



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

A Place to Connect, Grow and Serve

March 21, 2019 – Connections newsletter

VOICE sets out 2019 plan of action

If you are concerned about racial justice, legal system reform, affordable housing, mental health access, or immigration rights, you'll be glad to know that at their annual meeting last week, VOICE leaders from most of the region's 50+ congregations clarified a very ambitious agenda for 2019.

Arlington members have added a new focus on access to mental health care, Fairfax members have established a new teen issue team--open to all teens from VOICE congregations--and our Muslim leaders are about to launch actions to combat Islamophobia by tackling the language our nation has become too accustomed to. We are also happy to announce Alexandria and Arlington members have decided to address the Amazon juggernaut in a big way. This last focus is built on much careful homework to identify economic impacts, tax options, and points of political leverage. Details are forthcoming, but for now we ask that all UUCA members deeply concerned about the impact of Amazon on housing affordability to pencil in June 2 on their calendars for a special action with local politicians.

We also learned at last week's meeting that VOICE's state lawmaker visits, while useful, were unable to move the needle on most of the issues we tackled. Several excellent bills on criminal justice reform were passed in the Senate but then killed in House committee by a handful of powerful delegates. On the plus side, the legislature did pass a major budget increase of \$12 million earmarked to add more school counselors--only a third of what VOICE lobbied for but much better than the status quo. All this serves as a reminder that the 2019 state senate and house elections will be a watershed event. We will be out in full force next fall knocking on doors to get out the vote.

We will offer more details about each of these developments over the coming months, but if you already recognize an issue in the summary above that speaks to your heart, please let us know right away by contacting **David McTaggart** (dmctagg@gmail.com) or Pat Findikoglu (patfindikoglu@gmail.com) or by stopping by our VOICE table at fellowship hour.