Justice Update:

- **Build Back Better:** Senator Schumer's office still says that the Senate will vote on the Build Back Better bill before Christmas, even with Sen. Manchin saying he's skeptical of the legislation due to concerns about debt and inflation. The Christmas deadline is especially important because folks will soon get their last Child Tax Credit payment if the program isn't renewed by the end of the year.

- **Election Reform:** Also still waiting for Senate action is the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act – time is ticking and the Senate is running out of runway to get both things accomplished by Christmas. As states draft their voting districts and start their legislative sessions setting voting laws it's critical the protections of these bills are in place. Manchin convened a group of senators today to discuss Senate rule reform. A number of Arizona students are doing a hunger strike for voting rights until such legislation is passed.

- **Immigration:** A U.S. appeals court on Monday rejected a renewed attempt by the Biden administration to end a policy put in place by the last administration that forced tens of thousands of migrants to wait in Mexico for the resolution of their U.S. asylum cases.

- **Citizenship:** The Build Back Better House passed version includes a version of parole in the form of work permits for about 7 million undocumented people, the fight upcoming in the Senate will be whether the parliamentarian agrees these scaled down provisions can remain as part of a reconciliation budget bill.

- **Debt Ceiling:** Proving that you can get around the filibuster if you're creative enough the Senate passed a debt ceiling hike that will last through 2023 (getting Congress through the midterms). Now if only we can apply that same creative spirit to getting the Freedom to Vote and JLVRAA passed.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Equity:** Faith communities around the world continue to advocate for a temporary waiver on intellectual property (IP) barriers at the WTO that are limiting global development of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests. A letter initiated by faith groups in D.C. and signed by the UCC was delivered to WTO representatives last week from over 100 organizations and delivered by the World Council of Churches.

- **Summit for Democracy:** The Biden administration's held a "Summit for Democracy" last week that outlined efforts to enhance democracy, address corruption, and lift up human rights. The gathering was critiqued by many due to the lack of U.S. self-critique on human rights at home and in terms of U.S. military assistance for known human rights violators such as Egypt and the Philippines, as well as the erosion of our own democracy happening as voting rights are further undermined by state governments.

- **Pentagon Spending:** The $768 BILLION defense bill is likely to pass this week now that the Senate has voted to end debate on a compromise version. The bloated military bill includes even more funding for the Pentagon and nuclear arsenal than what President Biden had requested, and failed to include a key amendment that faith groups had pushed for to repeal the AUMF

- **Gun Violence:** Absent Congressional action and in the wake of the Supreme Court granting Texas permission to move forward with the law allowing private citizens to sue abortion providers Gov. Newsom of CA has said he's working to legislation for CA residents to sue anyone who manufactures/sells assault weapons or ghost guns.