

# WISDOM



**Working for *M.A.D.* change in Wisconsin!**

## WISDOM

WISDOM is the statewide network of faith-based organizations, which began with MICAH's founding 1988. WISDOM has grown to include:

MICAH (Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope)

RIC (Racine Interfaith Coalition)

CUSH (Congregations United to Serve Humanity – Kenosha)

JOB (Justice Overcoming Borders – Beloit)

ESTHER (Empowerment Solidarity Truth Hope Equity Reform – Fox Valley)

SOPHIA (Servants of Prophetic Hope & Intentional Action – Waukesha County)

JONAH (Joining Our Neighbors, Advancing Hope – Eau Claire)

JOSHUA (Justice Organization Sharing Hope & United for Action – Green Bay)

NAOMI (North central Area congregations Organizing to Make Impact – Wausau)

RUTH (Responding with Understanding, Truth and Hope – Manitowoc)

MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality and Solidarity)

WISDOM is part of the national Gamaliel Network, which has organizations in 17 states.

WISDOM's best-known work is the campaign called "ROC Wisconsin." (See [www.rocwisconsin.org](http://www.rocwisconsin.org).) ROC (Restoring Our Communities) Wisconsin calls for a drastic reduction in our incarceration rates and racial disparities. WISDOM also has a long-standing commitment to Public Transportation. Lack of mass transit affects all of us, but it especially impacts low income people, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

WISDOM and Gamaliel have stood with and for immigrants for many years by educating, advocating and acting together with our newest neighbors for policies that express our compassion and respect for all people. Locally, WISDOM organizations are working on many issues, ranging from housing to public education to jobs.

Exciting work is being done by WISDOM organizers on the Menominee reservation. An important issue that has been brought to us by the Menominee is the need to stop the "Back Forty Mine," which would dig up ancestral burial grounds, destroy a pristine forest and endanger the Menominee River and Green Bay.

A large and growing part of WISDOM is EXPO (EX-incarcerated People Organizing). EXPO members are formerly-incarcerated men and women who have come together to offer mutual, positive support, and to lead in the struggle for change in the criminal justice system. Faith communities are called to stand with people who have suffered injustice and believe that the people most impacted by the issues need to lead our response.

WISDOM has joined with the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Wisconsin Citizen Action and Kids Forward to initiate the "End Child Poverty" campaign. We call on Wisconsin to claim a goal to *reduce child poverty by half* and *reduce racial disparities in child poverty by half*. To learn more, visit [www.endchildpovertywi.org](http://www.endchildpovertywi.org)

## **Building the Beloved Community: Why We Do What We Do**

*Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.*

*~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Since WISDOM came together in 2000, its affiliate members across Wisconsin have valiantly fought to “bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice” on issues ranging from mass incarceration and mistreatment of immigrants to generational poverty and environmental degradation.

In doing this work, we can sometimes get caught up in the details of our current fights and forget that, if we are to create the “beloved community” envisioned by Dr. King and achieve lasting change, we must also transform ourselves and our organizations.

Whatever the specific issues of the day, our actions and advocacy must reflect our three guiding values:

- Radical inclusion
- Costly reconciliation
- Living for the seventh generation

As we embark on another year of organizing in Wisconsin, it is important to remember why we do what we do and to rededicate ourselves to living these values in our own lives, our organizations, our communities and our state.

### **Radical Inclusion**



At its core, “radical inclusion” means that, in the Beloved Community, *everybody’s in/nobody’s out*. While that seems a simple goal, our daily experience shows us how difficult it is to achieve. As human beings, we are wired to accept as “safe” those who look, act and talk like us, and to be wary of, if not hostile to, those who don’t.

To be truly inclusive, we must be willing to stand up for the “radical” belief that no one – including even those with the best intentions – can decide who is worthy of inclusion and who is not.

But we make these decisions every day. When we advocate on behalf of non-violent offenders, we risk drawing a line that implies that people who commit “violent” crimes are less worthy of our compassion and support. When we focus our attention on transit in

specific neighborhoods, we may forget that there are individuals across town – immigrants, the elderly and those with disabilities – who also lack access to affordable transportation. And when we advocate for those who are incarcerated, that worthy focus should not blind us to the fact that thousands of immigrants, including children, are also being imprisoned for the “crime” of wanting a better life.

In our organizations, we must work to achieve the richness that comes from diverse voices, viewpoints and opinions. And we must remember that there are many kinds of diversity -- not only people of other races, ethnicities and religious beliefs, but also those who are different from us in age, physical and mental ability, gender, sexual orientation, geography or political beliefs.

If our task forces do not include those most impacted by the issues we address, our values should compel us to reach out to those individuals. Our organizations must intentionally create pathways for impacted people to be included in decision-making and leadership. This might be uncomfortable, but discomfort often leads to growth. And if we fail to grow as individuals and as an organization we will stagnate, and eventually fail.

## Costly Reconciliation



South African theologian and leader Desmond Tutu said, *“True reconciliation is never cheap, for it is based on forgiveness, which is costly.”* It is not “forgive and forget” – as if nothing wrong ever happened. Instead, true reconciliation requires a full understanding of both the details and consequences of injustice. *“True reconciliation,”* Tutu reminds us, *“exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt and the truth.”* He continues, *“It is a risky undertaking, but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing.”*

Individuals who come from backgrounds of privilege often believe there are easy answers to problems such as racism, child poverty, immigration or mass incarceration. After all, “access to education,” “equal opportunity,” “parental involvement” and “family planning” helped them succeed in life – so why aren’t those enough to help others become more like them? What’s missing in this superficial view is a deep understanding of the lasting effects of generations of exploitation and exclusion on cultures, families and relationships.

To achieve real healing, we must do three things – all of them hard:

- Practice deep listening and unequivocal forgiveness
- Work to repair the damage done by years of injustice
- Build lasting bridges across the racial, geographic, religious and other divides that separate us so the harm will cease, and the healing will begin.

As another South African, author and anti-apartheid activist Alan Paton, put it: *“We must ‘forgive and go forward’ – building on the mistakes of the past and the energy generated by reconciliation to create a new future.”*

## Living for the Seventh Generation



According to Wilma Mankiller, the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, *"In Iroquois society, leaders are encouraged to remember seven generations in the past and consider seven generations in the future when making decisions that affect the people."*

Most of us are unlikely to ever meet individuals who are more than four generations behind us, yet we have an obligation to think about how the decisions we make today will affect not only them but their children's children – the seventh generation.

In a society that rewards short- versus long-term thinking, velocity over value and convenience over conscience, trying to do that is clearly swimming against the tide. But we must do it, both in our everyday lives and in our social justice advocacy.

We are already reaping the consequences of short-term thinking in the treatment of our air, water and land and the habitats of other living things. We also know that the impact of climate change is being felt first by the poorest among us and will exacerbate the challenges they face.

What may be less obvious is the extent to which we need to think about the future in our other work. For example, when we advocate for educational opportunity for all, we should consider not only the needs of today's children but also their children – and their children's children. Similarly, when we work for criminal justice reform, we must remember that incarceration affects generations of families.

We must also lay the groundwork today for those who, we hope, will continue to try to "bend the arc" after we are gone. Organizations, if they turn into institutions, ultimately die of their own weight. If we want future generations to use WISDOM and our affiliates as effective vehicles for organizing and advocacy, we must make decisions today that will ensure that the organization is flexible and ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

In other words, we must do everything in our power to ensure that we, and those who are not yet born, continue to act based on the guiding values of Radical Inclusion, Costly Reconciliation, and Living for the Seventh Generation so that we can, in fact, build the Beloved Community together.

## **WISDOM PROPHETIC DECLARATION**

- We are people of faith united by our passion for justice, commitment to community and practice of hope. We stand together understanding that our lives and destinies are intertwined.
- We come together because God calls us into relationship with one another, with our communities and with the world around us.
- We come together from across the state, across faith traditions, across race, class, gender and ethnicity, and across many divides that might ordinarily keep us apart.
- We come together around core faith convictions that affirm our direction and shape our vision for the future.
- We come together to act for justice, build power and to transform our communities, cities and state.

### **We stand together in our faith**

- We believe in the God-given dignity and infinite worth of each and every human life.
- We believe that we are each and all part of a sacred community, to which we have responsibility and from which we gain sustenance.
- We believe that our faith calls us to work for justice and liberation, standing against all forms of oppression and inequity.
- We believe we are called to be stewards of the natural world in all its bounty and diversity.
- We believe in shared abundance and stand against the dominant culture of reckless consumption and consumerism for some and deprivation for others.
- We believe in the triumph of love and hope over hate and fear.
- We build power and act together, drawing courage and inspiration from our faith.
- We believe God has called us to live, speak and act courageously in accordance with our faith beliefs. Together we will create the community we seek for ourselves, but also build the power we need to transform the world around us.
- We will build the relationships and strategic capacity we need to powerfully engage and impact public decisions.

### **Together we declare...**

- Where there is division, we declare unity.
- Where there is hatred, we declare love.
- Where there is lack, we declare abundance.
- Where there is desolation, we declare renewal.
- Where there is discouragement, we declare hope.
- Where there is lack of strength, we declare power!

# **WISDOM RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT**

**Adopted February 21, 2019**

## **Our Aspirations**

**Racial equity is a core value of WISDOM and its affiliates and is practiced in everything we do.**

- Diverse voices, viewpoints, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are actively encouraged and embraced throughout our organization.
- A culture of deep and authentic relationships throughout WISDOM and its affiliates fosters a sense of restored community and mutual caring.
- Our commitment to racial equity promotes a just, fair, respectful, inclusive, and thriving community for everyone in our organization and in the institutions we seek to improve.

**WISDOM and its affiliates, and participants individually, are open and responsive to constructively-given feedback about racist attitudes or behaviors we may display, however unintentional.**

- Mistakes are courageously and forthrightly identified. We will graciously “call each other in” and describe and discuss mistakes with clarity as part of a continuous education process.
- Patience, genuine caring, and compassionate listening are practiced in our mutual effort to understand oppression, both overt and systemic.

**WISDOM and its affiliates are characterized by an intentional identity as an antiracist institution.**

- Our antiracist identity permeates our organizational culture, values, norms, and behaviors.
- Diverse racial, cultural, and economic groups enjoy full participation and shared power in all aspects of our mission, structure, constituency, policies, and practices.
- People of color lead in the work we do and are always at the tables where decisions that affect us get made.

**WISDOM embraces and champions policies that both provide for individual dignity and dismantle structural racism in the wider community by building clear lines of accountability to organizations of color and racially oppressed communities that are directly impacted by our work.**

- Our work for racial liberation values embracing diversity/difference as a gift, the unique worth of every person, treating everyone with dignity, inclusivity, social justice, public good, and cultural competence (awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills). By living these values, we are better human beings.

## **RACIAL EQUITY ACTION STEPS AND MEASUREMENTS**

WISDOM and its affiliates will take the following first steps toward fulfillment of these principles and will do an annual racial equity check-in to keep us all accountable. The WISDOM Racial Equity Core Team will provide tools for this to the affiliates (e.g., a WISDOM assessment tool to be used each October) and serve as resources to the affiliates as needed.

Provide Education on Implicit Bias: We will provide an Implicit Bias workshop in every affiliate and encourage all members to participate. This training is provided through Gamaliel and is in conjunction with Gamaliel affiliates across the country.

Baseline Analysis of Organizational Racism: We will develop a baseline analysis of racism within our organization that will serve to increase commitment of members to dismantle racism both within WISDOM and its affiliates and within the community.

Education and Dialogue: We will develop a shared understanding within WISDOM and its affiliates of the meaning and historical reality of systemic racism through education and dialogue.

Long Term and Short Term Racial Equity Goals: We will be strategic and intentional in setting both long term and short term racial equity goals and in monitoring our progress toward them by their impact, not simply our intention. (We should be able to see the progress.)

Raise up and Support Under-Represented Leaders: We will prioritize historically and systemically excluded or marginalized people by recognizing, raising up and supporting leaders from under-represented populations and intentionally creating pathways for them to be included in decision-making and leadership.

# WISDOM ISSUES AND REQUESTS FOR LEGISLATORS

## Immigrant Drivers' Cards

Before 2006, Wisconsin, like most states, issued driver licenses to undocumented immigrants. The Real ID act of 2005 created new federal standards for state-issued driver licenses and non-driver identification cards. The law allowed states to still issue "driving privilege certificates/cards"; 12 states, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and DC have chosen to do that. Those states have provided unlicensed drivers the opportunity to pass the driver's test, pass a vision test and obtain car insurance - making roads safer for all drivers. Safe and secure roads are directly connected to driving certificates or cards for the undocumented. A study in California showed a significant reduction in hit and runs since the introduction of the driver's card program. Bills to issue driver cards were introduced in Wisconsin in 2014 and 2015 but went nowhere.

Without a driver's certificate or card, undocumented immigrants have greater difficulty getting to work, taking their children to school, going to the grocery store, opening bank accounts, receiving proper health care etc. Without a driving permit, the undocumented face an increased risk of becoming "criminalized" under new immigration guidelines. This leads to the ongoing problem of possible separation of families. They are in constant fear of being targeted or profiled. Lack of a driver's card is an issue that has a direct impact on everyone.

***Request: Allow provision for Drivers' Cards for undocumented people to remain in the state budget. It brings new revenue to the state, besides ensuring that people can get to work, school and church.***

## Transit

WISDOM and our supporters believe that the state transportation budget should ensure every person access to a robust public transportation system.

The transportation system in Wisconsin is not working for everyone. People who cannot or choose not to drive are unable to access jobs, healthcare, school and other opportunities due to a lack of transportation options. Previous cuts in state investment have forced our public transit systems to eliminate routes and have prevented the replacement of aging buses. Public transportation is an economic driver and a key consideration for businesses deciding whether to enter or leave Wisconsin communities. Meaningful mobility choices are an investment in vibrant communities and a healthy Wisconsin economy.

The need for accessible and affordable public transportation is greater than ever. The aging baby boomer population, the millennial generation, low income populations, workers, and people with disabilities all rely on public transportation. All Wisconsin residents need a modern, robust, multimodal transportation system that provides an important connection to jobs, school, healthcare and entertainment.

**Request: Support Governor Evers' proposed transportation budget which includes:**

- **\$22 million increase for transit**
- **\$10 million for transit capital assistance**
- **\$6 million increase for specialized transit**
- **10% increase to Tribal Elderly Transportation Grants & Paratransit Aid**
- **Levy limit exclusion.**

## **No Prison Expansion**

Wisconsin incarcerates far too many people. Our prison population has gone from about 3,500 in 1980 to more than 23,500 in 2019. It is time to join states like Texas, Michigan, Connecticut, Mississippi, Rhode Island and South Carolina, which have significantly decreased their prison populations in recent years and are closing facilities that are no longer needed.

Wisconsin could safely reduce its prison population by at least 1/3 within the next two years if it just took common sense steps that other states have already pioneered. Specifically, Wisconsin could cut the prison population by 8,000 by:

- Increasing TAD funding by \$15 million;
- Ordering a complete review of all parole-eligible people being held under the "Old Law" and moving quickly to release those who are overdue for release;
- Ending the practice of Crimeless Revocations

Knowing this, the plans in the Governor's proposed budget to add to the state's prison capacity are unnecessary and wasteful. The state needs to focus first on the steps it can immediately take to cut down on prison admissions and to hasten the release of those who have served the time judges had planned for them to serve.

Wisconsin's budget should not spend any money to expand prison capacity. It should be planning to close facilities that are old (e.g. Green Bay and Waupun) and/or inhumane and dangerous (e.g. the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility). It should plan to redirect the savings to programs that will uplift and rebuild the communities that have been the most harmed by unnecessary incarceration.

**Request: Do NOT support budget provisions to add "barracks" or otherwise add new beds to Wisconsin's prison system. Do NOT support capital projects to do renovations to the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility.**

## Treatment Alternatives and Diversions

Wisconsin is at a unique crossroads of need and opportunity. On one hand, our state prisons are overcrowded, understaffed and, in some cases, very near the end of their physical viability. New OWI laws, the heroin epidemic, and the continuing crisis of methamphetamine addiction are threatening to further increase the population of our prisons. On the other hand, Wisconsin has many proven, evidence-based, cost-effective alternatives to incarceration. Drug Treatment Courts, Veteran's Courts, Family Courts, OWI Courts, the Safe Streets Treatment Options Program (SSTOP), and other interventions have all proven to be more effective than incarceration for reducing recidivism.

Legislatively-mandated evaluations of the programs funded by the Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD) fund show that they save taxpayers almost \$2 for every \$1 the state has invested. We currently spend about \$6 million for TAD each year, but the UW Lafollette School of Public Affairs has recommended that the state should budget at least \$22 million per year.

In the next budget, Wisconsin has the ability to safely and effectively reduce the prison population and the growth in prison spending by significantly increasing the funding available for TAD. A \$15 million increase could divert at least 1,500 people from state prisons, and many thousands from county jails. A majority of this increase needs to be targeted to the communities that have the state's highest incarceration rates.

***Request: Increase the proposed TAD increase in the 2019-21 budget to \$15 million per year and ensure that the increase is distributed in a way that is proportional with the rates of incarcerated people from each county.***

## Revocations

Wisconsin's current revocation process is at odds with common sense approaches to justice. Crimeless revocation — the practice of re-incarcerating people on probation, parole, or extended supervision for infractions that do not involve new convictions — is more than significant. It is a failed policy, a waste of money, and an embarrassment to Wisconsin.

3,000 people enter Wisconsin prisons each year for crimeless revocations. The average time served for a crimeless revocation is 18 months. Over 4,500 people in Wisconsin prisons are there for a revocation without a new conviction.

While the Department of Corrections investigates allegations of rule violations, Wisconsin temporarily holds thousands of other people, who do not eventually get revoked, at county jails and the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF).

Seven states enacted policies more than five years ago that enabled them to close prisons and greatly reduce both levels of re-incarceration for revocations and rates of violent crime. These states reinvested resources saved into programs that helped to build safer, stronger, and healthier communities. Wisconsin cannot afford to wait any longer to enact similar policies.

It is time to transform the state's unreasonable revocation process and reinvest resources into the communities that have been the most disproportionately harmed by mass incarceration.

A recent study shows that Wisconsin has more people on Supervision than other states, that people have longer Supervision sentences than they do in other states, and that more people are revoked back to prison than in other states. Visit [www.rocwisconsin.org](http://www.rocwisconsin.org), and look under "Resources" to read a recent report by Columbia University's Justice Lab on "Mass Supervision in Wisconsin" to learn more.

***Request: Do NOT fund any expansion of Wisconsin's prison capacity until the Department of Corrections presents a plan to reform the Revocation process which will reduce the prison population.***

## **Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF)**

The inhumane conditions at Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF) and the policies and practices that force people to be incarcerated there are out of step with Wisconsin's values of fairness, compassion, and equity. Tragically, at a time when Wisconsin needs bold leadership on human rights issues, nearly all public officials in the state have remained silent about Milwaukee's high-rise torture chamber.

Built in 2001 to accommodate Wisconsin's racist, aggressive Community Supervision system, MSDF holds people accused of crimeless rule violations in excruciating conditions. The state of Wisconsin built MSDF to incarcerate people who have allegedly violated rules of probation, parole, or extended supervision.

Many of the nation's leading community corrections practitioners recently signed on to a statement that called for an end to the overuse of probation, parole, and supervision and reinvestment in rehabilitation services. Red and blue states across the nation have enacted policies that have enabled them to greatly reduce levels of incarceration for minor infractions and to close prisons. These states reinvested resources saved into programs that helped build safer, stronger and healthier communities. Bringing Wisconsin's revocations and sentencing policies and practices in line with national best practices would enable us to empty and close MSDF.

Visit <https://closemsdf.org/> for more information about MSDF and the #CLOSEmsdf Campaign.

***Request: Do NOT include the requested \$8.1 in the state budget for an MSDF remodeling project that will not be complete until 2023. MSDF needs to be closed, and the building needs to be razed or re-purposed. The \$40 million annual savings needs to be re-invested in the community.***

## Parole and Compassionate Release

Nearly 3,000 people in Wisconsin prisons are eligible for parole. All of them were convicted of crimes committed before “Truth in Sentencing” was enacted in 1999. Prior to “Truth in Sentencing,” many people were given extremely long sentences by Wisconsin judges who understood that they would likely be paroled after 25% of their overall sentence had been served if they completed their programs and were deemed rehabilitated.

In recent years, the percentage of eligible people granted parole has shrunk to about 5%, meaning the vast majority of what are called “old law” prisoners are serving much more time than the judges who originally sentenced them anticipated. More than 400 are so low-risk that they leave the prisons every day to work unsupervised in the community. All of these prisoners have already served at least 17 years.

Old law prisoners cost taxpayers more than \$95 million per year. But even more important than the monetary cost is the cost in frustration and suffering for not only the prisoners, but also their families.

Many parole-eligible people are elderly and/or seriously ill. Those people should be identified and moved through the release process as quickly as possible. Extremely few cases have been approved in recent years, leading to enormous costs, while families are deprived of a chance to have their loved ones nearby in their final years.

***Request: Do NOT approve any expansion of Wisconsin’s prison capacity until there has been a complete, independent review of every case of a person eligible for parole, with the goal of releasing all those who can be released safely. Demand that a new Chair of the Parole Commission agree to a complete review of the system.***

## Public Education

Currently, because of the complexity and quirks of the formulae for funding schools in Wisconsin, districts with high property values receive more funding, while districts with low per capita income receive less. As a result, large urban school districts with diverse populations, such as Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Green Bay, as well as smaller districts with declining enrollments, are suffering compared to wealthy, suburban districts.

For example, in 2014-15, the Milwaukee Public Schools revenue limit per pupil was \$10,261 while, at the same time, the revenue limit for Whitefish Bay was \$11,248 – nearly a \$1,000 per pupil difference. This equates to an \$80.2 million annual difference for Milwaukee. Since 2011, per pupil spending on public education for all of Wisconsin has been flat or declining.

***Request: We ask the legislature to maintain the public school funding increases proposed by Governor Evers. We especially urge support for the Governor’s proposal to invest \$600 million in Special Education. This is an area where our state’s effort has been among the lowest in the country, and it especially impacts districts with many low-income families.***

## Solitary Confinement

Solitary confinement for more than fifteen days is considered torture and a violation of basic human rights by the United Nations. The primary task of prisons is to foster safer communities not be institutions of state sanctioned abuse. Despite the moral and factual evidence against solitary confinement, hundreds of Wisconsin inmates are routinely isolated in closed cells for 22-24 hours a day. They are virtually free of human contact for periods of time ranging from days to decades. It is called “segregation,” “administrative confinement,” or more recently “restrictive housing.”

Calling solitary confinement by a different name does not diminish its cruelty or future consequences. Rick Raemisch, former Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, has said that, “By placing a difficult offender in isolation you have not solved the problem — only delayed or more likely exacerbated it, not only for the prison, but ultimately for the public.”

Wisconsin must:

- Immediately end the placement of mentally ill prisoners in solitary confinement.
- Immediately end the use of long-term “administrative confinement.”
- Order the Department of Corrections to document how many days inmates in Wisconsin prisons spend in all levels of segregation and order them to immediately reduce by fifty percent the number of days inmates in Wisconsin prisons spend in segregation.
- Immediately begin a process that will end all use of solitary confinement for more than 15 consecutive days in Wisconsin prisons.

***Request: Call upon the Governor and the Secretary of Corrections to end all use of solitary confinement for more than 15 consecutive days, and to ensure that there cannot be more than one assignment to Solitary in a year. These reforms need to be done as Administrative Rules changes, approved by the legislature. Related to this, the state needs to reform the Internal Complaint Examiner (ICE) function so it is truly independent.***

## End Childhood Poverty

End Child Poverty Wisconsin is a campaign to cut child poverty in Wisconsin in half in the next 10 years, led by the Wisconsin Council of Churches, WISDOM, Citizen Action of WI, and Kids Forward. Children are among the most vulnerable people in Wisconsin – 1 in 6 of them live in poverty, and this number has increased significantly in the past few years. Racial disparities in child poverty rates mean that children of color face an even steeper climb for equity. When any of our children are hungry, thirsty, underhoused, poorly clothed, or without appropriate medical care, it means we have abandoned our responsibility to care for the most vulnerable. If we seek a future of wholeness and justice, then we must attend to the well-being of Wisconsin’s children.

End Child Poverty WI has gathered more than 5,000 signatures to build public pressure to adopt a three-part goal of:

- Cutting Wisconsin's child poverty rates by half in 10 years.  
Cutting racial disparities in child poverty rates by half.
- Creating a robust, independent mechanism to measure and regularly report on our progress toward these goals.

With evidence-based policies that can find support across political divides, we can transform the lives of children and their families. Similar efforts in other countries have had massive success in transforming the conditions that trap people in poverty beginning in childhood. You can add your signature and join the campaign for a whole and healthy future for *all* of Wisconsin's children at <http://www.endchildpovertywi.org>

***Request: Talk to other legislators about building bipartisan support for legislation that would establish the goals of reducing child poverty by half in the next ten years, of cutting racial disparities for child poverty in half, and establishing a clear means of evaluating and reporting progress toward those goals each year.***

## **Mining Moratorium**

Wisconsin's landmark "Prove it First" law called for a simple test before a metallic sulfide mine could be opened in the state: there needed to be an example of a similar mine that had operated without damaging the environment. To date, there are no examples of such mines. Unfortunately, the law has been repealed. Wisconsin's Flambeau mine and other examples cited by the mining industry so far do not qualify to meet the law.

The law was approved by the state legislature by overwhelmingly bi-partisan margins (29-3 in the Senate and 91-6 in the Assembly) and signed into law by Governor Thompson as 1997 Act 171. Wisconsin residents from more than sixty organizations supported the law, along with petitions signed by more than forty thousand citizens.

Public opinion polling prior to the repeal of Prove it First found that 72 percent of Wisconsin residents wanted to keep protections from mining pollution. Spencer Black, former representative of the 77<sup>th</sup> Assembly District for 26 years, and principal author of the legislation, asked, "Doesn't it make sense to require a mining company to show at least one other sulfide mine in North America that has operated and closed without water pollution before we let them threaten our waters?"

***Request: Support the reintroduction of Wisconsin's Prove it First Mining Moratorium Law which was repealed at the behest of mining interests in the last session of the legislature.***

## **Dignity for Incarcerated Women**

We believe in the dignity of all people, including pregnant women who are incarcerated. We are joining a national movement led by women with lived experience of incarceration to demand that women who are incarcerated are treated with dignity. The Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act, by #cut50, sheds light on four facts about women's incarceration:

- Despite the overwhelming numbers of sexual assault victims in women's prisons, some states still allow male guards to strip search women and supervise them in the bathroom.
- Many mothers who are incarcerated are forced to be housed in a facility hundreds of miles from their children, making it impossible to visit.
- Feminine hygiene products are a necessity, not a luxury, yet some prisons force women to purchase these items on commissary or go without.
- In many states pregnant women are forced to give birth in shackles, endangering both them and their babies.

Here in Wisconsin, the Department of Corrections still participates in the archaic exercise of shackling incarcerated women during labor and after childbirth. Last August, Senate Bill 393 was introduced to restrict the shackling of pregnant and post-partum women. Despite unanimously passing the Judiciary and Public Safety committee in October, the bill failed to pass during last legislative session. Other states such as Oklahoma (5/23/18), Connecticut (5/23/18), and Maryland (awaiting Governor's signature) have recently passed laws restricting the use of shackles during labor and after childbirth. Women in Wisconsin's prisons deserve the same.

***Request: Pass legislation that will ensure the dignity of women who are incarcerated by eliminating the use of shackles during labor and after childbirth.***

## Health Care

Health care is recognized as a human right in multiple documents in America, yet our delivery system is based on “pay to play” – profits are more important than life itself. If the human right to healthcare is based on ability to pay, why do we not as a society demand that all human rights only be accessed by one’s ability to pay?

In Wisconsin, several reports make note of the fact that most all citizens have access to healthcare. But not noted is that socioeconomic factors limit access to affordable healthcare. In the broad sense, one out of three people either delay or forego healthcare because of cost. As a result, the cost goes up for everyone because by delaying or forgoing care, money is then spent on unnecessary care to treat illnesses or diseases that could have been prevented or controlled in the first place.

In a study by the Institute of Medicine, it was estimated that more the \$750 billion (in 2009 dollars) is wasted in our healthcare system nationally – 27.5 percent attributed to unnecessary care, with 24.8 percent stemming from excessive administrative costs. Just the amount wasted on unnecessary care is enough to pay for affordable access to healthcare for every American.

In Wisconsin, it is time to end the suffering of families and children from the loss or suffering of loved ones due to lack of access to affordable healthcare. Investing in expansion of BadgerCare to provide all Wisconsinites with affordable healthcare now, will, in the long-term, result in lower costs for everyone.

BadgerCare expansion will:

- increase health care access to workers who do not earn enough to pay for health insurance or aren't offered health insurance through their jobs;
- fill the gap for people who fall on hard times and ensure they have access to health care as they recover from an illness;
- help people who need support when they lose a job or become too sick to work.
- help people who have to take off work to care for an ailing parent or a sick child.
- help people in rural areas who don't have employers who provide health coverage, like family farmers and agricultural workers;
- offer financial protection for working families so that they do not have to go bankrupt when they face an unexpected illness or need to go to the hospital.
- help people who lose their jobs due to cancer and other serious illnesses, assuring that they don't lose access to health care when the need it most.

***Request: Support BadgerCare expansion as it is proposed In the Governor's budget. It will provide 82,000 additional people with health coverage, AND bring \$300 million into the state budget.***

## **WISDOM Madison Action Day Agenda**

March 26, 2019

Madison Masonic Center

**8:00** Arrival, Fellowship Coffee (Catlin Lounge)

**8:50** Jingle Dress Dancers begin (Auditorium)

**9:00** Plenary Session (Auditorium)

MC's: Roshi Susan Myoyu Andersen and Rev. Michael Bell (JOB/EXPO)

Welcome, Overview and Prayer: Rev. Willie Brisco (WISDOM President -- MICAH)  
Rev. Marian Boyle-Rohloff (WISDOM VP -- JOSHUA)

Radical Inclusion: Ms. Andrea Harris (MOSES)  
Ms. Norys Piña (ESTHER)

"Quick One-on-Ones"

Costly Reconciliation Rev. Richard Shaw (MICAH)  
Ms. Karen Nelson (ESTHER)

Sharing in small groups

Living for the 7<sup>th</sup> Generation Ms. Kristin Welch (Menikanaehkem)  
Mr. John Wegner (JONAH)

Voices of Young People RIC Youth Group

Logistics/Instructions MC's

Call to Action Mr. Ron Alexander (NAOMI)  
Mr. Carl Fields (EXPO/CUSH)

**11:00** Lunch and Legislative Visit Planning

**12:15** Depart for Capitol, led by Jingle Dancers

**12:30** Rally on the Capitol Steps:

Speakers: Rev. Marilyn Miller (MICAH), Ms. Sandra Brown (MOSES),  
Mr. Emilio De Torre (ACLU), Mr. Tony Brown (Menikanaehkem)

**1:15** Legislative Visits

**3:00** Return to Masonic Center

## About the Jingle Dancers

*The Jingle Dress Puppet was created by a group Native and non-Native people, hand crafted to use in ceremonies or at events to bring healing to hurting communities and to settle strife. She prays in unity for all people and is used to bring understanding between different cultures. She is inspired by the traditional jingle dress dancer, with beadwork and jingles. The hands on the calico of her dress are prints of community members.*

## Places for Lunch/Legislative Visit Planning

Lodge 1 (Upstairs): ESTHER, JOSHUA, RUTH – Northeast WI

Lodge 2 (Upstairs): NAOMI and JONAH – North Central and Northwest WI

Ballroom, right side (Downstairs) – MICAH and SOPHIA – Milwaukee/Waukesha area

Ballroom, left side (Downstairs) – MOSES and JOB – Madison area and Rock County

Classroom (Downstairs) – RIC and CUSH – Racine and Kenosha Counties

Small Dining Room (Down) – People visiting legislators not covered by above groups

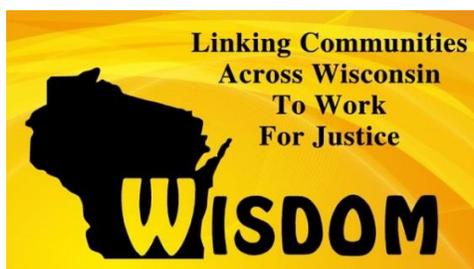
**At 3:00 pm, there is a meeting of people with a loved one in prison.** The gathering Small Dining Room (downstairs) of the Masonic Center. (Note: This meeting will last until after 4 pm. Buses will NOT wait for this meeting to end.)

### **EXPO RADIO: *When we speak up, people will listen***

Listen to EXPO Radio “Live” Wednesdays at 8:30 PM: Anytime at [riverwestradio.com](http://riverwestradio.com)  
April 3<sup>rd</sup> will be the 100<sup>th</sup> Broadcast. Join us for group listening sessions at 7:30 in locations across the state. For further information: Rob Schreiber, 414-559-6906, [robschreiber9@yahoo.com](mailto:robschreiber9@yahoo.com)



**RADIO EXPO: 104.1 FM**  
**Riverwestradio.com**



## **WISDOM**

2821 Vel Phillips Avenue  
Suite 217

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212  
414-831-2070

[wisdomforjustice@gmail.com](mailto:wisdomforjustice@gmail.com)

[www.wisdomwisconsin.org](http://www.wisdomwisconsin.org)

[www.rocwisconsin.org](http://www.rocwisconsin.org)

Immigration, Connie Raether, [connieraether@gmail.com](mailto:connieraether@gmail.com) ~ 920-878-8370

Conference calls 1<sup>st</sup> Mondays, 7:30 pm (next call, April 1) at 605-468-8012, passcode 423951#

Transit, contact the WISDOM office: [wisdomforjustice@gmail.com](mailto:wisdomforjustice@gmail.com) – 414-831-2070

ROC Wisconsin (Restoring Our Communities) [david.liners1@gmail.com](mailto:david.liners1@gmail.com) ~ 414-736-2099

*Conference calls at 605-468-8012, passcode 423950# are:*

Post Release Issues, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, 7pm (next, March 28) – *For this group code 423951#*

Old Law, Parole Issues, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays, 8:30am (next call, April 13)

Prison Prevention Issues, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, 5:00 pm (next call, April 9)

Solitary Confinement Issues, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, 4:00 pm (next call, April 9)

