

**UUSJ Committee and Task Force Reports  
for April 7, 2018 UUSJ Board Meeting  
(as of April 6)**

**Reports Submitted as of April 6, 2018:**

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**Committees that did not submit a report or had no new information to report since the last Board meeting:**

- Audit Committee (not a standing committee)
- Gala Planning Committee (not a standing committee)
- Governance Task Force (formerly Bylaws and Standard Operations Committee; not a standing committee)
- Issue Selection Process Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Nominating Committee

## Immigration Task Force Report – April 7, 2018

### Members

Charlotte Jones-Carroll, John Gubbings, Ronald Outen, Sean McCarthy, Kalman Rupp, Brian Barger, Don Chery; ex officio: Bob Denniston, Anna Rhee, and Lavona Grow

The UUSJ Immigration Committee returned to the Hill as both Congress and DREAMers returned from the holidays. Following the lead of DREAMers and partner allies (conveyed through listservs and webinars as well as visits), we were focused on possible bipartisan legislation to provide relief for DACA holders in the Senate that was considered in February and visited all four MD-VA Senate offices to advocate for the better deals. None of the bills passed, so we made one last call/email push, again following the lead of partners, to oppose the significant budget increases in the omnibus bill sought by the administration for ICE enforcement, border security and detention expansion. The outcome in this respect was much better, with very modest amounts allocated for those.

Mindful of not getting ahead of immigrant leadership, and understanding what direction they would like allies to take, we invited Virginia immigration activist **Walter Tejada** to join a committee zoom meeting. His message, in addition to recommending additional pro-immigrant organizations with which to partner, was to note that a purely moral justification for supporting immigrant families has very limited impact, compared with the economic, cultural and business evidence of how immigrants contribute to society. We plan to follow up with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and several labor union organizations to hone our information in that area and include in our communications more details on the economic/business side.

The Committee also has been considering how to reach out to the UU congregations for more action planning and to engage more UUs who are interested in immigration. We sent out a one-page summary in early March to the larger UUSJ immigration list-serv, and had the same ready for the recent advocacy training. Now the committee plans a broad invitation planning session for May 12 (at River Road UUC). We'll be discussing and getting feedback on how we might best expand beyond national advocacy to share information and enhance actions in the area of education, witness and service, as well as state level advocacy (UULM-MD has just decided to organize an immigration initiative).

Submitted by: Charlotte Jones Carroll, convener, UUSJ Immigration Committee

## **Program Committee Report – April 7, 2018**

The UUSJ Program Committee holds monthly meetings.

### **Members**

Martha Ades, Chair, Pablo DeJesus, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Marsha White

In 2018 the Program Committee continues its monthly meetings and caring for the UUSJ program needs.

The main program Committee activity was the **Social Justice Leaders Roundtable** held March 17th at Arlington UU Church. This program was held in 2015 with the goal of getting local social justice leaders to interact with each other. This year's program was a similar program with 2-minute "speed sharing" and break-out sessions for discussions on issues confronting congregations. We also presented some of the advocacy work UUSJ is doing. The program was attended by 24 people from 11 congregations. Our newly revised evaluation sheets show the overall program a rating of 4.5 out of 5 possible. The Program Committee held a follow-up meeting and discussed ways to improve the program the next time it is held.

For future events the Program Committee is preparing checklists for communication plans and for event logistics to aid task force meetings.

Upcoming events:

1. **April 15 EEI organized UUSJ/UUJEC webinar at River Road 1-4 PM:** UUSJ/EEI is organizing and hosting.
2. **April 19- second UUSJ/UUJEC webinar.** UUJEC is organizing and hosting. Dr. Margaret Flowers will be presenting a webinar with us about single payer.
3. **May 12 immigration event**
4. **Green Activists:** TDB in the next four weeks
5. **UUSJ Board Meeting June 2**

Submitted by: Martha Ades, Program Chair

## **Escalating Economic Inequity Task Group Report – April 7, 2018**

The EEI holds regular meetings online the first Sunday of each month.

**Members** (regular participants at recent EEI meetings)

Martha Ades, Earl Koteen, Serena Lowe, Bob Denniston, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Peter Clark, Sean McCarthy, Rita Roth

The Escalating Economic Inequity group contributed background research and support for lobbying in December against the tax reform bill. In the new year we have focused on Republican efforts to reduce spending on key parts of the social safety net by imposing new work requirements and other restrictions for Medicaid and SNAP. EEI supported lobbying in January against cuts in social programs, and potential cuts to SNAP will be the Lobby Day focus in April.

EEI is helping organize a webinar on April 15 by Robbie Silverman from Oxfam America on trends in global inequality. In May EEI is looking to hold a meeting to discuss our future work and organization.

Submitted by: Adam Wassermann, EEI Thought Leader

## **Communications Committee Report – April 7, 2018**

**Members:** Bob Denniston, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Lavona Grow

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The new news to report is that until we hire an Administrative Assistant, members of this committee will send out the monthly eNews and any blasts that others cannot.

We did get some attention for our postings to Twitter and Facebook from the March for Our Lives. We need folks to take pictures of UUSJ sponsored activities they are participating in. The committee members will arrange to accept them from you and post them to the requisite social media site.

Also we need one or two volunteers to take the monthly eNews and post various parts of it to Twitter and Facebook. No experience needed, training provided.

Submitted by: Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, UUSJ Guru, Core Group Member

**Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Group**  
Activities from January – March 2018, Board Report for April 7, 2018

During the first quarter of 2018 the UUSJ Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Group (E/CJ) continues a process of leadership transition. The recent volunteer leaders (Doris Marlin, Eric Goplerud and Lavona Grow) are called to focus elsewhere on new professional duties, alternative organizational affiliations, or different UUSJ priorities.

On February 24 UUSJ's consistent key E/CJ "thought leaders" were consulted and engaged in preparation for convening the Green Activist UUSJ community to discuss the group's sense of goals, objectives, and priorities in terms of advocacy, witness and education. The group decided to have a strategic planning session on March 10 to discuss a framework for the next phase of UUSJ's environmental justice work and identify priorities. The goal being to establish clarity on educational, witness and advocacy priorities and to determine willingness to engage more deeply and specifically in UUSJ's pivot to advocacy.

The UUSJ Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Group (E/CJ) gathered March 10, 2018 at the Washington Ethical Society to discuss priorities and enumerate important witness events. There were 17 participants. Highlights from the meeting include:

- Joelle Novey, Interfaith Power and Light, gave an update on MD/DC/VA issues
- Lavona Grow, UUSJ, gave an update on federal level advocacy
- Rev. Earl Koteen, (Berkeley CA member of UUSJ Roots of Justice and Escalating Economic Inequity Task Group and an UU environment community minister) called in for a short time. We discussed the importance of working harder on getting new people elected to public office to change the fundamental power dynamic, and the challenges of connecting to front-line communities and other faith groups. He agreed to hold a Zoom meeting on the topic.
- Doneby Smith, Silver Spring, outlined a proposal to conduct outreach to UU congregations beyond the DMV, which have Green Sanctuary teams, but also have members of Congress in tight re-election races. This would be in coordination with the Advocacy Outreach Committee and Advocacy Corps efforts with going nationwide through our UUSJ Write Here! Write Now! Letter-Writing campaigns.
- People agreed GOTV work was important. UUSJ will apply for a Voter Registration/GOTV grant again (received a small grant in 2016).
- Anna Rhee, UUSJ consultant, facilitated a brainstorming session and recorded the ideas generated. Those present then voted via dot voting on flip charts in favor of issues under the three major headings of advocacy, witness and education. Top votes, highlights here, went to the following by category, by rank order. It was agreed that categories with five or more would be those that we should prioritize:
  - Advocacy (32): GOTV (6), WHWN/Networking Nationwide (5), Intersectionality (5), Encourage advocacy engagement /recruit others (5)
  - Witness (20): Potomac Pipeline (3), Science March (3), Poor People's Campaign (3), Earth Day (3)
  - Education (18): Religious Education - Module on E/CJ Advocacy (4), Responsible Consumption Education (4)
- Next Steps:
  - Survey of UUSJ Green Activists to provide an opportunity to offer input similar to the dot-voting exercise.
  - Lavona will contact Rev. Earl to find a date in May to conduct a webinar on connecting with front-line communities and other diverse faith groups

Prepared by: Pablo DeJesús, UUSJ Executive Director, and Lavona Grow, AOG Chair

**Advocacy Oversight Committee Report -- As of April 4, 2018**  
(Includes the Advocacy Corps and related advocacy efforts)

**Members:** Lavona Grow, chair, Bob Denniston, Ed Kringer, Anna Rhee (consultant), Sean McCarthy, Larry Underwood

The purpose of this group is to coordinate UUSJ's advocacy activities, materials, and infrastructure; and to help identify, guide and provide feedback regarding UUSJ's advocacy program and opportunities.

The committee has not met since the last Board meeting. Need to revisit the purpose and feasibility of the committee. Intend to establish a regular monthly meeting schedule.

**Climate Justice Month National Letter-Writing Campaign:** We are partnering for the second time with the UU Ministry For Earth (UUMFE) on a nationwide letter-writing campaign during April. The topic is the RECLAIM Act to support 25 coalfield states and three Indian tribes. We prepared the tools for congregational letter-writing including sample letter, talking points and an information page on our website. The campaign is featured on the main page of the UUMFE Climate Justice Month web page. We anticipate around 700 letters coming in. This year we will conduct strategic outreach and call some congregations. See pilot below.

**National Outreach Pilot:** There is a new short-term task group to pilot a protocol for outreach to congregations. We will use the opportunity of Climate Justice Month in April to reach out to strategic Green Sanctuary congregations and self-selected congregations (15-40 congregations; plus contacting State Action Networks) to build relationships and tell them about the WHWN letter-writing campaign. Task group members are John Sutton, Arlington; Doneby Smith, Silver Spring; and Peter Bishop, Washington Ethical Society. Lavona serves as convener.

**Grants to support Advocacy, Outreach and GOTV:** 1. Applied for a \$20,000 UU Funding Program Grant submitted March 15, 2018 to fund increased efforts to conduct outreach nationwide, address data collection needs, and explore fundraising strategies. We received letters of support from the UUs for a Just Economic Community and the UUMFE. Expect to hear back by early June. 2. We will apply for a UUSJ Get Out The Vote grant similar to the 2016 grant we received for a regional effort. Intent is to expand on what we did in 2016 and support efforts beyond our region to downstate Virginia, rural Maryland, and possibly West Virginia or Pennsylvania. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis; response will be known within three weeks after application. Grant size around \$1,500.

**Write Here! Write Now! Letter-Writing Campaign Toolkit (WHWN):** Since December there have been 10 downloads for a total of 110, most outside our region. A WHWN Letter-Writing Toolkit users' survey will go out the week of April 9.

**Advocacy Corps (AC) by the numbers:**

- AC Members: **26** have attended AC Capitol Hill visits two or more times. There are **four** new members since December. There are **67** people on the General AC group list.
- The median number of participants is up from **12** in December to **17** per visit.
- **Advocacy Corps information sessions:** held **two** Zoom video conference information sessions in January resulting in **three** new AC members.
- **Citizen Engagement Advocacy Training:** one tentatively scheduled June 16 at Rockville.

**UUSJ Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps Visits:**

- NEXT April 12: Protect SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) in Farm Bill.
- March 13: Johnson Amendment -- fight the efforts to repeal; 14 AC members; 34 offices; four scheduled visits; more than 100 constituent letters delivered.

- February 13: Medicaid - work requirements; 18 AC members; 26 offices; four scheduled visits; more than 100 constituent letters delivered.
- January 9: 2018 Budget - protect the safety net programs including CHIP and Medicaid; 18 AC members; 49 offices; two scheduled visits; 52 constituent letters delivered. Three drop-in visits.
- December 12: DREAM Act and Tax Bill - protect safety net programs; 16 AC members; 48 offices; one scheduled visit; over 150 constituent letters delivered.

#### **Partners and Networking:**

- **Faith in Public Life:** collaborated on an action at Rep. Comstock's office in Reston regarding the tax bill.
- **UUSC:** Lavona met with Meredith Larson, Director of Advocacy and Strategic Communications, UU Service Committee (UUSC) to identify common issue areas of concern and mutual interest.
- **Relationship Building Meeting:** Ed Kringer and Lavona Grow met with Rev. Linda Olson Peebles, Accotink, to discuss our advocacy efforts and UUSJ going national. She recommended that we talk to Rev. Debra Haffner from Reston who has extensive non-profit management experience.

#### **Old business still under consideration:**

- Revision of the 2012 Board guidelines for sponsorship, endorsement and using the name of UUSJ. **UPDATE:** Under consideration by the Core Group.
- Covenant with Coalition of UU State Action Networks (CUUSAN): Next step is ours to develop covenant with CUUSAN to be presented at the June 2018 CUUSAN annual meeting at General Assembly. We were invited to also develop a "relationship model" to work with a limited number of interested SANs in the short term. **Immediate next step:** draft covenant for the Iowa SAN Board to consider.

#### **Needed to support the Advocacy Corps:**

- **Data Management:** We need expertise to create the necessary infrastructure to organize and easily access all the different spreadsheets and documents associated with our work. We started a data management project with a team of three volunteers to tackle the problem but even the experts say it's too time consuming and complex for volunteers to set up the systems needed. **UPDATE:** Will use current grant funds to hire a consultant to jump-start the work, first focusing on a pilot for documenting and reporting the WHWN national letter-writing efforts.
- **Promotional material for Hill visits and General Assembly** - work with communications committee: Need: 1) a handout about UUSJ for a leave-behind to Hill staff. 2) general promotion of our advocacy programs. We need an updated UUSJ brochure and/or postcards or bookmarks to promote advocacy.
- **Advocacy Corps materials:** Still need... 1) new badges; 2) notepad or post cards for leaving notes to staff.

#### **Ongoing Board member support needed:**

- Promote the UUSJ Advocacy Program. Direct people to UUSJ's website advocacy page and issue pages. Contact Anna and Lavona at [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org).
- Arrange a Congregational Citizen Engagement Training event at your church.
- Encourage and recruit new members to the Advocacy Corps.
- Promote "Write Here! Write Now!" and distribute WHWN bookmarks.
- Identify people interested in GOTV efforts - voter registration and Get Out the Vote for 2018.

Submitted by: Lavona Grow, Chair [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org)