

**NOTES FOR CHANGE: February 15, 2019 Newsletter**

**AN HISTORIC TIME IN ALBANY**

In a legislative whirlwind, the New York State Legislature passed unprecedented legislation which Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law. Each of these laws deals with issues which IINYS has been promoting for many years.

**REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE LEGISLATION - SUMMARY**

*SIGNED INTO LAW: The Reproductive Health Act (RHA)*, which embeds *Roe v. Wade* principles in New York State health laws and removes abortion from the criminal code. \*

*NEW:* The Governor wants to place provisions of this act in the State Constitution, a process that must be passed by two different sessions of the Legislature and approved in a state referendum. After signing the RHA, Cuomo said, "But we're not done yet. I propose we amend the New York State Constitution to enshrine *Roe v. Wade* into law for all future generations and settle this issue once and for all."

*SIGNED INTO LAW: The Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act*, which makes contraceptives more easily available. \*

*SIGNED INTO LAW: The Boss Bill*, which prohibits employers from refusing contraceptive coverage in health plans based of their religious convictions.

\*See the January "Notes for Change" for detailed descriptions of these laws.

**"LET NEW YORK VOTE" LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY**

Peggy Sherman, IINYS Board Member

On January 24, Governor Cuomo signed these significant voting and election reforms into law:

- Early voting will be available, starting in November 2019, for 9 days before Election Day.
- New Yorkers will vote on one consolidated primary date, instead of two -- less confusing and less expensive, too.
- Teenagers who are 16 or 17 years old will be able to pre-register so that they are automatically registered to vote when they turn 18.
- When New Yorkers move within the state and fill out a change of address form with the Postal Service, their voter registration will be transferred to their new location.
- Limited liability corporations (LLCs) will be subject to the same contribution limits as corporations under the Election Law.

Two proposed constitutional amendments passed in January must be passed again in two years by the next elected Legislature and then approved by state-wide referendum:

- Allow for voter registration on the same day as an election

- Allow for no-excuse absentee ballots Reforms that are still needed:

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- Funding for early voting, so that counties can pay for start-up costs and training and education.
- Electronic poll books (S508 / A2070), easier to update and maintain than the current paper books used in New York State.
- The Voter Friendly Ballot Act (S2300 / A26782) to provide more readable, well-designed ballots.
- Automatic restoration of the right to vote for all New Yorkers who are on parole (S1931).
- Automatic voter registration, to be implemented in DMV and other state agencies.
- A deadline for changing party affiliation that is closer to the primary date.
- A small donor matching system for campaign financing.

### **OTHER LEGISLATIVE MATTERS – SUMMARY**

**PASSED: *The New York Dream Act***, which provides college financial aid for children of undocumented immigrants.

**PASSED: *GENDA***, which protects transgender and gender nonconforming persons from discrimination. Conversion therapy has been banned.

### **CLIMATE ACTION BILL NOT A SLAM DUNK**

Paula Shaw, IINYS Board Member

The turnover in the senate has breathed new life into the Climate and Community Protection Act, New York's signature, comprehensive climate bill (A3876 /Englebright and S2992/Kaminsky).

I watched the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee pass the bill out of committee on February 5, and the bill is expected to pass the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee as well. It is basically unchanged from last year's session, calling for: 100% reduction in anthropogenic GHG emissions in New York by 2050 and 50% by 2030; 40% of funds from any climate fees to be invested in communities most affected by the burning of fossil fuels; and fair labor standards guaranteeing that Green Jobs are Good Jobs.

The bill is expected to pass both houses of the legislature, but the hitch is that it could be rendered ineffective if it doesn't get into the governor's budget. So, it is important to let the governor know that our faith communities support a strong response, such as the CCPA, to our escalating climate problems.

Below is a sample letter you can use to advocate with the Governor on this issue. Copy it, modify it by adding your name and contact info, etc., then go to <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>, fill out the form, paste the letter into the message box on the bottom, and click on "submit." You can find the email addresses of your legislative representatives on the Senate and Assembly web sites.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CCPA  
(CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT)  
The Honorable Governor Andrew M. Cuomo,

I am writing to ask for your support for the Climate and Community Protection Act (A3876/Engelbright and S2922/Kaminsky).

Strong action is needed to address our escalating climate problems. In addition, because of weakening federal regulations, carbon emissions in the United States have increased in the past two years, where before they had been decreasing. This reality makes it ever more important to make significant changes in our carbon footprint and, at the same time, inspire other states to do the same.

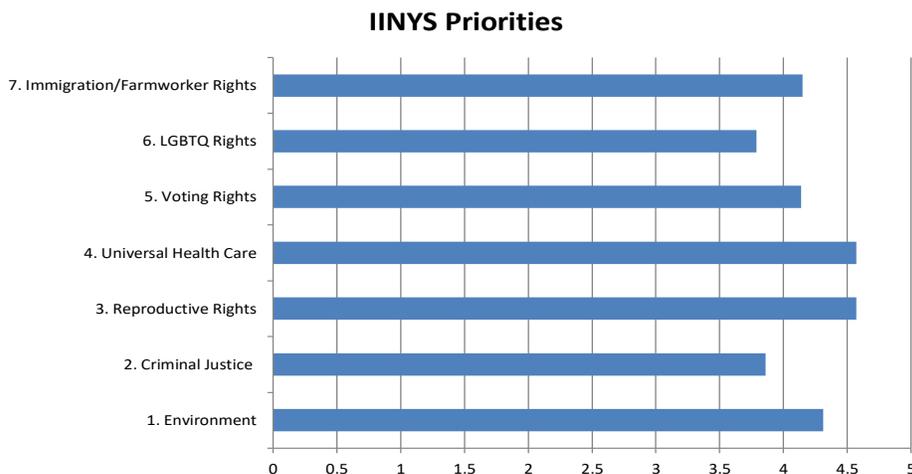
The legislature is expected to pass this bill, but we know that it will not be effective unless it is adequately funded. Please budget adequately for this bill to be enforced. Time is of the essence. It is easier to do now than it will be at any time in the future.

Thank you for your service to New York State. [Or use a closing of your choice.]

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Info]

## IINYS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: RESULTS OF OUR SURVEY MONKEY



## THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE: HOW IT HAPPENED AND HAPPENS

Editorial Comment by the Rev. Richard S. Gilbert, President, IINYS

While we catch our breath over the speed and scope of progressive legislation in Albany, it may be time for a moment of reflection. First, we ought not be dazzled by passed legislation. Implementation is the way we evaluate it. For example, the many voting reforms are likely to stall out unless they are funded by the state. Reproductive rights legislation is good, but there is the task of winning minds and hearts so that there are doctors trained in this field and clinics are available both here and in the nation at large. Also, Gov. Cuomo wants to embed *Roe v. Wade* in the state constitution – a good idea, but a heavy lift.

Getting GENDA passed was another significant GLBTQ victory, but there are still homophobes in our midst who will try to stifle it. Implementation is the way we will judge our victories; meanwhile, the new

Reproductive Health law is being challenged on the local level by attempts to create restrictions on reproductive health. There is still much work to be done.

Let's also consider the process by which this and other victories were won. The election of progressives in 2018 broke the log jam and we saw the swift passage of important bills that had been held up for decades. What we might forget is the groups, including IINYS, that have been working for years on these bills--educating people, supporting other activist groups, speaking with legislators often opposed to our agenda, keeping the moral limelight on the issues. In other words, part of the work of social justice is the patient and painstaking work of moral cultivation – creating a climate so that when opportunity arrives, we are ready.

The bills on which widespread agreement had previously been forged passed quickly during the first few weeks of the 2019-20 session. Now come bills that require more consensus building, and here we have work to do. The problems range from some representatives being unfamiliar with the bills to the presence of strong opposition from well-connected individuals who benefit from things the way they are.

All this is what has been called “the hum drum work of democracy.” In religious terms this is the prophetic imperative patiently at work in the world.

### **LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR AND INTERFAITH IMPACT DATES TO NOTE**

Legislative Session and ends June 19 - <https://nyassembly.gov/leg/calendar/>

**February 19 (Tuesday):** New York-New Hope Budget Principles, Teach-in & Press Conference, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, 624 N Broadway, hosted by the NY Council of Churches with the Fiscal Policy Institute. Endorsed by IINYS. For other New Hope Budget events, go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/2255159951476981/>

**February 21:** New York-New Hope Budget Principles, Teach-in & Press Conference. Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, 597 East Avenue, Rochester, NY. (See above)

**February 27 (Wednesday):** Criminal Justice Reform Lobby Day. IINYS supports this. For more information, see <https://justleadershipusa.org/event/freenewyork-advocacy-day-in-albany/>

**March 12 (Tuesday):** Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts Advocacy Day

**March 17 (Sunday): Rochester Chapter IINYS Annual Legislative Briefing: “God’s Own Junkyard: Environmental Stewardship” – Asbury First United Methodist Church**

**April 1 (Monday):** Budget Approval Deadline

**May 6 (Monday): Advocacy Day for Interfaith Impact of New York State**

**QUOTE TO NOTE:** “Each of us is responsible for everything to everyone else.” Fyodor Dostoevsky in *The Brother Karamazov*, Dr. Zossima

### **WE INVITE YOU TO**

- Become a member of IINYS and support it financially. To support either our 501C4 action arm, **IINYS, Inc.** or our tax deductible 501C3, **IINYS Foundation, Inc.**, go to <http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org/Donations.html>.
- 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**

**Interfaith Impact of NYS. P.O. Box 7163 Capitol Building, Albany, NY 12224**  
**518-463-5652; <http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org/> <https://iinys.nationbuilder.com/>**

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

**NOTES FOR CHANGE** newsletter is published the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Action Alerts, Background Papers and Webinars will be announced. We thank the New York State Convention of Universalists for their support.

**PREVIEW OF THE MARCH ISSUE OF NOTES FOR CHANGE:** Criminal Justice and the Budget as a Moral Document.