

UUSJ
BOARD REPORT FROM UUSJ IMMIGRATION TEAM
JANUARY 2020

Taking to heart the strategic planning facilitator's query last September, the Immigration Task Group has begun exploring how to deepen our partnerships with organizations that represent impacted persons – DACA and TPS status immigrants, refugees, Muslim groups – as a way to follow their lead, rather than decide we know best. We did a comprehensive survey of all the organizations we monitor or are active with – most of which are faith-based or secular groups of allies and advocates – and identified some from the immigrant communities with which we will try to build stronger relations. At a minimum, we are already monitoring and taking account of their websites/social media and attending some of their webinars and panels.

We also began to work on the planned partnership with UUSC to advocate for Senate legislation supporting solutions for holders of Temporary Protected Status, TPS. We provided content for the eventual WHWN instructions to elicit letters from UU congregations that we can take to the Senate on Advocacy Day in March 2020. We provided comments to UUSC on how to make their promotional campaign more specific to current status of legislation.

We developed talking points and background we shared with UU congregations opposing the latest anti-immigrant federal rule change: USCIS' plan to raise their fees for visas and other processing (including asylum applications). This resulted in more individuals going online to make public comments opposing the rise.

We participated in the DACA rally in front of the Supreme Court on November 12, when the Court took up the case.

We updated the immigration questions and UU grounding in the Voter's Guide that UUSJ is developing as a partner with UUA in the UU the Vote campaign.

We supported the Immigration Film Fest, complementing their main mid-September film showings with an October showing of films about "acting on our principles."

We interacted with UULM-MD and Congregation Action Network to oppose new ICE detention centers in Maryland and shared CAN's alert with UUs about an ICE center being discussed by the town of Sudlersville, MD near Chestertown. Opposition to that has for the moment caused the town council to defer decisions.

Finally, we participated in a free trial of the POLITICO product, focusing on their resources about immigration legislation, to see if we wanted to recommend that UUSJ subscribe to their services. This allowed us to easily update and expand our contact list for Senate staff dealing with immigration.

We hope in the coming quarter to look into more ways to change the (negative) narratives on immigrants and refugees, using letters to the editor and social media.