

YUUR Voice in Trenton

CONGRATULATIONS NEW JERSEY and

THANK YOU TO OUR UU CONGREGATIONS

It has been quite a month for the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey. Within a three-week period two of our major issues came to fruition. We have won marriage equality throughout the state and the NJ minimum wage referendum raising the minimum wage and tying it to a cost of living index won at the polls. UULMNJ would like to thank everyone who helped make these two major wins possible. Your contributions, your letters, your phone calls, your legislative visits and your witnessing helped us win. Justice has tipped its hat toward New Jersey.

The UULMNJ Agenda for 2013-14:

The UULMNJ Issues Workshop was held at the Plainfield Society on Oct. 19. After listening to our wonderful speaker, Sue Fulton and hearing the music of *Giving Voice* under the direction of Penny Gnesin, the UULMNJ task forces went to work. As a result, the following issues will be the UULMNJ front burner UULMNJ issues for 2013-14:

Environment Task Force: Will focus on the following:

- Legislation that is being proposed by NJ FREE that seeks the adoption of a requirement for 80% renewable electricity by 2050, with an intermediate requirement of 30% renewable electricity by 2025. It also seeks a requirement that the total electric usage in New Jersey be reduced by 20% by 2025 relative to 2012 usage, and be reduced by 30% by 2050 relative to 2012 usage. Chair: Rohn Hein rohh@netzero.net

Immigration Task Force: Will focus on the following areas for the coming six or eight months:

- Federal comprehensive immigration reform
- Tuition equity in New Jersey (proposed legislation will be appearing during the lame duck session)
- Revived letter campaign to the Obama Administration to enforce existing policies. Chair: Ted Fetter fetter4@verizon.net

Economic Justice Task Force: Will focus on the following three areas:

- Getting out the vote in support of minimum wage, which has already been accomplished
- Affordable Housing and housing recovery from Hurricane Sandy, especially targeting the great need to replace rental and affordable housing in the storm areas.

- Research: Mass Incarceration as an Economic Justice Issue. Best selling books, such as “The New Jim Crow” and “Orange is the New Black” have revealed the huge impact that incarceration of family member has on the financial and emotional stability of a family. . The research will include: statistics, policy brief, fact sheets, identifying partner organizations and proposed legislation. Chair: Lorraine Wearley lorrainewearley@gmail.com

Gun Violence Protection Task Force: Worked tirelessly on NJ Gun Violence Protection legislation in New Jersey this past year. This year it will focus on the following:

- Persuading four New Jersey Congressmen to support the Thompson-King bill, HR 1565, that requires universal background checks while also protecting gun owners’ rights
- Mobilize UU congregations, gun violence prevention activists , inter-faith clergy councils, medical personnel, students and other constituency groups in creating a groundswell of public pressure to convince these four congressmen to co-sponsor HR 1565. Chairs: Diane Finn finnflynn@verizon.net and Lew Maltby

Health Care and Reproductive Justice: Will focus on the following areas:

- Documenting the rights of a Medicaid patient, rights including the right to cease a pregnancy and purchase birth control (this sub task force is currently formulating).
- Taken on the responsibility to draft responses to inaccurate news stories, on-line posts and comments, that inaccurately portray the progression of the Affordable Care Act. Chairs: Carolyn Baldicchini (Affordable Care) cal6balda@yahoo.com and Rev. Kathleen Green (Reproductive Justice) usr.minister@verizon.net

Marriage Equality Task Force

- We thank Chair Marty Rothfelder and the marriage equality task force for a job well done! Congratulations!

If you are interested serving on a task force, contact the task force chair at the address above or contact director@uulmnj.org. If you would like more information about any of these issues, check with your congregation’s UULMNJ liaison or stop by the UULMNJ table at coffee hour. For more information go to <http://www.uulmnj.org>.