May 27, 2019 Newsletter

We make an effort to stay on top of pieces of legislation as they make their way through the legislative process. We keep in touch with a variety of groups which share with us key dates action plans, and information to give you the tools you need to exercise your faith in public square. We seek to have our choices informed by the social principles of our denominational partners.

We urge you to know your Assembly Member and State Senator and be in touch with them whenever possible. You are urged, of course, to meet them in Albany. We also invite you however, to be in touch with them in their district offices which is often more effective. If you have questions about the status of a particular piece of legislation, do not hesitate to contact me, Peter Cook, at 508-380-8289 or Pcook@Nyscoc.org. You can also reference past newsletters for resources, contacts, and information by going to our web page at WWW.NYSCOC.org.

If you find this service valuable, we invite you to donate online to our ministry by going to our website. You can also mail contributions to New York State Council of Churches at 1580 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12205.

POOR PEOPLE'S MORAL ACTION CONGRESS

JUNE 17-19

At the Poor People’s Moral Action Congress this June, people from all over the country will convene on Capitol Hill to frame the national political narrative around the REAL emergencies facing 140 million people today. Somebody’s been hurting our people, it’s gone on far too long and we won’t be silent anymore!

Everyone who attends will be there for the release of our Moral Budget, a forum with presidential candidates, a National Freedom School and Congressional hearing.

Register now and join us in DC this June: poorpeoplescampaign.org/tickets

NEW YORK HEALTH ACT

Joint Assembly & Senate Hearing on the NY Health Act - legislation that will create a statewide universal, guaranteed healthcare system! Tomorrow, Tuesday May 28, starting 10am (could go all day) in the Legislative Office Building Hearing Room A, 2nd Floor State St near Swan St, Albany. Please sign up & invite friends by clicking here.

Buses and car pools are being organized from across the state. People can learn more and RSVP for travel here.

CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT

The New York State Council of Churches encourages you to support the Climate and Community Protection Act. The CCPA sets an ambitious emissions reduction goal, invests in frontline and vulnerable communities, and protects workers. Sign a letter to Gov. Cuomo and the state legislature calling for climate action now.
FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

The Interfaith Climate Justice Community of Western New York continues its letter campaign for divestment of fossil fuel stocks from the state pension fund. We urge you to sign one or both of the following letters in support of divestment by doing the following.

1. Collect hand written signatures in your congregation or community group for a letter prepared by Interfaith Climate Justice of Western New York. The letter and sign up sheet can be found by clicking here. We invite you to print this letter out with the signature sheet to collect the hand written signatures. Please mail the names and congregational affiliations to Riverside-Salem UCC/DC, P.O. Box 207, Grand Island, NY 14072-0207.

2. You can also indicate your support for this letter, by sending your name, title, organization, and city to Pcook@Nyscoc.org or Roger Cook at rogercook@wnycosh.org. Here is the growing list of signers.

3. We are also collecting signatures for another statewide Faith Leader Fossil Fuel Divestment letter: You can sign on by clicking here.

We will hand deliver all these letters from faith leaders to Albany in the next couple of weeks.

SEPARATION OF CHILDREN ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSE ACT

We are urging you to contact both your Assembly Member and State Senator right away to urge them to be a co-sponsor of the SCAR Act. The SCAR Act was approved by the Senate Family and Children’s Committee and reported to the full Senate. The Assembly is reviewing and revising the legislations. We are concerned that it will get mired down and we urge you to call on Assembly members to resolve their differences and move the bill out of committee. Ellen Jaffee is chair of the Family and Children Services Committee. It will also go before the Committee on Social Services, Chaired by Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi.

You can write letters to the editor. Click here for a sample. To further aid you in shaping your arguments, take note of this editorial which appeared in the New York Daily News which was authored by The Reverend Chloe Breyer, Executive Director of the Interfaith Center of New York. For more background on the SCAR Act click here to see it on the New Sanctuary Coalition web site.

GREEN LIGHT BILL DRIVER’S LICENSES FOR IMMIGRANTS

350 people mobilized at the capitol on May 22. It included a very energetic press conference featuring many disaffected people. Legislative leaders included Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie—who reiterated his commitment to passing the Green Light bill in the Assembly this session--and the Senate's Deputy Majority Leader, Sen. Mike Gianaris. The hold up at this point, according to Green Light, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, is more resistant and has said worried about losing her majority and is not ready to make a commitment to passing Green Light this session. We will continue to mobilize. Urge your Senators to support the Green Light bill including those more on fence in Long Island and parts of upstate New York.

Please mark your calendars for the next action on June 7 in Yonkers at 4 PM.
The next coalition coordinating call is Thursday, May 30 at 11 AM. Contact Emma Kreyche if you would like to participate at (845) 331-6615 ext. 1006 or ekreyche@wjcny.org

Photos and videos from the day of action are posted on Green Light’s Facebook page.

Below are links to some of the media coverage.

**Guest Column, Democrat and Chronicle**

**Hundreds Rally in Support of "Green Light" Immigrant License Bill**

**Last action for the driver's license campaign #GreenLightNY before summer (Spanish language radio broadcast)**

**Advocates put pressure on state Senate to back legislation granting driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants**

**Los indocumentados mas cerca de conducir legalmente en Nueva York**

**Albany Struggles to Pass Bill on Driver's Licenses for Undocumented**

**VOTING RIGHTS**

**Automatic Voter Registration Public Hearing & Advocacy Day. Thursday May 30, Rally at noon, Million Dollar staircase, NYS Capitol; Hearing 1-5pm in the Legislative Office Building Hearing Room A, 2nd Floor State St near Swan St, Albany. Please sign up & invite friends by clicking here.**

**BAIL REFORM**

**Making Sense of Bail Reform in New York State (Part 2)**

New York just passed historic pretrial justice reforms. Given that the Governor, Senate leaders, and the Assembly speaker made public commitments to end cash bail, why didn’t that happen? And what does it mean?

In a new summary *(the 2nd of a 2-part analysis)* penned by gabriel sayegh, Making Sense of Bail Reform in New York State, Part 2, we take a deep look into how the new bail law came to be and why it looks the way it does.

**Read Making Sense of Bail Reform in New York State, Part 2 here.**

**HALT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ACT**

Please Make 3 Calls on May 30 to Urge Passage of the HALT Solitary Confinement Act! (or at least 1 call!)

They have the votes for #HALTsolitary but they're still not bringing it to a vote
Please join a mass call-in TODAY - 1000+ calls
There are now 33 Senate cosponsors & 79 Assembly cosponsors of #HALTsolitary, & many others committed to vote.
With only 12 session days left in the legislative session, time is running out to pass HALT. We need YOU to take action TODAY.

1. 3 minutes for HALT: Call Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins TODAY at (518) 455-2585 & tell her:

   “Thousands of New Yorkers are suffering in solitary confinement, for months, years, and decades. The HALT Solitary Confinement Act (S1623/A2500) has 33 Senate cosponsors and others committed to vote for it. I respectfully urge you to bring HALT to a vote now (as is, without watering down its protections), so we can finally end this torture. There is no time to lose. Do not let another mind or life be taken by this torture. Thank you.”

2. 5 minutes for HALT:
   Also Call Assembly Speaker Heastie at (518) 455-3791 & tell him:

   “Thousands of New Yorkers are suffering in solitary confinement, for months, years, and decades. Thank you for your leadership in supporting the HALT Solitary Confinement Act (A2500/S1623). We appreciate that the Assembly passed HALT last year and that you continue to support the bill. I respectfully urge you to bring HALT to a vote now (as is, without watering down its protections), so we can finally end this torture. There is no time to lose. Do not let another mind or life be taken by this torture. Thank you again.”

3. 10 minutes for HALT: Call Your Own Senator Too (find at openstates.org):

   “Thousands of New Yorkers are suffering in solitary confinement, for months, years, and decades. Thank you for your support of the HALT Solitary Confinement Act (S1623/A2500). What are you doing now to end this torture? Will you tell the Senate leadership that HALT is a priority and that you want the bill to be brought to a vote now (as is, without watering down its protections)? HALT has 33 Senate cosponsors and others committed to vote for it. There is no time to lose. Do not let another mind or life be taken by this torture. Thank you.”

   There will be a rally on June 7, 12:30 pm, at Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins' District office in Yonkers (29 Wells Ave.)? We are trying to get as many people to attend this rally as possible to urge the Senate Majority Leader to bring HALT to a vote. **Please urge anyone and everyone to sign up here:** [http://bit.ly/YonkersRallyHALT](http://bit.ly/YonkersRallyHALT).

In faith,

Peter Cook

Executive Director

New York State Council of Churches

Remember to **visit our website** We value your partnership in ministry with us. The New York State Council of Churches relies on contributions to carry out its ministry, **please donate.**

Also, **like us on Facebook** and **follow us on Twitter.**