

**UUSJ Committee and Task Group Reports  
for September 29, 2018 UUSJ Board Meeting**

**Reports Submitted as of September 27, 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)
- Communication & Outreach Committee
- Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Group
- Gala Planning Committee (not a standing committee)
- Governance Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Issue Selection Process Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Nominating Committee

## **Advocacy Oversight Committee Report – September, 2018**

(Includes the Advocacy Corps and related advocacy efforts)

**Members:** Lavona Grow, chair, Bob Denniston, Ed Kringer, Anna Rhee (consultant), Sean McCarthy; returning member as of September is Loretta Garcia from River Road.

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 did not formally meet since May 9, 2018. We had planned to meet via Zoom monthly but that hasn't happened. But the AOC now vets recommendations for sign-on letters and advocacy efforts that do not fit in any one of our task groups.

### **Question for the Board:**

The work of the Advocacy Corps, related advocacy work with issue task groups and the GOTV work, is predominantly funded on soft (grant) money. Our contract advocacy consultant has been funded this past year near or at 100% grant funds. We were not funded at the requested level in the current 2018-19 grant from the UU Funding Program. Therefore, we will fall short of funds to support the work this fiscal year. Based on advice from funders, we don't anticipate future grant funding at the levels necessary to sustain our current level of effort. Focused projects are more likely to be supported. Since we have used UUFPP funds for more than five years to build up and expand our work we need to transition to hard dollars. **How does the Board plan to sustain the work of our advocacy and future GOTV efforts?**

### **Advocacy Data Pilot Project:**

Ongoing. We are near completion of Phase 2 of a three phase pilot. We contracted with Coccozza Organizing and Design on a phase-by-phase contract. In Phase 1 we analyzed our software requirements, in Phase 2 designed, developed and tested the concept entering actual WHWN information into GoogleForms. Currently we are reviewing the report outputs.

The pilot used UUA congregational source data and in Phase 2 a test of software with data entry for our Write Here! Write Now! letters. The phase 1 pilot included working with a team of six people, including Martha Ades (system administrator), John Sutton, Lynn Ferguson Riggs, Lavona Grow, Bob Denniston and Peter Bishop. In Phase 3 Coccozza will provide training and 90 days support to a system administrator.

### **Grants to support Advocacy, Outreach and GOTV plans:**

We received a grant for \$15,000 from the UU Funding Program that went into effect September 1, 2018. We also received a Technical Assistance grant of \$2,000 towards our Salsa database. We partnered with the UUs for a Just Economic Community and the UU Ministry for Earth. In light of not receiving the

full funding our requested of \$20,000 or a challenge grant option, we need to adjust our scope of work. We have not yet held an advisory group organizing meeting.

### **Write Here! Write Now! Letter-Writing Campaign:**

1. The WHWN Toolkit: We now have over 120 downloads of the toolkit. At General Assembly in June we had a Poster Session on our WHWN Letter-Writing Campaign and Toolkit. People who signed up to receive the toolkit have yet to be contacted. This must happen ASAP. The users' survey of the toolkit has once again been delayed but will be implemented in October.
2. As of October, 2018 we had a pilot congregational partner from Des Moines, Iowa. We are reaching out to add congregations to our regular letter-writing efforts. Following General Assembly a new congregation from Iowa City became a partner. In September, a congregation in Springfield, Missouri became a partner. This was a result of a former Advocacy Corps member who is our ambassador talking up our WHWN letter-writing campaign. We anticipate having a new congregation from New York joining us in October.

### **Citizen Engagement Advocacy Training:**

June 16 at UUC Rockville. Lavona and a new trainer, Lynn Ferguson Riggs from UU Church of Arlington, were co-presenters. XX participated including two relatively new Advocacy Corps members that wanted additional training. Two people from the training have since joined the Advocacy Corps.

### **UUSJ Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps Day Visits since June:**

offices visited - 233; letters delivered - 954; on average 18 (range 14-24) AC members and others (immigration task group members and guests plus Anna) participated on AC days each month June-September.

- **September 26 Senate, and September 27 House side: Special Hill visits on immigration during the "Week of Action"** sponsored by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. On short notice we partnered with the UU Service Committee, who solicited letters from the UU State Action Networks and others. UUSC sent us its letter from President Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, which we provided along with our letter and our UUSJ Immigration Task Group's 10 point issues/platform. Members of the Immigration Task Group and the Advocacy Corps went out jointly. It was a big success. We visited 56 offices, and delivered over 160 letters. Several follow up meetings are being arranged as a result of the visits. We were invited back by a member of the House and to bring more people to the meeting. We intend to contact congregations in districts to see if we they can generate more letters.
- **September 11 – Senate Defend UU Values: Oppose Kavanaugh Nomination to the Supreme Court** Information Page. AC Members 15
- **August 14 – Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee: Protect SNAP**, anti-hunger program (focus on no additional work requirements). Information Page is in development. We did not

originally intend to go out in August but because the Senate was in session and the Farm Bill was pending a vote, we decided to go out. Lavona was on vacation and several volunteers stepped up to do some of her tasks.

- **July 10 – Senate [Stop Detaining Children and Separating Families](#)** Information Page
- **June 12 – Senate [Farm Bill: Protect SNAP](#), anti-hunger program, and support current Senate bipartisan efforts.** Information Page.

Submitted by: Lavona Grow, Advocacy Oversight Committee Chair

## Development Group Report – September 29, 2018

**Members:** David Strauss of UUC of Rockville, Gary Magnuson of UUC Frederick, Peter Bishop of Washington Ethical Society.

**Ex Officio members:** Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director and Bob Denniston, Board Chair, and Martha Ades, Board Secretary and Program Committee Chair -- participate as appropriate and as invited.

**Summary:** the development group has begun working to cover the resource shortfalls discussed in April and June. Events, steps and preliminary recommendations are being developed for FY 2018-2019.

An exciting lead off event has been conceived and early planning begun for a UUSJ hosted fundraising reception at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation on December 2, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM.

**Our scheduled and confirmed keynote speaker will be Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), we plan to pursue others.**

You may remember that the group is planning activities to fill the projected \$12,672 gap in our budget, discussed in April and approved as part of the budget in June, plus other needs that intend to make supporting UUSJ as an organization an exciting investment (as was the recommendation from the floor in April). This with the goal of keeping UUSJ operating at a solvent and successful steady state through FY 2018-2019 as well as positioning the organization to adopt growth minded budgets in the near future.

While the postponement of hiring an Administrative Assistant has resulted in some savings, the need for UUSJ administrative and technical support remains the same, so the group has been using the planning figure of \$20,000.00.

### **December 2 Fundraising Reception:**

It is very exciting news, that UUSJ will host a fundraising reception with Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), and hopefully others. Rep. Raskin represents the 8<sup>th</sup> District of Maryland in Congress, and is Vice-Ranking Member on the House Judiciary Committee. He is also a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which has broad oversight authority over federal agency activities. A lawyer and former professor of Constitutional Law at American University, he served for three terms in the Maryland State Senate.

We scheduled this event to capture the hoped for energy coming out of the November 6 elections. If there is a favorable outcome, Rep. Raskin can help us plan the ways to influence the new leadership teams in the House and the Senate. In a different outcome, he can energize us for the work we need to do in the coming months and years.

This event will be a pilot project, testing whether we are serious about creating a base of self-funding to carry out and greatly expand our highly important direct advocacy work. We expect this December 2 event to provide \$3,000 in unencumbered revenue to support UUSJ's general fund to that end.

Executing the December 2 fundraising reception will not be easy, but it is achievable. This is the first, but not the last, fundraising effort that will require Board members and alternates to be totally

committed. **This means that each member congregation of UUSJ will be asked to sell at least 10 tickets to the reception.**

- To make our goal, we have set the price **per ticket at \$75**, a fairly modest amount by Washington area reception standards.
- Every member congregation has an active social justice committee or its equivalent, often with subcommittees dedicated to particular causes (e.g., immigration, racial justice, climate change). The members of these committees need to be approached and asked to help grow UUSJ.
- This is also a great opportunity to educate congregants about the great work that UUSJ has been and continues to do on their behalf.
- Our team will supply flyers about the event and UUSJ's leadership will produce a highlight sheet of UUSJ's accomplishments over the past two years for your use in promoting this event.
- We'll also describe your commitment to taking our advocacy program national.

**While this event will be held in Maryland, RRUUC is close to D.C. and Virginia.** We hope that an additional Member of Congress from Virginia, will join Rep. Raskin for this important event.

In any case, December 2 will also provide a rare opportunity to get to know other members of UUSJ, the leadership, and to speak personally with Rep. Raskin—one of the most progressive and responsive members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### **Reminders and Recommendations:**

Please remember, this financial shortfall we must fill and to realize the potential the UUSJ offers, requires all of us to work hard and to make personal commitments beyond voting for policies and attending the quarterly meetings. Selling tickets to the December 2 event is one part of what must be done, but other actions must be planned and taken.

1. We remind the Board that we have recommended a re-examination of UUSJ membership levels, prices and benefits to further our base of support.
2. We will also contact UU congregations that have been interested in UUSJ's work, but have not yet made the commitment to membership. We will focus initially on those that were part of conversation establishing UUSJ.
3. Another critical piece of fundraising activity will be personal contact with large donors. That effort will begin soon and is projected to make a substantial dent in our shortfall.
4. We also recommend a \$500 per congregation, over and above the fair share contribution, commitment. This can be done by raising funds at congregation events such as showing films (UUSJ has a small film library), having speakers, doing educational events at which you can pass the hat to support UUSJ, and other ways. This doesn't have to be done overnight: it can be achieved over the next nine months, before the end of the fiscal year.

We will have other recommendations as the year proceeds. These are important, because the likelihood of a large funding source to provide for our operations is slim, since foundations are prohibited by law from granting to groups that do direct legislative advocacy—one of our core activities.

We need to be proactive and take control of our own future. It starts with our December 2 reception and will continue throughout the coming years.

**We are confident that the combination of our visionary mission, our recent successes, and the ability to secure the necessary financial support from our own funds will carry us forward to a future we can all, as dedicated UUs, be proud of.**

Submitted by: David Strauss

## **Escalating Economic Inequity Task Group Report – September 24, 2018**

The EEI holds meetings online the first Sunday of each month at 7pm ET

**Main participating members:** Martha Ades, Rev. Earl Koteen, Lavona Grow, Peter Clark, Adam Wasserman (chair) Ex Officio member: Bob Denniston, Chair.

EEI has continued to focus on the social safety net. The Farm Bill, and opposing efforts to add restrictive work requirements for SNAP eligibility, were the focus of UUSJ's Lobby Day in August. This was the 2nd effort devoted specifically to the Farm Bill.

At our September EEI online meeting, volunteer Rhonda van Roekel summarized information she gathered on new threats to the Affordable Care Act. A multi-state legal challenge to the constitutionality of the ACA is working its way through the courts. It's possible that we will see legislative initiatives designed to meet some of the legal objections. The lower court decision is not expected for another several months, and it is certain to be appealed. It's a complicated issue and Rhonda plans to keep abreast of developments and opportunities for us to take action.

I will be moving away from the Washington area to New Mexico in early October, and will not be able to continue to lead the EEI group and convene meetings. It has been a real pleasure to help lead this group over the past two years and I plan to stay engaged with UUSJ from out West.

Submitted by: Adam Wasserman, EEI Thought Leader

## **UUSJ GOTV - Mobilizing for the 2018 Midterm Elections**

as of September 27, 2019

Submitted by Lavona Grow, Chair, and Anna Rhee, UUSJ consultant and GOTV lead organizer

UUSJ applied for and received a \$3,000 GOTV grant in July from the UU Funding Program's Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility. This grant gives us the opportunity to build on our 2016 GOTV project and to provide our program materials nationwide, with a focus on key states -- Florida, Iowa, Maryland, Virginia, and possibly Wisconsin.

Following is a list of activities we've undertaken with further planning underway:

- Our GOTV activities began even before we received the grant. As early as March, Doneby Smith, UU Silver Spring Church, identified toss-up districts.
- In June, we collaborated with UUA to offer a joint webinar on electoral justice and GOTV. We helped plan activities at UU 2018 General Assembly (GA) in Kansas City. We developed a flyer for promotion of the webinar, copied (paid for by UUA) and distributed it at GA. And we set up a 2018 UU's Mobilizing for the 2018 Midterm Elections web page [link here](#).
- At GA we made connections with the State Action Networks and collected names of people interested on working on Electoral Justice and Mobilization for the Midterm Elections.
- At GA, we made a connection with the Second Chances Initiative in Florida (ballot initiative to restore voting rights to felons through the UU Florida state action network. We connected the Silver Spring congregation with them in June and they've done monthly phone banking. UUSC has now made well over 5,000 phone calls. The next phone banking will take place Oct. 9. For details and other dates go to our web page.
- On July 12, we cosponsored a national webinar with the UUA, "UUs Mobilizing Towards Electoral Justice: Strategizing for the 2018 Midterms," which featured experts and community leaders in Ohio and Florida, with an emphasis on the importance of restoration and maintenance of voting rights. Our Anna Rhee helped shape the program and represented on our UUSJ project.
- In early July, we worked with the Iowa state action network. We provided technical assistance in support of a statewide UU GOTV meeting and called all UU congregational to remind them of the meeting and promote the UUA/UUSJ July 12 webinar. In early October, we will make phone calls to congregations to encourage GOTV activities and let them know about our UUSJ GOTV Toolkit and resources.

- The UUSJ Voter Mobilization Toolkit is updated for 2018 and online, ready for download. The toolkit includes useful links to registration and GOTV tools as well as a downloadable checklist and signage for congregational voter registration tables.
- This year, we are strengthening our partnership with the Reeb Project for Voting Rights (All Souls Church Unitarian), coordinating communications and outreach/mobilization activities, especially in northern Virginia. We are co-branding some resources, including a joint events calendar. All found on the UUSJ GOTV Mobilizing for the Midterms web page.
- A unique element of our project is a forthcoming voter resource, “Questions for Candidates,” that offers individuals and congregations justice-oriented questions on UUSJ’s priority issues areas - economic inequity, environmental justice, immigration. The resource is a guide to congregations to provide tips on organizing discussion about what issues are important to them. It will assist individuals that have opportunities to speak with candidates at public forums and meetings, and can also be used to reflect on personal values and views as voters evaluate candidates. (We are behind schedule by two weeks.)
- We’re considering developing a promotional UUSJ GOTV promotional flyer.

Our 2018 program partners include:

1. UU congregations in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia
2. Iowa UU Witness/Advocacy Network
3. New Virginia Majority
4. Poor People’s Campaign
5. Reeb Project for Voting Rights (All Souls Church Unitarian)
6. Second Chances Florida
7. UU Justice Florida
8. Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO)
9. Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE)

The grant Advisory Group met via Zoom on September 5 to discuss the big picture concepts of the program and next steps. Members include: Chair, Lavona Grow, UUSJ; Ed Kringer, UUSJ; Sean McCarthy, UUSJ; Dean Wanderer, UUSJ and co-chair the Virginia state action network; Hannah Connolly, GOTV consultant (former 2016 GOTV leadership team member from UUCA now in Minnesota); Marti MacKenzie, UUSJ; Sally Hartman, co-chair, Iowa state action network; Brigham Johnson, Florida state action network; Rev. Rob Keithan, All Souls Church Unitarian, DC and Doris Marlin Reeb Voting Rights Project; and Susan Leslie, UUA.

We are in the process of assembling a local DC-MD-VA working group comprised of representatives of local congregations that will assist with implementation, promotion and evaluation of the program.

We've identified contacts in some UUSJ member congregations and need your help to find others. Also listed are some non-UUSJ member congregations.

1. Accotink - Mary Kringer
2. All Souls - Doris Marlin
3. Arlington - Suzan Chastain
4. Bull Run
5. Cedar Lane - Margery Demond
6. Columbia
7. Davies
8. Fairfax
9. Frederick
10. Goodloe
11. Mt. Vernon
12. Paint Branch
13. Reston
14. River Road - Jack Lebowitz (confirm)
15. Rockville - Betsy Wilder
16. Silver Spring - Doneby Smith
17. Towson - Marti MacKenzie
18. Washington Ethical Society

Board members are asked to spread the word about our GOTV project. Please link to our web page from your church website or post on Facebook. We will send weekly notices of upcoming opportunities -- please help disseminate the information. October 13 is a UU day of canvassing and phone banking in northern Virginia with the New Virginia Majority. Participation is not limited to Virginians, everyone in the D-M-V can join in! Look for UUSJ communications with more information.

Submitted by: Lavona Grow, Advocacy Oversight Committee Chair

## Immigration Task Group Report – September 21, 2018

Through the summer the Group has been meeting every two weeks

**Members:** Don Chery, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Charlotte Jones-Carroll (convener), Sean McCarthy, Dean Wanderer, Gayle Boyd, Kalman Rupp, Serena Lowe (members).

Ex Officio members: Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director and Bob Denniston, Board Chair, and Anna Rhee, advocacy consultant -- participate as appropriate and as invited.

The Immigration team meets twice a month, monitors websites and participates in webinars to inform our responses to the many administrative initiatives detrimental to immigrants and refugees.

Among these are:

- **DHS Budget for ICE/CBP:** After our partners alerted us to the possibility of a Continuing Resolution that would “continue” ICE’s budget at a higher level based on emergency transfers, we asked UUSJ advocacy team to deliver a letter opposing this to Sen. Van Hollen, a member of the Appropriations Committee.
- **Refugee resettlement levels:** The committee urged UUSJ to sign onto an interfaith letter objecting to the Administration’s proposal to reduce refugee entries to the US for 2019 to 30,000. Even the 2018 level is unlikely to be reached owing to slow government processing.
- **Separation of Children and Child Detention:** We objected to the zero-tolerance approach of the Department of Justice which caused over 2000 children to be separated from their families at the border, nearly 500 of whom are still not reunited, despite huge public outcry and court decisions. UUSJ’s advocacy team [Advocacy Corps] carried a letter on this topic to Hill offices in July. We are gearing up to oppose possible regulatory changes that would obviate the Flores settlement (which enforced a 20-day limit on detention of children), in view of assessment from many quarters that prolonged detention of minors is severely damaging to their mental health. We are tracking other practices like slow discharge from detention, that caused sharp increases in detained children totals (including unaccompanied minors). We recommended UUSJ sign-on to an interfaith letter regarding these proposals to change child-detention practices, which was signed and sent.
- **Opposition to Texas’s Efforts to Enjoin (Amicus Brief filing):** During July we facilitated UUSJ becoming part of an *Amicus Brief* (Friend of the Court) filing opposing the State of Texas’s efforts to enjoin Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA). See our “[Statement of Identity and Interest](#)”. We also made the [full amicus brief available](#). UUSJ was honored to join, and help bring on UUSC.
- **Public Charge definition change:** The committee developed a statement detailing the reasons that DHS/USCIS/OMB should not expand the definition of “public charge” to include use of many additional benefits. This could be used as a pretext for refusing requests to “adjust status” from residents applying for legal permanent resident status as well as refusing admission to the US for individuals outside the country. We will send this to the government during the 60-day public comment period.

- **Comprehensive Statement on Immigration Issues:** The committee plans a Hill visit during partner “action week” in late September, carrying our summary of past and current positions on a variety of immigration and refugee topics. We developed bullet points to use, and plan to share these with UU congregations who might want to develop their own letters to their Members of Congress. We hope to collaborate with **UUSC** by also delivering their own communications on immigration-related topics.
- **2020 Census:** We wrote to Department of Commerce objecting to the inclusion of a question about citizenship status in the 2020 census.
- **Immigration Film Fest:** We are cooperating with the 2018 Immigration Film Fest by posting their promotional material for October 27-28 event at our congregations.
- **Committee 18-month priorities:** Look for our priorities for the next 18-months, expected to be agreed and shared by end-October.

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

## **Program Committee Report – September 24, 2018**

The Program Committee holds monthly meetings

**Members:** Martha Ades, Chair, John Gubbings, Marsha White

**Ex Officio members:** Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director, Bob Denniston, Chair. Lavona Grow, AOC chair as needed and asked.

The Program Committee held one meeting during the summer to plan for the UUSJ program needs. We continue to revise program checklists that provide guidelines to facilitate meeting logistics.

Over the summer support was given for:

- Track Play Reading – SWEAT: After multiple queries to congregations in the area to support this program and learning that most staffs were not engaged over the summer to make a decision to host the play at their site, the program was put on hold. Feasibility of offering the program will be readdressed when more of the congregations have staff available to do scheduling.
- Fundraising Event – The program Committee is working with the Development Committee to organize a reception with a Maryland member of Congress. The event will be a fundraiser that will have refreshments and a short talk from the Congressman about how the new election impacts our progressive values. It is scheduled for **December 2nd** at River Road UU and currently **Rep. Jamie Raskin** has agreed to be present.
- UUSJ Board Meetings – supported the September 29th meeting. Planning for other meetings during the 2018-2019 year.

Submitted by: Martha Ades, Program Chair