

Advocacy Program Report

Advocacy Corps & *Write Here! Write Now!*

Lavona M. Grow, Advocacy Program June 13, 2020 - lavona@uusj.org

Roses/Highlights

Engagement with UUSJ by our Advocacy Community

- **WHWN Congregational Partners:** March 29 brainstorming session with 23 participants. (we have about 20 semi-regular partners)
- **WHWN Issue Briefings:** with Virtual “How To” Advocacy:
 - Attracting a national audience
 - Numbers of participants are growing
 - People are taking action and engaging with UUSJ
- **Advocacy Corps team meetings:** April, 14, 28 and May 12, 26 average 18 participants per meeting

Roses/Highlights cont'd

Engagement with UUSJ by our Advocacy Community

Earth Month season April (House) & May (Senate) WHWH partnered with UU Ministry for Earth - Urged Congress to take action to address global warming phased out HFCs AIM Act

- **Issue briefings:** April 17 - 56 participants & 65 signed up
- **Issue briefings:** May 8 - 45 participants & 60 signed up
- **YouTube briefing video:** HFCs AIM Act 24 views in four weeks
- **Timing of Briefings:** Friday at 3pm ET

Roses/Highlights cont'd

Engagement with UUSJ by our Advocacy Community

June WHWN Senate - Secure Our Vote & Support the USPS

Urge Senators to provide \$4 billion
for free, fair, safe, and secure elections

- **Issue briefing:** Friday, June 5, 3pm ET
- **60+ participants and 70 signups**
- **Conversions:** two new members for the Defending Our Democracy Task Group; 5 downloads of our WHWN toolkit; 4 sign ups for workshop; and a new member to Ames, Iowa WHWN team...

Roses/Highlights cont'd

Engagement with UUSJ by our Advocacy Community

Identify New Advocacy Corps Volunteer Talent

conducted first of several surveys to assess needs and interest

- **Conducted GoogleSurvey with 29 respondents**
- **Formed four-member AC task group assessing training needs**
- **Two volunteers to address website related issues**
- **Two volunteers to address data issues**

Invitation to UUSJ and the Advocacy Corps

First Unitarian Church, Baltimore May 24 Sunday Service

Sermon by Lavona and Testimonials by Moses and Ken

Thorns/Concerns

- Huge drop in WHWN letters submitted to us due to pandemic
- Increased workload to collect fewer letters from more sources: 1. more individual submissions 2. fewer from congregations but of those more attachments in emails 3. uploaded to our new web-based submission tool and 4. sent by USPS snail-mail (this may change over time)
- Concern over **loss of momentum** and keeping up the monthly practice of letter-writing
- More engagement requires more follow up, and we're not doing that well
- No adequate transition plan in place to support my stepping back in August

Advocacy Program “Ministry” Update

Advocacy Corps Update

Short-Term Objectives

- **Maintain a UUSJ presence on the Hill:** continue to communicate with Hill staff to maintain relationships; strengthen the “meeting” by engaging constituents in the meeting = ensure a unique niche and added value.
- **Maintain current and future meaningful AC team engagement:** they bring a depth of knowledge and commitment to the work.
- **Build new capacity and engage more people:** conduct virtual training sessions and issue briefings.

Advocacy Program “Ministry” Update

Advocacy Corps Update cont’d Training Report

Tanner Wray convener

AC Training Group formed in mid-May as outgrowth of AC survey and discussions. Task to identify AC training+ needs:

- 1. Short term:** for new AC work includes defining what a suite of training tools/materials are needed
- 2. Longer term:** assuming a new model of advocacy, or for a prolonged virtual advocacy model, assess what’s needed

Future survey of AC members include asset mapping of skills+

Advocacy Program “Ministry” Update

Write Here! Write Now! Report & Advocacy Schedule

WHWN and AC Schedule:

- **Letter deliveries in July, September, October, and December**
- **Conduct corresponding issue briefings for those months**
- **Anticipating needed appropriations vigilance in Oct.-Dec.**

Normally no WHWN in August. None in November due to anticipate congregational and individual focus on the elections and GOTV

Advocacy Program “Ministry” Update

Write Here! Write Now! & Advocacy report cont’d

Use more web-based Action Alerts: Additional way to conduct virtual advocacy. Lessons Learned:

- **Negative:** Similar level of effort at the front end to preparing a WHWN Handout. Research, collaboration, writing - 5-6 parts.
- **Plus:** Easy to repurpose; gets click-thrus; and sign ups to receive UUSJ info
- **Plus:** Post-Action - At the back end, next to nothing to do!

But what is our value added? What makes us unique? What is our niche? How do we create or maintain relationships with Hill staff?

Advocacy Program “Ministry” Update

Other items and action needed:

- **June 17, 7:30pmET Kelsey’s Webinar**
- **July 11, 1-4pmET *Storytelling As Advocacy* Zoom Workshop**
- **General Assembly next week - Bob - sharing virtual booth with UUEC promoting WHWN, briefings, and...**
- **Current Grant requesting extension through Dec. 2020.** Funds for: 1. \$1,500 fundraising consultant with UUEC timeline ASAP; 2. \$1,500 Evaluation consultant 1 hr. free consult timeline ASAP. 3. \$12,000 for advocacy assistant/ WHWN manager through Dec. (will need 1.5 FTE)

See last page of report for the full Advocacy Program Report Sept.-May

April 16, House: AIM Act HFCs - 54 letters; to 16 Reps.; 1 mtg.

May 14, Senate: AIM Act HFCs - 212 letters; to 22 Senators; 0 mtg.

June 18 Senate: Protect Our Vote & USPS

(dates now reflect end of action/letter due dates not the AC Day)

Post-COVID-19 8-AC members not continuing at this time:
AC members: 25 Support Team: 7 Total AC Team: 32

Thank you for all that you do! **Onward!** Lavona M. Grow, lavona@uusj.org