

# *“Preach Good News to the Poor”*

*Isaiah, 61:1*



## *A LI Jobs with Justice Toolkit To Help Faith Leaders Be A Prophetic Voice for Economic Justice*

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

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## INTRODUCTION



*"The church must be reminded that it is ... the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state."* Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"None of us can say, 'I have nothing to do with this, they govern.' No, no, I am responsible for their governance, and I have to do the best so that they govern well .... Politics... is one of the highest forms of charity."* Pope Francis

*"If not me, who; if not now, when?"* Rabbi Hillel the Elder

Do these words of Dr. King, Pope Francis and Rabbi Hillel challenge you? Do they raise more questions than answers?

- Haven't we been taught that "mixing religion and politics" is bad manners?
- Isn't our Constitution clear that church and state are separate?
- Don't most Long Islanders see faith as a private, personal matter?

What faith leader has not been torn between consoling the congregation and confronting social evil? Long Island is rife with income inequality, racial segregation, worker exploitation, pockets of poverty and other economic injustices.

We at Long Island Jobs with Justice understand the challenges faith leaders face addressing injustice. This is why we offered a Sojourners' workshop, "How to Preach about Social Justice ... And Hold on to Your Congregation," at our March, 2015 conference. This is also why we provided follow-up workshops in May, 2015 as well as this toolkit, "Preach Good News to the Poor."

If you are a faith leader struggling with theologian Karl Barth's call to live our faith with "the Bible in one hand, and the newspaper in the other," this toolkit has ideas, practical tips and resources to help you and your congregation be a prophetic witness in the public square. The **toolkit is divided into three parts:**

- (I) **PRAY** (interfaith Scriptural quotes as well as prayers for economic justice);
- (II) **STUDY** (analyses of two issues currently before the New York State Legislature – a raise in the minimum wage and the NYS DREAM Act for undocumented students who came to the US as young children);
- (III) **ACT** (tips and resources on how to preach and advocate for economic justice as a faith community).

The Long Island Jobs with Justice staff is available with ideas, resources and support ([www.longislandjwj.org](http://www.longislandjwj.org)) as you and your congregation take on this difficult but essential challenge of being a "conscience of the state." *If not you, who?*

# *Part I* **PRAY**



200 faith leaders and others attending LI Jobs with Justice "Pilgrimage for Immigration Reform," October 2013





## Justice for Immigrants, Workers and Poor People In Jewish, Christian and Muslim Scripture

### Hebrew Bible

#### Isaiah 61: 1-2

The spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given to me, for Yahweh has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to the captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favor from Yahweh.

#### Exodus 23: 9

You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt.

#### Leviticus 19: 32-34

If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

#### Psalms 103: 6

Yahweh, who does what is right, is always on the side of the oppressed.

#### Ecclesiasticus 4: 8-9

To the poor man lend an ear, and return his greeting courteously. Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, and do not be mean-spirited in your judgments.

#### Deuteronomy 24:14–15,

Don't withhold wages of poor and needy laborers, including those of "aliens."

#### Jeremiah 22:13

Woe to him who makes neighbors work for nothing and does not give them their wages.

#### Isaiah 10: 1-2

Woe to the legislators of infamous laws, to those who issue tyrannical decrees, who refuse justice to the unfortunate

#### Micah 6: 8

This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.

### Christian Testament

#### Matthew 25: 35-40

For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me. . . I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.

#### Mark 12: 30-31

This is the first [commandment]...you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

**Luke 4: 18-19**

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.

**Galatians 3: 28**

. . . there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

**John 4: 19-21**

Anyone who says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, is a liar.

**The Qur'an**

*The verse numbers given in the references below sometimes vary slightly in different editions and translations of the Quran. However, they are rarely off by more than five verses in either direction.*

**Verse 107**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful Hast thou observed him who beliesth (makes a lie of) religion? This is he who repelleth the orphan, And urgeth not the feeding of the needy. Ah, woe unto worshippers Who are heedless of their prayer; Who would be seen (at worship) Yet refuse small kindnesses.

**Verse 55:9**

But those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which has been given to them, but prefer (the refugees) above themselves though poverty become their lot. And who is saved from his own avarice—such are they who are successful.

**Verse 16:41**

And those who became (refugees) for the cause of God after they had been oppressed. We verily shall give them goodly lodging in the world, and surely the reward of the hereafter is greater, if they but knew.

**Verse 24:22**

And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and to the needy, and to refugees for the cause of God. Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that God forgive you? God is Forgiving, Merciful.

**Verse 16:41**

And those who became (refugees) for the cause of God after they had been oppressed. We verily shall give them goodly lodging in the world, and surely the reward of the hereafter is greater, if they but knew.

**Verse 4:135**

Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for God, even though it be against (the worldly interests) of yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man.

**Verse 5:8**

Be steadfast witnesses for God in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to God. Lo! God is Informed of what ye do.

SOURCE: Interfaith Worker Justice, *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith* (Resource H: *Immigrants in the Jewish, Muslim and Christian Texts*, Pp. 70---71)



## Interfaith Prayers for Immigrants

### Remember the Immigrant

*A Prayer for Call-and-Response by Interfaith Worker Justice*

**Leader:** We ask God to open our eyes to the struggles of immigrant workers, for we know that...

**All:** We must not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether the worker is a resident or immigrant living in our town. We must pay the worker the wages promptly because the worker is poor and counting on it. (Deuteronomy 24:14) **Leader:** God's desire is that those who build houses may live in them.

**All:** And that those who plant may eat. (Isaiah 65:22)

**Leader:** And yet we know this is not possible for many in our midst.

**All:** We know of: farm workers who cannot feed their families; construction workers who have no homes; nursing home workers who have no health care; restaurant workers who could not afford a meal in the restaurant. **Leader:** We know that too many immigrant workers among us are not receiving the fruits of their labor, nor the justice required by the courts.

**Leader:** But our laws do not adequately protect immigrants. Our legal and social

service programs exclude many immigrants. Our education programs undervalue immigrant children.

**All:** God tells us that the community is to have the same rules for citizens and for immigrants living among us. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Citizens and immigrants shall be the same before the Lord. (Numbers 15:15)

**Leader:** When an immigrant lives in our land.

**All:** We will not mistreat him or her. We will treat an immigrant as one of our native born. We will love an immigrant as ourselves, for God's people were once immigrants in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33--34)

**Leader:** To those who employ immigrant workers, we lift up God's command:

**All:** Do not oppress an immigrant. God's people know how it feels to be immigrants because they were immigrants in Egypt. (Exodus 23: 9)

**Leader:** To those who craft our immigration laws and policies, we lift up God's command:

**All:** Do not deprive the immigrant or the orphan of justice. Remember that God's people were slaves in Egypt and the Lord our God redeemed them from there.



## Prayers for Worker Justice

### Opening Prayer:

Worker God, whose hands built the earth, molded our bodies, and sowed the stars across the sky, we gather in your presence with praise and thanksgiving for your mighty deeds. Meet us here, Worker God; strengthen our hearts and our hands to work with you in the building of a world filled with justice and peace.

### Petitions:

**Reader:** For all those who work:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For those who are unemployed or underemployed, or have lost their jobs because of changing economic conditions, let us pray:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For those who work in hazardous conditions without sufficient protection, let us pray:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For Long Island farmworkers and immigrant workers who are not protected by fair labor laws, let us pray:

**All:** Lord give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For all low-wage workers on Long Island who labor long hours at or below the minimum wage, without health insurance and other benefits, let us pray:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For all employers that they may seek to provide a just work environment:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For those who face discrimination, harassment, or abuse in the work place, let us pray:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

**Reader:** For those who must balance job commitments with the needs of their family, let us pray:

**All:** Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

## Concluding Prayer:

Spirit of Love and Life, on this Labor Day weekend, we ask your special blessing on all people who labor, either to provide a living for themselves and their families or as volunteers enhancing the life of their community. Today we honor and acknowledge the work of all people, in the U.S. and around the world. We especially pray for your blessings on workers who labor at low wages. We celebrate their hard work and mourn the ways that workers' worth and dignity are devalued. We lament that laborers work hard and yet still go hungry. Creator God, help us to build a new world where all workers are uplifted, a world where those who clean houses can afford housing, a world where those who grow food can also feed their families. Fill us with courage and strength to walk with love in the workplace and the marketplace. Amen.

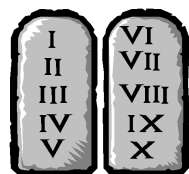
*\*Sources: adapted from New York State Labor Religion Coalition and Interfaith Worker Justice "Labor in the Pulpits"*



Sr. Simone Campbell, Executive Director of Network Social Justice Lobby, founder of the "Nuns on the Bus" movement and keynote speaker at the 2013 Long Island Jobs with Justice Conference

# *Part II*

## *Study*





# SOME COMMON FEARS AND FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS IN U.S. HISTORY ... AND TODAY

Prepared by Richard Koubek, PhD,  
Community Outreach Coordinator, LI Jobs with Justice  
May 2015

| •IMMIGRATION REFORM MYTHS VS. FACTS•   |  |
|--|--|
| MYTH   | FACT   |
|  |    |
| UNDOCUMENTED<br>IMMIGRANTS<br>DON'T PAY TAXES.                                     | UNDOCUMENTED<br>IMMIGRANTS PAID<br><b><u>\$10.6 BILLION</u></b><br>IN TAXES IN 2010. |

## Fear # 1: Don't Immigrants Take Our Jobs?

### Immigrant Facts:

- **Historically, immigrants come to the U.S. when the economy is doing well and do not to come during recessions and depressions.**
  - For example, during the recession of the 1850s, immigration fell from 400,000 a year to about 150,000. During the depression of the 1870s, it again fell from about 450,000 to 100,000. When that depression ended, immigration rose to 800,000 by 1880.
- **Immigrants historically have taken unskilled jobs Americans don't want.**
  - Historically, **immigrants have taken low-wage jobs**, thus allowing native-born workers, in the words of one researcher writing in 1912, to become an "aristocracy of labor."
  - In short, **immigrants have done the work that native-born people would rather not do** (e.g., canal and railroad construction in the 1800s, landscaping and agricultural harvesting



today) thereby creating opportunities for the native-born workers to become supervisors or to take “higher-level jobs.”

- **Today, the U.S. has a serious shortage of unskilled workers.**
  - According to the Department of Labor (2004), **there will be a shortage of two million unskilled workers by 2010** and the number of native-born unskilled workers is steadily shrinking due to low birth rates and higher levels of education.
  - The Long Island Immigrant Alliance reported in 2006 that **work visas are issued to only 5,000 unskilled workers a year while the economy creates 500,000 unskilled jobs per year.** Many of these jobs are not desired by native-born workers and are filled by undocumented immigrants who enter the country without visas.

## Fear #2: Don't Immigrants Lower Wages?

### Immigrant Facts:

- **Initially, immigrants can have a small impact on wages.**
  - There are **economic pockets, especially in the cities and African-American communities, where immigrant labor has lowered wages** for some unskilled, native-born people.
  - But, the 2005 *Economic Report of the President* found that **unskilled immigrants generally do not compete with native workers** and that a 10 percent increase in immigrant workers lowered the wages of native workers by only 1 percent.
- **But they tend to increase wages in the long run.**
  - A 2006 study by three economists found that the effect of illegal immigrants was zero because these **lower-wage workers allow native-born Americans to expand their businesses or work hours** by hiring more employees, taking on new contracts or having more time to increase their income. States with higher numbers of illegal immigrants actually had higher median wages for high school dropouts. (*New York Times*, April 16, 2006)
  - And, **immigrants - particularly legal immigrants - generally do as well financially, if not better than native Americans.** For example, a 1998 Urban Institute study concluded that legal immigrants, after living 15 years in New York, actually earn more money (\$18,700/yr.) than natives (\$18,100/yr.)

## Fear #3: Won't Immigrants Cost Taxpayers More Money?

### Immigrant Facts:

- **Immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in government services.**
  - **Immigrants do add to the cost of some government services.** For example, a 1997 National Academy of Sciences study found that in New Jersey a native-born family pays an average \$232 a year in state and local taxes to cover the net costs of services used by immigrants; this figure is \$1,178 in California.
  - **However, current federal welfare laws prohibit legal immigrants from accessing most welfare services for five years.** Undocumented immigrants can never receive welfare.

- Meanwhile, the National Academy of Sciences study found that **immigrants have added billions of dollars a year to the American economy**. While there may be an initial cost for immigrants - especially in public education - immigrants more than make up for these costs in the productivity they add to the economy.
  - As for taxes, by one estimate, **immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay about \$90 billion in taxes and use only \$5 billion in public benefits**.
  - **The approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants alone pay \$7 billion a year in taxes** including sales taxes or the portion of their rent that goes to local property taxes.
- **And, both documented and undocumented immigrants make major contributions to the economy.**
- Because current immigration laws favor educated and skilled people, a 2008 Adelphi University study found **high levels of education among many Long Island immigrants, with more than 13% over the age of 25 having a graduate degree (compared with 15.6% of the total population,) and 32.3% of them with at least a bachelor's degree (compared with 35% of the total population.)**
  - The Adelphi University study also found that **Long Island immigrants contributed \$10.6 billion in purchasing power to the local economy in 2006, generated 82,00 LI jobs and paid \$2,305 more in local taxes than they received in government services such as education and health care.**
  - In addition, a 2005 study by the Social Security Administration found that **legal immigrants will contribute \$611 billion to Social Security over the next 75 years while undocumented immigrants contribute \$20 billion to Social Security each year**, a net gain for the system because undocumented immigrants can not collect Social Security.
  - Finally, the 1998 Urban Institute study found that **immigrants pay as much in taxes as natives**; New York State's legal immigrants who constitute 15.4% of the population paid 15.2% of the State's tax burden - \$17.8 billion a year in local, state and Federal taxes.

### Fear #4: Can We Assimilate So Many "Different" Immigrants?

#### Immigrant Facts:

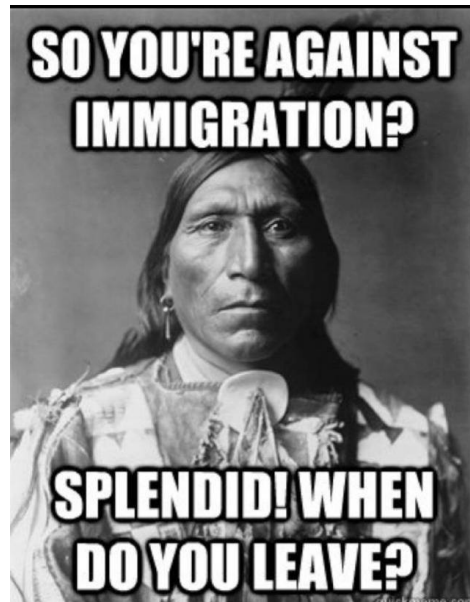
- **Immigrants have been both welcomed and feared throughout U.S. history.**
- **Belief that the U.S. can't assimilate immigrants is an old, unfounded fear.** On March 16, 1898, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts said in the U.S. Senate that immigration should be restricted because the new immigrants, "Italians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks, and Asiatics" were people that "English-speaking people have never hitherto assimilated, and who are most alien to the great body of the people of the United States." **All these groups are today fully assimilated.**
  - Until 1924, the U.S. had virtually open borders with few restrictions placed on incoming immigrants. Thus, national immigration policy encouraged immigrants to "flood" into the U.S. as a much needed workforce. When people today ask, "Why can't immigrants enter this country legally like my ancestors did?" the answer is quite simple: most of our immigrant ancestors faced few, if any legal restrictions on their ability to enter the United States.
  - **Unfounded fears about our nation's ability to assimilate "different cultures" did lead the U.S. to change its immigration policy from what had been a virtual open door to**

**strict quotas adopted in 1924** that severely restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America until 1965. Prior to 1924, Chinese and Japanese were restricted between the 1880s and 1905, criminals, people with mental illness and communicable diseases or those who could become a burden on the community and, after 1917, people illiterate in their own language, had been restricted.

- Today, the U.S. is not being flooded by hoards of illegal immigrants; **two thirds to three fourths of immigrants enter the country legally. Immigrants represent only 12% (33 million people) of the U.S. population today** compared with about 15% in 1920.

➤ **But historically, large numbers of immigrants from many different cultures have successfully been assimilated into American life.**

- Numerous studies have shown that the **children of today's immigrants generally speak English** (as did the children of earlier immigrant families) and are rapidly adapting to American cultural norms. In fact, the Urban Institute study found that the children of immigrants grow up to earn just as much as the children of native-born Americans.
- A 2004 study by the Mumford Center at the State University of New York in Albany found that **72% of third generation Hispanic immigrants speak English exclusively.**
- **One third of immigrants are naturalized citizens**, a major step toward assimilation. So many immigrants are applying for citizenship that the process is backlogged for years.





## **What is the New York DREAM Act?**

The New York DREAM Act would allow undocumented students who meet in-state tuition requirements to access state financial aid (TAP) for higher education. It would also open 529 tuition savings accounts to all New York youth.

### **Why is it important?**

An estimated 146,000 youth in New York who have been educated in New York public schools are currently ineligible to receive financial aid under federal and state law. Of the more than 4,500 undocumented students who graduate from New York high schools every year, only 5-10% pursue a college degree due to tremendous financial obstacles. Although many have attended New York schools from kindergarten through 12th grades, they are left in limbo after graduating high school, ineligible to receive federal tuition assistance, grants or loans. New York, as a state with one of the largest immigrant populations in the U.S, must do what Washington D.C. has failed to do and equip these students with the tools that will help them succeed in their higher education pursuits. Over a decade ago, New York showed leadership by allowing all students who graduate from a high school in New York to pay in-state tuition rates at CUNY and SUNY. The New York DREAM Act would be the next step, extending state financial aid to all students who meet the requirements for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). California, Texas, and New Mexico have passed state-level DREAM Acts allowing undocumented students to access state funded financial aid, and New York should join them in passing legislation that is good for our community, good for our youth, and good for our economy.

### **Those who benefit from the bill must meet the following requirements:**

- Attended a NY high school for at least 2 years and graduated, or obtained a NY GED
- Enroll in a college or university in the state of New York within 5 years of graduating
- Meet Higher Education Services Corporation's requirements for TAP
  - Be enrolled as a full time student taking 12 or more credits per semester
  - Declare a major by the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a 2-year program or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 4-year program
  - Maintain a C average

- Be charged at least \$200 tuition per year
- Meet income eligibility requirements
- Has good moral character (no criminal background)

## **The New York State DREAM Legislation**

### *A strong return on investment*

*SOURCE: Fiscal Policy Institute*

*New York State DREAM Legislation proposes to open the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to all students who meet the funding criteria, irrespective of their immigration status. In 2012, the Fiscal Policy Institute provided a preliminary analysis of the costs and benefits. This brief looks in greater detail at the proposal's impacts on the New York State economy and fiscal situation.*

**The legislation would be a fiscally and economically sound investment for New York State.**

- **The New York State DREAM Legislation would cost about \$17 million a year.** A Fiscal Policy Institute analysis concludes that extending aid to undocumented immigrant students would increase the annual cost of the state's Tuition Assistance Program by approximately \$17 million, which represents two percent of current expenditures for TAP.<sup>1</sup>
- **Higher education provides a very strong return on investment.** For a 4-year college student, the maximum cost of TAP is a one-time investment of \$20,000 (four years at \$5,000). Compared to a high school graduate, the college grad can then be expected typically to earn an additional \$25,000/year in New York State, spending money in the local economy, and paying about \$3,900 more per year in state and local taxes. For a 2-year graduate, the cost of TAP is a one-time \$8,000 investment (2 years at \$4,000), the boost in median earnings is \$10,000/year, and the added state and local taxes are about \$1,000/ year. The economic benefits of an education are clear, even if for undocumented immigrants they may be less than these overall levels.
- **These college graduates will work in the New York economy.** Comprehensive immigration reform also seems like a real possibility this year, but even without it Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – the policy instituted in 2012 by the Obama Administration – means that many formerly undocumented immigrants of college age will be eligible to live and work in the United States for renewable 2-year periods. In addition, some number may also have other pathways to a lawful immigration status. With or without work authorization, however, it is also clear that undocumented immigrants work: the labor force participation rate for undocumented immigrants is as high as it is for U.S.-born citizens; there are currently about 450,000 undocumented immigrants working in New York State. Undocumented immigrants are likely to be working one way or the other; the question is whether they will go on the job market with a college degree.<sup>3</sup>
- **Future costs to the state budget should not be higher than \$17 million, and may well be lower.** The number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, including the number of undocumented children, reached a peak around 2007 and has declined since then. It is possible that access to TAP funds would increase the percentage of undocumented students in college. At the same time, with few new arrivals and far fewer undocumented children in the younger

age brackets than at high school or college age, the number of young people eligible for tuition aid because of the New York State DREAM legislation is not expected to substantially increase.<sup>4</sup>

- **Even under current budget constraints, this expense is manageable.** If the \$17 million annual cost for the New York State DREAM legislation were financed through the state income tax, it would represent 87¢ *per year* – less than the price of a single donut – of what is owed by a typical (median) taxpayer with an adjusted gross income of \$45,000-\$50,000. It would represent a cost of \$4.92 for a taxpayer with an adjusted gross income of \$150,000-\$200,000, and 26¢ for those at the \$20,000-\$25,000 level.



Call your State Senator **TODAY** and tell him that you support the New York state **DREAM Act**. To find the name of your senator or his contact information go to [www.nysenate.gov](http://www.nysenate.gov) “Find My Senator”

#### Notes and sources

1. The Fiscal Policy calculations estimating the cost to the state are found in “The New York State DREAM Act: A Preliminary estimate of costs and benefits,” (New York: Fiscal Policy Institute), March 9, 2012. Two other estimates were cited in a recent Associated Press news story (“Dream Act would provide aid to illegal immigrants,” *Utica Observer Dispatch*, January 21, 2013). Senator Jeffrey Klein’s “proposal would provide \$19.5 million a year for the state financial aid,” and “Senate Republicans a year ago estimated the cost at as much as \$30 million.” This range represents an expansion of TAP by two to three percent.

2. Fiscal Policy Institute, March 9, 2012. For tax revenues: It is difficult to predict what the conditions will be facing undocumented college students when they graduate. People granted deferred action can pay taxes using their own Social Security number. Even if others remain undocumented, it is important to note that most of the state and local taxes paid by residents are paid by all residents, irrespective of their legal status. For all but the highest-earning New Yorkers, the majority of taxes are sales, excise, and property taxes—which undocumented immigrants also pay. Of the 12 percent of income paid in state and local taxes by the middle quintile of families, for example, property taxes represent 3.9 percent of income, and sales and excise taxes 4.7 percent. This middle quintile of families pays 3.4 percent their income in state income taxes; about half of undocumented immigrants are estimated to pay state income tax (using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers, or ITINs, in place of Social Security numbers).

3. Estimate of undocumented labor force participation rate from an unpublished analysis by Jeffrey Passel, senior demographer, Pew Hispanic Center. Estimate of undocumented immigrants in the New York State labor force from Jeffrey Passel and D’Vera Cohn, “Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), Table A4.

4. Overall undocumented population has declined since 2007: Jeffrey Passel and D’Vera Cohn, “Unauthorized Immigrants: 11.1 Million in 2011,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center), December 6, 2012. Fewer undocumented children in younger age brackets: Passel and Cohn, “A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center), April 14, 2009, figure 7.

## Myths and Facts about the New York DREAM Act (A.2597 / S.2378)

**Myth 1:** *The Bill would provide an incentive for people to come here illegally.*

**Fact:** The New York DREAM Act offers no reason for people to enter the country illegally. It does not legalize students -- only federal reform can do that. The NY DREAM Act also does not provide benefits for immigrants who are not already here. It requires students to graduate from a New York high school or obtain a GED in New York to qualify for state financial aid.

**Myth 2:** *It will be a fiscal burden and increase the strain on state educational systems.*

**Fact:** The New York DREAM Act would make money for taxpayers. State and local taxpayers are already investing in the education of undocumented students in elementary and

secondary school. Continuing to invest in NY youth, so that they can attend college, will bring a strong return on investment by allowing youth to develop their careers. The annual cost of the NY DREAM Act is less than 2 percent of the current TAP budget. Workers in New York with a college education pay \$3,900 more in state and local taxes every year compared to workers with a high-school diploma.

**Myth 3: *This bill is funded by US citizens' tax payments and benefits only undocumented youth.***

**Fact:** Undocumented immigrants pay payroll taxes, income taxes, and property taxes (directly, or through their landlords), just like U.S. citizens. The Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that undocumented immigrants paid \$662.4 million in taxes to NY State in 2010.

**Myth 4: *Documented New Yorkers will lose spots in college.***

**Fact:** The small number of students who will be impacted by the New York DREAM Act is not significant enough to affect the opportunities of others. The colleges and universities in the 12 states that allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition have not experienced a large influx of undocumented youth that have taken seats away from U.S. citizen students. Further, TAP is an entitlement program, which means that all youth who qualify and apply are able to obtain financial aid. Extending this program to undocumented students does not affect other students' access to TAP or to higher education.

**Myth 5: *The NY DREAM Act is a form of amnesty.***

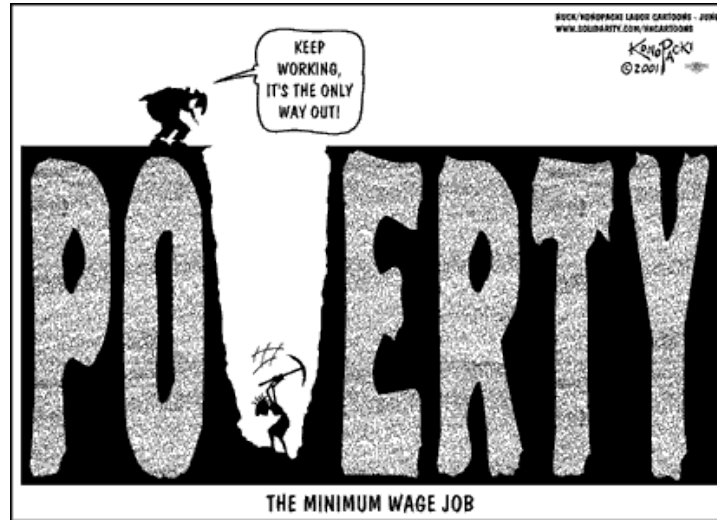
**Fact:** The New York DREAM Act does not provide amnesty or change immigration law. The focus of the bill is to expand access to higher education for undocumented students who live in New York and have graduated from a New York high school. These students are here to stay and we should provide them with the tools to succeed fully and contribute to the State's economy.

**Myth 6: *The federal government will fix our immigration problems. We do not need to act.***

**Fact:** Current proposals for federal immigration reform would not grant financial aid to undocumented students. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has already granted work authorization to many undocumented youth in New York State. Assisting undocumented students to obtain a college education allows the State to immediately capitalize on professional skills and higher tax payments as soon as immigrant youth obtain work authorization through DACA or any future federal legalization.

*SOURCE: New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC)*





## Facts about New York State's Minimum Wage

According to the federal government, a family of four is poor in 2015 if they earn \$24,250 a year. According to a report by the Welfare to Work Commission of the Suffolk County Legislature, a Long Island family of four is poor if they earn 200% of the Federal Poverty level or \$48,500 a year because of our very high cost-of-living.

**A family earning the current minimum wage of \$8.75 earns ONLY \$18,200 a year or \$6,000 less than the Federal Poverty Level.** A typical two-bedroom apartment on Long Island rents for \$1,682 a month or \$20,184 a year – that's \$1,284 more than a minimum wage worker earns.

This is why the current minimum wage is a ticket to hunger and homelessness. Raising the New York State minimum wage will directly benefit **140,000 Long Islanders** who right now work for less than \$9.00/hour.

Long Island Jobs with Justice is proud to join labor, faith and community groups all across New York State in calling for an **increase in the New York State Minimum Wage, with future increases tied to inflation.**

### WHY SUPPORT A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE?

- Because 78% of New Yorkers support increasing the minimum wage
- Because increasing the minimum wage boosts the economy and \$1.00 in wage increase for a minimum wage worker results in over \$3,200 in new consumer spending by his or her household over the following year, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.
- Increasing wages reduces costly employee turnover and increases productivity. When the minimum wage goes up, employers can enjoy these benefits of paying higher wages without being placed at a competitive disadvantage, since all companies in their field are required to do the same.

## CALLS FOR MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ARE WIDESPREAD

President Obama has called for the federal minimum wage to be increased to from the current \$7.25 to **\$10.10/hour**. Many pundits don't think Congress will enact this increase.

Governor Andrew Cuomo has called for an increase in New York's **minimum wage to \$10.50/hour while indexing it to inflation** which means, each year, the minimum wage will rise with the cost of living by about 3%.

Low-wage workers are calling for an increase in the **minimum wage to \$15/hour** so that they can meet basic life necessities.



# Myths and Facts about Poverty on Long Island

## Myth: Poverty is Rare on Long Island

**Fact: 10% of Long Islanders Seek Help at Food Pantries; 20% Are Poor**

In 2010, Island Harvest and Long Island Cares released the Long Island section of a national study, *Hunger in America 2010*. The study reported that 283,700 (one in 10) Long Islanders sought help at a food pantry or soup kitchen in one year, a 21% increase since the last hunger study was released in 2006. About 64,900 different clients receive emergency food assistance in any given week. **Almost half live in households with one working person.** Other data and studies – including the US Census - reveal that poverty on Long Island is more widespread than commonly believed.

## WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE ON LI?

- 39% are under 18 years old (110,643 children.)
- 74% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale; 37% have very low food security.
- One study showed that food pantries did not prevent hunger:
  - 34% of clients had times when they were hungry but could not eat;
  - 33% skipped a meal or cut the size of their meals;
  - 42% of the children did not eat enough and 12% skipped meals.

## MANY CLIENTS HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES

- 47% had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities/heat.
- 49% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage.
- 36% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.

## MANY LI CLIENTS ARE IN POOR HEALTH

- 30% of households had at least one household member in poor health.

## POVERTY ON LONG ISLAND IS WIDESPREAD

- While the federal government defines poverty for a family of four in 2015 as an income of \$24,250, research has shown that **the “true poverty level” for Long Island, due to our high cost of living, is 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or \$48,500 a year.**
- Other studies have shown that a LI family of four requires *at least* \$75,000 a year to make ends meet (pay for basic necessities.)
- Using the federal government's “official” definition, only about 6% of LI families are “poor” compared with a US poverty level of about 15%.
- But almost 20% of Long Island families are poor, using the \$47,700 “true poverty level” definition.
- In 2014, for the first time, working-age people made up a majority of Food Stamp recipients rather than children and the elderly, according to a study by the University of Kentucky.

(Read the complete LI hunger study at [www.islandharvest.org](http://www.islandharvest.org) or [www.licares.org](http://www.licares.org). Sources for the LI poverty data: US Census, American Fact Finder, 2010; *The Self Sufficiency Standard for New York*, 2010; *Struggling in Suburbia: Meeting the*

**Myth: Most Poor People on LI Are Minorities Who Don't Want To Work**  
**Fact: Poverty on LI Affects Working People of All Races in Most Communities**

Perhaps the most common American stereotype about poor people is that they are “lazy,” uneducated and are primarily people of color who live in segregated slums. In a place like Long Island, with one of the nation’s best school systems, with a median-family income of \$94,000, twice the national median, how could anyone be poor? On close examination, however, it turns out that **the real myth is that most Long Islanders are wealthy and that the poor are confined to minority communities where people don’t want to work.**

The U.S. Census reported in 2011 that between 2000-2010, the number of people living at the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) increased by 66.2% in the suburbs compared with an increase of 46.8% cities. Using the FPL definition of poverty (\$23,050 for a family of four in 2011) in Nassau and Suffolk, 161,000 people were “officially” poor.

**Who are the “officially poor” on Long Island? In Suffolk, for example:**

- 8% (5,731 people) of working-aged adults in poverty worked full or part time, year round
- 36% (19,424 people) of poor adults age 25 or older have a high school diploma; 37% (19,942 people) have some college or an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree
- 27% (4,161 families) are married couples with children
- 16% (2,418 families) of poor families receive public assistance or Supplementary Security Income or SSI (Social Security benefits for needy people who are aged, blind or disabled)
- 71% (63,994 people) in poverty are white; 12% (11,030 people) are black; 28% (25,255 people) are Hispanic
- The average salary for the 25 most-in-demand jobs in Suffolk in 2000 was only \$11.69 an hour (\$15.20 today adjusted for inflation) or only about \$30,000 a year. U.S. salaries have been generally flat since 2000.

**Low wages and the lack of affordable housing make life even tougher for many working Long Islanders:**

- Long Islanders leaving welfare for work earn, on average, only about \$11.00 an hour, which is below to the federal poverty level for a family of four.
- 40% of LI homeowners and 47% of renters are spending more than 35% of their income on housing. Many, especially renters, are spending 50% of their income on housing. (Note: 35% is the standard of family income that should be spent on housing costs)

These data challenge a number of stereotypes about poor people. The vast **majority are white** rather than people of color. Only 16% of “officially-poor” families receive public assistance or SSI. **Almost 36% had a high school diploma and another 37% had some college education or a college degree.** And a significant number of families are married couples with children. The data confirm poverty’s heavy toll on certain populations. The percentage of whites who are poor is just 4% compared with almost three times that number of African Americans (12%) and seven times that number of Hispanics (28%). The data also **reveal low-wage levels for many Long Islanders**

and a shortage of affordable housing which lead to family budget stresses such as a high portion of income going for housing costs, leaving too little for other expenses such as food or child care.

### Myth: The FPL of \$24,250 is the “Actual” Poverty Level for LI

(Sources: US Census, American Fact Finder, 2010; *The Self Sufficiency Standard for New York*, 2010; *Struggling in Suburbia: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty in Suffolk County*, Welfare to Work Commission of the Suffolk County Legislature, December 2012

#### WHAT DOES A FAMILY OF FOUR (2 ADULTS, 1 PRE-SCHOOL AND 1 ELEMENTARY-AGE CHILD) NEED TO GET BY ON LI?

WHAT IS MISSING IN THIS BUDGET SUCH AS ENTERTAINMENT, VACATIONS, COMPUTER SERVICE?

WHAT IF THEY HAD TO PAY UTILITIES (\$200) HEALTH INSURANCE (\$509) OR CHILD CARE (\$712) A MONTH?

| Budget Item   | Monthly Expenditure   |
|---|---|
| Food (standard 14% of budget)                               | \$565.00  |
| Fair Market Rental for 2 bedroom apartment (with utilities) | \$1,718.00  |
| Telephone   | \$70.00   |
| Auto maintenance: gas, insurance, repairs, loan             | \$362.00  |
| Clothes   | \$172.00  |
| Miscellaneous: household, personal hygiene, bedding, etc.   | \$245.00  |
| Federal/state taxes   | \$910.00  |
| <b>Monthly Total</b>  | <b>\$ 4,042</b>   |
| <b>Annual Total</b>   | <b>\$48,504</b>   |
|   | <b>Twice the “official” Federal Poverty Level (FPL) of \$24,250</b> |

### Myth: \$48,500 is Enough to Make End Meet on Long Island

#### Fact: \$75,000 is Long Island’s Base Income

Long Island Association Chief Economist Pearl Kamer testified that for a family of four, an annual income of \$75,000 was needed to cover basic necessities on Long Island. Dr. Kamer reported, 409,063 Long Island households (1.2 million people) had incomes below \$75,000. Here is Dr. Kamer’s base family budget:

#### Basic Monthly Budget for a Family of Four in Nassau-Suffolk, 2012

| Item  | Cost   |
|---|--|
| Housing   | \$1,529  |
| Food  | 643  |
| Child Care  | 1,372  |
| Transportation  | 447  |
| Health Care   | 547  |
| Other Necessities   | 522  |
| Taxes   | 932  |
| <b>Monthly Total</b>  | <b>5,993</b>   |
| <b>Annual Total</b>   | <b>\$71,913 (adjusted for inflation to \$75,000)</b> |
| Source: <i>Struggling Suburbia: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty in Suffolk County</i> can be accessed at: <a href="http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/clerk/cmeet/wwc/2012/SWTWC-StrugglinginSuburbia121812.pdf">http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/clerk/cmeet/wwc/2012/SWTWC-StrugglinginSuburbia121812.pdf</a> |  |

# *Part III*

# *ACT*



Sr. Rosalie Carven (center), JwJ AMOS Steering Committee member, along with other faith leaders, participating in a LI Jobs with Justice immigration-reform vigil





## *How to Talk About Hard Topic without Alienating Others Needlessly*

From *Many Names for God* by The Rev. Thomas W. Goodhue, Executive Director, Long Island Council of Churches

Most of us are a bit nervous about discussing divisive issues because they are, well, divisive. What do you say when your friend tells a racist joke? What do you do when an in-law says something during Thanksgiving dinner that makes your blood boil? How can you discuss a hot-button topic without needlessly alienating your friends, neighbors, or parishioners? Here are a few things I've learned that help:

- 1) **Listen before speaking.**  
Few of us listen very long to any salesman, preacher or community organizer who wants our attention without giving it. Try to know and understand your audience and remember, as LI peace advocate Margaret Melkonian says, "You never know who is in the room." If you are a pastor, priest, or rabbi, call on your flock at home or at work (more about calling-at-work later) before plunging into controversial issues. Ask a lot of questions. Listen long and hard to those with whom you disagree. Bill Coffin often said at Riverside Church, "You should always try to listen to your opponents carefully enough that you can state their position to their satisfaction."
- 2) **Let people know you have heard them.**  
As Maya Angelou said, "people will forget what you say and will forget what you do, but they never forget how you made them **feel**." They are only going to feel good about your message if they feel you have heard them. All of us are more open to discussion if someone says, "I hear what you are saying, but I see things differently," or "I agree with you about thus and so, but I wonder if . . . "Preachers are likely to find a more receptive audience if they begin their sermon with "I know this is a divisive issue but one of you asked me. . ." or "We have many different opinions among ourselves on this issue, but this is what I am hearing from you."
- 3) **Acknowledge that you approach the topic with some fear and trepidation**  
It is far easier for people to listen carefully if you begin by admitting that it is hard for you to speak. As you work on your sermon/speech/lesson, you might ask people to keep you in prayer, since you need to tackle a difficult topic.
- 4) **Confess your own sin and screw-ups, ambivalence and confusion.**  
Rather than tell others that you think they are wrong, confess how you yourself realized that you were wrong. Try to never condemn something without first locating it in your own life. Be willing to acknowledge the messy feelings that you have. A parishioner once asked "but if someone murdered Karen, wouldn't you want to see to see him executed." "No," I replied honestly, "I'd want to kill him with my own hands. I don't think it would give me any satisfaction at all to see a needle jabbed in his arm ten years later." It never hurts, either, to admit that you are uncomfortable addressing a divisive issue.



- 5) **Use humor, particularly if you and your people are the brunt of the joke.**  
You can make many points more effectively with a funny story than you can with a shrill argument. In Hawaii, ethnic humor is common but people mostly tell jokes about their own group.
- 6) **Address concerns directly, speaking to their enlightened self-interest.**  
There is not much point in urging people not to feel what they feel but much to be gained by addressing real needs. When people express objections to affordable housing or immigration, for example, I sometimes ask, “Don’t you want someone to help you when you are sick or elderly?” and then describe the shortage of nurses and home health aides that looms before us.
- 7) **Don’t demand that others to agree with you.**  
Paul Johnson, the senior pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock notes that he has found most people far more willing to hear him out if he does not expect agreement—or act like there is something wrong with them if they disagree. Many clergy who think they are preaching prophetically are neither called by God to be prophets nor preaching particularly well: they are just preaching like jerks.
- 8) **Speak for yourself.**  
It is far more effective and less offensive to say, “My experience has been different,” rather than “You don’t know what you are talking about.”
- 10) **Keep your eyes on the prize.**  
It is easier to hear a summons to do better than it is to accept a condemnation of what you are doing now, so preach grace more than judgment and hold out hope, Focus on the goal we seek rather than the evil we deplore. Social scientists have amassed considerable evidence that saying, “We are all bigots,” or “Many people have stereotypes about x and y” tends to increase biased behavior by making it seem more socially acceptable, but telling them, “Most people try to overcome their stereotypic perceptions” or “Employers want workers who can break through social barriers” decreases biased behavior.<sup>1</sup>

Last, but not least, remember that God loves those who are wrong. God loves bigots. God even loves the likes of you and me.

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<sup>1</sup>Adam Grant and Sheryl Sandberg, “When Talking about Bias Backfires,” New York Times Dec. 7, 2014.

## *Do Charitable Organizations Have Political Power?*



Americans often say, “You can’t fight city hall.” It’s sad that one of the world’s founding democracies now has so many people who feel they don’t have enough power to influence government leaders. **Our voter turnout is among the lowest of the industrial nations:** only about 50% of us vote in presidential elections; 30% in Congressional elections; 10% in school board elections.

For nonprofit agencies – especially those that are faith based - there is an additional complication: they think that laws governing tax-exempt organizations as well as the First Amendment’s separation of church and state prevent them from getting involved in politics. Not so, as explained on **page 21** of this toolkit, **nonprofit agencies and religious congregations can take political action so long as it is not partisan (e.g., Democratic or Republican Party) activity.**

**So what power do nonprofits and faith groups have in the public square? Consider:**

- **Standing:** Direct-service providers have first-hand knowledge of the problems faced by the poor people they serve in their food pantries and outreach centers. **Their charitable experiences – and the respect that their services command – give them moral and political standing as advocates for social justice:** they know what policies will help the people they serve. And elected officials know that their charitable services are saving millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded government programs.

The testimony of parish outreach coordinators about the problems faced by low-wage workers they served was a major factor in the Suffolk County Legislature’s adoption of a Living Wage Law in 2000.

- **Numbers:** While the media often focus on the drop-off in religious attendance in our secular society, in fact, **congregations still reach an enormous audience.** For example, about 300,000 Roman Catholics (Long Island’s largest denomination) attend Mass on any given Sunday. They live and vote in the districts of elected officials and, if organized, **they can add a powerful moral voice to public-policy debates in the halls of government.**

During March of 2012, about a dozen congregations on Long Island collected almost 1,000 letters at the request of LI Jobs with Justice in support of a State increase in minimum wage – which passed. Politicians believe that each letter counts as 40 voters.

- **Education:** Through their pulpits and weekly bulletins, **congregations can educate tens of thousands of Long Islanders about poverty and how their faith calls them to do both works of charity and the politics of justice** to alleviate the suffering of poor people.

When MICAHA (Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger) was launched 2007-2008, weekly bulletin inserts on the extent of hunger and poverty on Long Island were published in almost 100 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish congregational bulletins on a weekly basis, reaching a potential readership of over 170,000 people each weekend (about 45% of *Newsday*’s weekend circulation.)



## *What Political Actions Are Congregations Legally Permitted to Do?*

Nearly every religion teaches compassion for the poor, but how can we tell the difference between advocacy on behalf of neighbors in need, which is always right, and partisan politics, which not-for-profits must avoid? How can your congregation stay out of trouble in an election year, when candidates and their supporters want you to aid their campaigns? Houses of worship (and clergy acting in their official capacity) and nonprofit (tax exempt, 501 C-3) agencies ***cannot legally support or oppose any particular party or candidate for office.*** They may support social justice, but should not:

- Endorse candidates from the pulpit or in congregational newsletters, either explicitly or implicitly, not even their own members who are running for office;
- Distribute campaign information that favors one party or candidate, even a member of the congregation;
- Post signs on their property that favor or oppose any party or candidate;
- Organize voter registration or get-out-the-vote efforts for the purpose of electing any given party or candidate;
- Raise money for a candidate or party;
- Provide membership lists to candidates, even if the candidate is a member of the congregation.
- Invite a candidate to speak during an election season without providing a comparable opportunity to his or her opponents;
- Rent your building to a campaign.

Doing any of these things puts your tax exemption at risk and alienates people who respect the law. Even some things that may be legal--inviting elected officials to preach during their campaign or giving a candidate an award shortly before an election--are still bad ideas.

### **Houses of worship (and nonprofit agencies) can and should:**

- Take positions that reflect their values on public policy, including legislation, through public education, petitions, letter-writing, and meetings with elected officials;
- Organize non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives;
- Encourage members to volunteer as poll watchers on Election Day;
- Host candidate forums, at least if all candidates are invited and the format favors no candidate or party. If you cannot invite those who disagree with your faith community's position on an issue, don't hold a forum.

Further information on how to do the right thing and stay on the right side of the law is available from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (<http://rac.org>) and the Internal Revenue Service ([www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=179773,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=179773,00.html)).

Source: The Rev. Thomas W. Goodhue ([tomgoodhue@optonline.net](mailto:tomgoodhue@optonline.net)) Long Island Council of Churches [www.licny.org](http://www.licny.org)

## *Tips on How to Talk to People with Power*



**Pre-meeting “jitters” are normal. Here are a few tips as you go into the visit:**

- **You have power!** Elected officials work for you. You hire them; you can fire them.
- Don’t be intimidated by the trappings of power: receptionist, fancy desk, flags. You’re meeting in an office YOU paid for with your tax dollars. This is public space – your space.
- Do be willing to meet with an aide who sometimes has more knowledge on the issues than the elected official.

### **How do I get started?**

- Introduce yourself and the congregation or agency (his/her constituents) you represent.
- Open with a summary of your key concerns. (Let the team leader do this.)
- Be formal (public). Don’t be seduced by private (personal) flattery, etc.

### **What are my credentials?**

- Don’t overstate your power base: you do not speak for the entire organization.
- Yet, you do represent the positions of many Long Island people of faith and community-service agencies.

### **Do I know enough to speak on these issues?**

- The values you articulate can be more important and persuasive than technical policy details.
- Your experience serving the poor is powerful testimony. Tell stories of real people you have served in your congregation or agency in his/her district.

### **How do I get my point across?**

- The passion of your delivery may be more persuasive than your eloquence.
- Try to maintain a conversational rather than argumentative tone.
- Try to find common ground with the elected official or his/her aide – in either values or policy details. (E.g., “We’re talking about helping people who work 40 hours a week for poverty wages. Don’t you agree that we should support them?”)

### **How do I stay on message and what do I ask for?**

- Stay focused on the key issues YOU want to raise.
- Politely move the legislator away from tangents. If he/she “filibusters” – i.e., talks endlessly – politely interrupt and bring the conversation back to your issue.
- Be assertive, not aggressive; be respectful, not deferential.
- Any public policy conversation will contain disagreement. Don’t take it personally!
- Ask for specific action, e.g., to support and/or co-sponsor the bill.



## *Tips on How to Write to an Elected Official*

**Note:** to find the member of Congress or State senator or State assemblyperson who represents you go to: <http://nymap.elections.state.ny.us/nysboe/>

**Politicians tell us that each individual letter counts for 40 voters.**

- It is best to write to the district office rather than the Albany or Washington office where there can be delays in delivering your letter.
- Hand-written letters are preferable to form letters that are preferable to petitions or post cards that are preferable to e-mails.
- Congregations can be very effective collecting letters after services and hand delivering them to the elected official's office. Ask for an appointment to see, preferably the elected official or, if necessary, an aide, to deliver the letters and discuss the issue.
- Write or type the letter clearly.
- Include your name, address and telephone number.
- Be brief, be thoughtful, be personal. Share your knowledge and experience with the issue. If you work with poor people, tell a story.
- Be specific and confine your letter to one topic. Cite the bill number or title. Ask for specific action (e.g., voting for and/or co-sponsoring the bill.)
- Mention any groups or communities that you belong to. There is strength in numbers.
- Be courteous and express appreciation for something positive that the elected official has done in the past.
- Try to keep the letter to one page.
- Ask for a response.

*Source: "Your Voice Counts: Turning Lobbying Upside Down" study guide. NETWORK Education Program.*

**TELL SENATOR FLANAGAN TO  
THE RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE AND PASS THE DREAM ACT**

*Please send this letter today to New York State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan with a copy to our state senator. To find the name of your senator go to: <http://www.nysenate.gov/> and click "Find My Senator."*

Hon. John Flanagan  
Senate Majority Leader  
260 E Main St #203,  
Smithtown, NY 11787



Dear Senator Flanagan:

I join with Long Island Jobs expressing my concern about the growing plight of working-poor people on Long Island. There are two major causes of their poverty: low wage jobs and lack of education. I therefore call upon you to address these causes with immediate action by the Senate:

1. **Raise the Minimum Wage:** Please support an increase the New York State minimum wage to ***at \$15.00/hour and indexed to inflation***. In so doing, more than 1.35 million workers would get an increase in wages statewide, with the *majority of benefits going to adults and women*. The direct economic value across the state as a result of the higher wages would be \$3.4 billion. More than 594,000 New Yorkers and about 100,000 Long Islanders earn the current minimum wage of \$8.75 an hour which is only \$18,200 a year – below the Federal Poverty level of \$24,250 for a family of four and well below the \$75,000 required for a Long Island family to pay for basic necessities in this region which is one of *the most expensive in the U.S.*
2. **Pass the DREAM Act:** Please support the ***DREAM Act*** to enable high school graduates who are undocumented immigrants apply for state college-tuition assistance. An estimated 146,000 public school graduates in New York are ineligible for college aid under current state law because they are undocumented. Of the more than 4,500 undocumented students who finish high school every year, only between 5 percent and 10 percent go onto college. The inability to get tuition aid is a chief reason why. The DREAM Act will cost only about \$17 million a year, which represents two percent of the current expenditures for TAP. For a 4-year college student, the maximum cost of TAP is a one-time investment of \$20,000 (four years at \$5,000). Compared to a high school graduate, the college graduate can then be expected typically to earn an additional \$25,000/year, thereby spending money in the local economy, and paying about \$3,900 more per year in state and local taxes.

Senator Flanagan, I call upon you to allow both bills to come to a vote on the Senate floor and to support adoption of each measure for the sake of all our working-poor Long Island neighbors.

Yours truly,

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: State Senator

# YOU ARE INVITED!

## Graduation Day Outside of Senator Flanagan's Office

It is graduation season and over 100,000 youth educated in New York public schools will be unable to receive financial without the passage of the NY DREAM Act. Please join us in reminding Senator Flanagan that as Senate Majority Leader he is responsible not only for the best interest of young people on Long Island, but the entire state. **We want the DREAM ACT NOW!**



When: May 29<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm

Where: Senator Flanagan's Office

260 E Main St #203, Smithtown, NY 11787

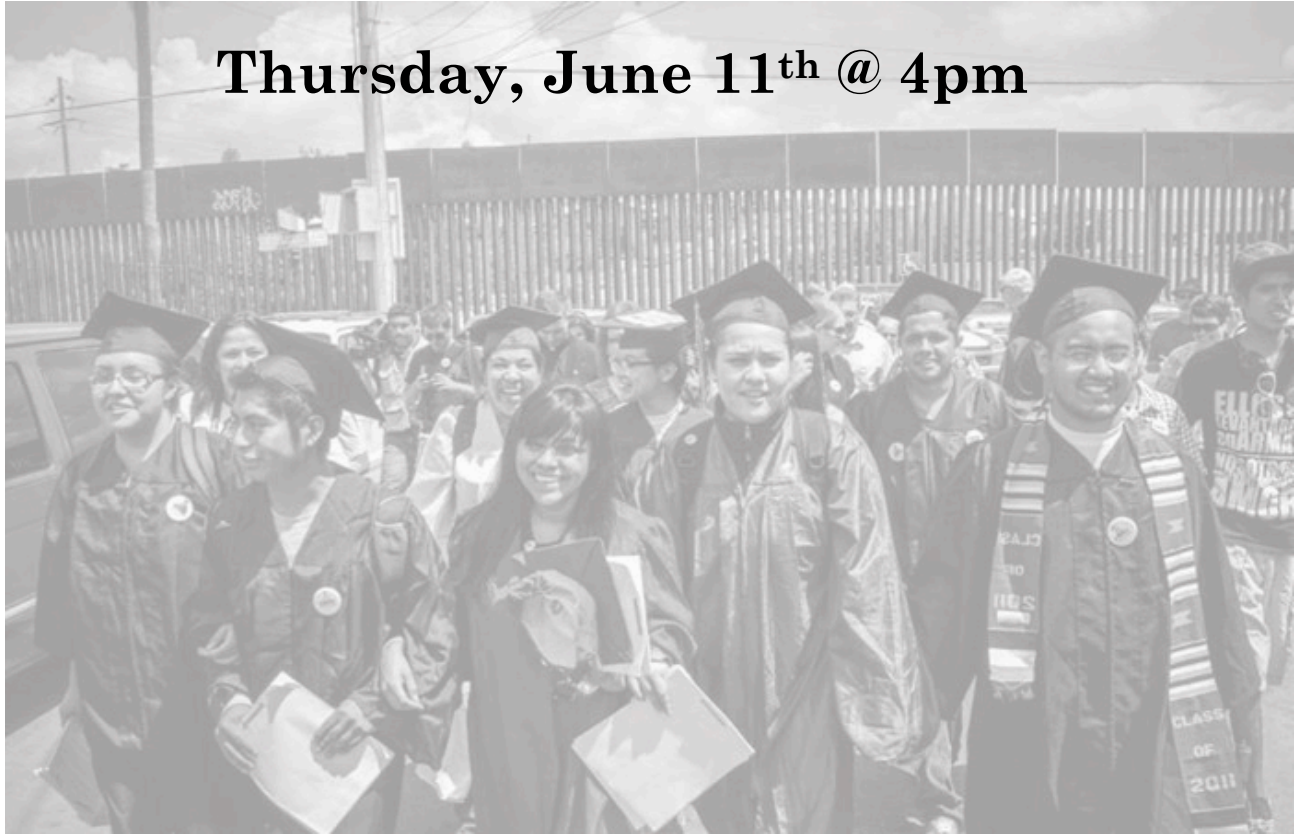
RSVP with: Victoria at [vdaza.lijwj@gmail.com](mailto:vdaza.lijwj@gmail.com) with any questions

 **LONG ISLAND JOBS WITH JUSTICE**



# PRAYER VIGIL FOR DREAM ACT

**Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm**



As people of faith we cannot stand idly as inequality is perpetuated in our communities. Please join us for a vigil where we will pray for the moral guidance of our political leaders to pass the NY DREAM Act.

**A more educated community benefits everyone!**

## **LOCATION:**

**Senate Majority Leader Flanagan's Office**  
260 E Main St #203  
Smithtown, NY 11787

If you have any questions, **please contact**  
Victoria at [vdaza.lijwj@gmail.com](mailto:vdaza.lijwj@gmail.com)



# DID YOU KNOW

# ?



That Governor Andrew Cuomo **WANTS** to Increase Your Wage !

Fast Food CEO's Make about 23.8 Million Dollars a year!

## DON'T YOU THINK YOU DESERVE \$15/hour?



"Alone we can do so little;  
together we can do so much."

**#Fightfor15** is a Nationwide effort calling for low wage workers to make \$15 and the right to organize. We work for corporations that are making tremendous profits, but do not pay employees enough to support our families and to cover basic needs like food, health care, rent and transportation.

Hundreds of workers across the nation have gone on strike and they are **winning!** McDonald's raised their wages and Gov. Cuomo is calling for a raise for New York's fast food workers.

**A wage board has been to created**

**And they need to know why workers NEED \$15/hour.**

For more information contact **Kimberly Saget**  
Cell: (516) -286-6440 Email: ksaget.lijwj@gmail.com

Join us in our fight for **#fightfor15**

**LONG  
ISLAND  
JOBS WITH JUSTICE**



# SAVE THE DATE

## Group Viewing and Panel Discussion of the Live Telecast:

### Pope Francis' Address to Congress

**Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

(time to be announced)

Long Island Federation of Labor (390 Rabro Drive, Hauppauge)

**OR** First Baptist Church of Riverhead

*"In a time of global upheaval, the Holy Father's message of compassion and human dignity has moved people of all faiths and backgrounds. His teachings, prayers, and very example bring us back to the blessings of simple things and our obligations to one another. We look forward to warmly welcoming Pope Francis to our Capitol and hearing his address on behalf of the American people."* **House Speaker John Boehner**

*"Whatever our beliefs, whatever our traditions, we must seek to be instruments of peace, and bringing light where there is darkness, and sowing love where there is hatred. And this is the loving message of His Holiness, Pope Francis. And like so many people around the world, I've been touched by his call to relieve suffering, and to show justice and mercy and compassion to the most vulnerable; to walk with The Lord and ask 'Who am I to judge?' He challenges us to press on in what he calls our 'march of living hope.' And like millions of Americans, I am very much looking forward to welcoming Pope Francis to the United States later this year."* **President Barack Obama**

A photograph of Pope Francis, wearing his white papal attire and a large silver cross necklace, waving his right hand. The background is dark.

"Some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting."

**LONG ISLAND**   
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