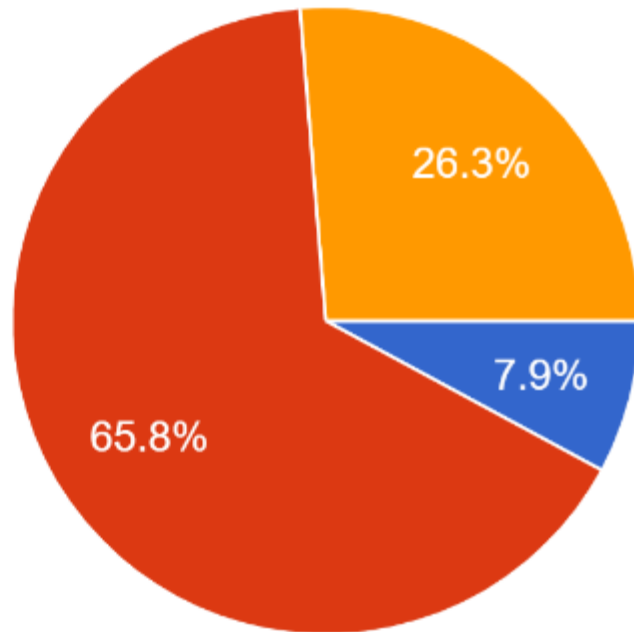
163.GR.B

- ☐ No, the law must always be obeyed.
- ☐ Yes, but only after exhausting all legal recourse.
- ☐ Yes, unjust laws and inequitable enforcement must be disobeyed.

Civil Obedience and Disobedience

Do you support individuals who resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or immoral?

38 responses



- No, the law must always be obeyed.
- Yes, but only after exhausting all legal recourse.
- Yes, unjust laws and inequitable enforcement must be disobeyed.

Civil Obedience and Disobedience

“**We support** those who, acting under the constraints of moral conscience or religious conviction and having exhausted all other legal avenues, feel compelled to disobey or protest unjust or immoral laws,”

BOD, ¶ 163.GR.B (page 136)

Consumption

To what extent should consumers exercise their economic power to influence corporate policies such as exploitative labor or unjust or harmful practices?

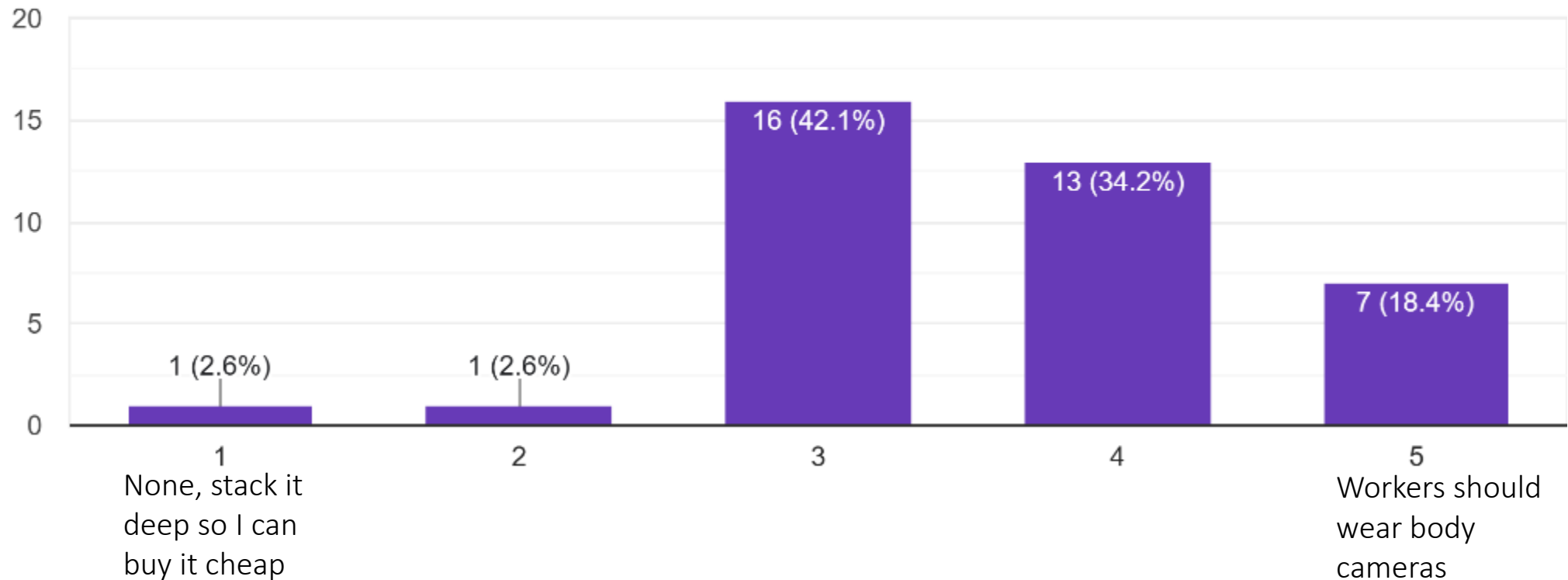
161.EJ.A

	1	2	3	4	5	
None. Stack it deep so I can buy it cheap.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Workers should wear body cameras so I can see how they're treated before I buy.

Consumption

To what extent should consumers exercise their economic power to influence corporate policies such as exploitative labor or unjust or harmful practices?

38 responses



Consumption

“We urge consumers to exercise their economic power to encourage the manufacture of goods that are beneficial to humankind while avoiding those produced through exploitative labor practices.”

BOD, ¶ 161.Economic Justice.A (page 118)

UMC Social Principles

Advocates for Social Justice

May 18, 2025