

The logo for Interfaith IMPACT of New York State is displayed on a dark blue rectangular background. The word "Interfaith" is in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by "IMPACT" in a larger, bold, white, uppercase, sans-serif font. Below this, "of New York State" is written in a smaller, white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

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Thanks to the NYSCU NOTES FOR CHANGE

January 15, 2018 Newsletter for Interfaith Impact of NYS

In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr. 1929-1968

For back issues of *Notes for Change*, email Rsgilbert@uuma.org.

EDITORIAL: Nevertheless, We Persist

“Nevertheless, she persisted.” Damning words spoken recently by a conservative senator to a liberal colleague. I take them, not as an insult, but as a mandate. Theodore Parker tried to bend the “moral arc of the universe,” by protesting the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and gladly going to trial to defend himself and the abolitionist movement. I have read Ida Husted Harper’s monumental three-volume biography of Susan B. Anthony and marveled at Anthony’s tenacity over decades of time and worlds of space. Who can forget Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail?” What did they have in common? They all persisted – not over weeks and months, but over years and decades – and lifetimes. And each of them was motivated by core religious values.

As I reflect on my 8 decades of life, 6 of them as a religious activist, I vividly remember the many moments of discouragement and defeat. I recall the “powers and principalities” arrayed against the movements in which I was involved. I have been tempted to “retire,” not only from active parish ministry (which I have), but from the public square (which I have not). Many do. However, I am always called back by that “still, small voice” of my religious heritage. There is a perspective here that reminds us that the Beloved Community will not be realized in my lifetime. It also suggests that we do not work alone, but nourished by our respective faiths and our faith communities. I conclude that social justice work is much more than a passing fancy, a time-limited hobby, an ad hoc address to the “sexy” issues of the day. It is very simply the work and mission of a lifetime. And, I find that the moral/religious perspective of IINYS both unique and important one as our state and nation “slog” toward justice.

The conservative senator was Mitch McConnell; the liberal colleague was Elizabeth Warren. While we are a non-partisan interfaith group, we cannot ignore a prophetic word when we see it. Recently, Warren was the speaker at the Union of Reform Judaism/Women of Reform Judaism Biennial Convention in Boston. Among other things, she said: “Our power is not a battery that is

drained with use; it is like a muscle that gets stronger the more we use it.” Nevertheless, we persist.

The Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert, IINYS President

For Immediate Attention

Legislative Calendar for 2018 ATTACHED.

IINYS supports the Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA). (See position paper on our website www.interfaithimpactnys.org.)

IINYS Supports the Green Light NY Coalition in seeking to secure the right of New York State Drivers Licenses for undocumented immigrants. A letter to the governor and legislators has been sent.

JUSTICE CALENDAR: DATES TO NOTE

January 16: Governor Cuomo releases his budget proposal

January 17: Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act Hearing in Albany – buses will be leaving from NYC, Westchester, New Paltz, Rochester, Lyons, Riverhead and Roslyn. For more information go to: www.ruralmigrantministry.org or farmworkersny.org.

January 23: Let New York Vote: Rally in Albany. The coalition, of which Interfaith Impact is a member, holds a lobbying day in Albany. Schedule: Gathering at a place to be determined from 11:00-11:30 am; 11:30 adjourn to the Capitol’s Million Dollar Staircase for a rally, followed by legislative visits; the program ends between 3:30 and 4:00 pm. For information go to www.LetNYvote.org/albanyactionday. Text **Our Vote** to **97779** for updates on actions and events happening near you! See summary below.

March 11, 2018: Rochester: A Better Prescription for Health Care in New York State. The Rochester chapter of IINYS has set its annual legislative briefing for Sunday, March 11, 2:00-4:30 pm, at the First Unitarian Church of Rochester. Carol Tegas, Executive Director of Finger Lakes Performing Provider System, will review the current state of health care in the Empire State; Harry Bronson, NYS Assembly member for the 138th district, will assess the political situation of health care in the legislature; and Rohith Palli, from the Rochester Campaign for New York Health, will make the case for single payer, universal health care. For information contact Judy Schwartz Schwartz179@earthlink.net or Rsgilbert@uuma.org. A flyer for posting will be available after the first of the year.

March 13, 2018: PLANNED PARENTHOOD DAY OF ACTION Contact <http://tinyurl.com/ReproductiveHealthAct> or call 212-490-9535 for information and how to

become involved, or contact The Education Fund of Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts at WWW.PPESActs.org.

March 13, 2018: Coalition for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement Advocacy Day

Please join CAIC for the March 13, 2018 Advocacy Day in Albany to **demand that Governor Cuomo and the NY legislature end the torture of solitary confinement** by passing the **#HALT Solitary Confinement Act, A3080/S4784**. Go to nycaic.org to sign up and learn more.

May 7, 2018: Interfaith Impact Advocacy Day in Albany is Monday, May 7 (Hold the date).

The IINYS Board has set Monday, May 7, as the date for the annual advocacy day in Albany to connect with legislators and staff members on issues of importance to progressive people of faith. Watch this space and the IINYS website (www.interfaithimpactnys.org) for details. See and post the **ATTACHED FLYER**.

June 5, 2018: CLERGY FOR CHOICE DAY IN ALBANY Contact Rabbi Dennis Ross at Dennis.Ross@ppesacts.org.

LET NEW YORK VOTE: AN AFFIRMATION OF DEMOCRACY

A coalition of “goo goos” (good government groups) has put out a five-point program for expansion of voting in New York. It includes early voting, automatic voter registration, flexibility to change party affiliation, electronic pollbooks and restoration of voting rights to people on parole. For details, go to www.LetNYvote.org. For the IINYS policy position on “Enhancing Democracy as a Religious Principle,” and a backgrounder on campaign finance reform, go to www.interfaithimpactnys.org – Policy Papers and Backgrounders respectively.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE IN NEW YORK STATE

There is an effort in New York State to set up a true universal health care program, NY Health. Movements start with the telling of untold stories. Share your healthcare story below to help shine light on the need for a healthcare system where coverage is guaranteed and no one is left behind. The survey below can be taken anonymously. **Go to http://www.nyhcampaign.org/tell_your_story**

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE REDUX

The coalition of groups working for reproductive justice is focusing on three issues this legislative session: The Healthy Teen Act, which provide for sexuality education in public schools (a high profile item especially considering the #metoo movement); the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act (providing for wider dissemination of contraceptives); and the Reproductive Health Act (which would apply the *Roe v. Wade* decision to New York State and move abortion from the criminal code to the health code). See events in calendar above.

WE INVITE YOU TO

___ become a member of IINYS and support it financially
(<http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org/Donations.html>)-either our 501C4 action arm, **IINYS, Inc**
or our tax deductible 501C3, **IINYS Foundation, Inc**, see below.

___ respond to our action alerts by contacting your elected officials and letting us know where they stand or if they want more information.

___ become an ambassador for IINYS in your congregation, receiving and distributing IINYS materials & encouraging congregational participation

___ urge your minister/rabbi to address issues from the pulpit and in adult education

DONATE NOW

Interfaith Impact of NYS depends on the donation of friends and members to maintain a year-round presence in Albany. Please, consider a generous donation now.

Go to <http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org/Donations.html> or include check and form below.



Yes, I'll help make our shared progressive religious values heard in the New York State Legislature and Executive Chamber. I want to donate to (please check one):

___ Interfaith Impact of NYS, Inc. to support direct issue advocacy (501C4, not tax deductible)

___ Interfaith Impact of NYS Foundation, Inc. issue education and civic participation (501C3 tax deductible)

Name and title: _____

Address - Street: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Congregation/denomination: _____

Suggested donation: ___ \$25, ___ \$50, ___ \$100, ___ \$200, ___ \$500, ___ other _____

Amount enclosed: \$ ___ (check made out to IINYS, Inc or IINYS Foundation).

Please mail to Treasurer, Interfaith Impact of NYS, 101 Coniston Dr., Rochester, NY 14610

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Facebook: like our IINYS group (to post your concern) and page for official posts