**Faith Leaders Join the Fight for Smart Justice***Proposed Web Content*

A group of united Delaware Faith Leaders has joined the Delaware Coalition for Smart Justice to bring the values of multiple denominations to the fight for meaningful criminal justice reform. Religious leaders have a unique capability to shape community values and build support for reform, and that’s exactly what this sub-coalition of faith leaders intends to do.

During the 2019 legislative session, the Delaware Coalition for Smart Justice worked to refine effective advocacy strategies. One coalition member (Delaware United) created a Lobby Day Guide. Coalition members also developed collaborative email advocacy campaigns using the Action Network platform.

How can you help as a member of the Faith Leaders Sub-Coalition for the Coalition for Smart Justice?

Below are listed some preliminary ideas for engaging Faith Leaders in coalition advocacy. The list of potential activities is extensive but is presented in the spirit of brainstorming. All coalition activities would remain completely voluntary with each participant determining their own level of involvement:

**Small Group Lobby Day Meetings with Legislators**On two Smart Justice Lobby Days during the 2019 session we were able to set up meetings with approximately 20 legislators for each Lobby Day. We included 3 to 4 Coalition members in each meeting including subject matter experts. The inclusion of Faith Leaders would add a new dimension to these meetings.

**Lobby Day Rallies and Events**In 2019 our press conferences/rallies included presentations by ACLU leaders and the Game Changers - advocates who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system. In 2020 we are hoping to plan an event where Faith Leaders have an opportunity to speak out. We have also discussed creating visual displays to heighten interest and awareness around these issues.

**Email, Phone and Social Media Advocacy**Several coalition members have launched collaborative email campaigns using the Action Network platform. Action Network has the capability to automatically link activists with their representatives or to target members of legislative committees. Congregations wouldn’t have to adopt a new email software to benefit from this technology; all that’s needed is a link to the specific Action Network campaign.

**Educational Seminars for Congregations**
The Coalition for Smart Justice welcomes the opportunity to offer presentations, film screenings, and/or webinars for congregation members to learn more about the complex issues surrounding criminal justice reform.

**Informal Faith Leader Leadership Group**
We’ve begun partnering with clerical leaders to recruit coalition participants. We’re hoping that these partnerships will evolve into an informal leadership group to facilitate consultation with Faith Leaders and plan the activities listed above.

**Faith Leaders Listed on Webpage and Future Petitions/Flyers**The listing of faith leaders on the ACLU of Delaware website and other coalition marketing materials provides an easy opportunity to support the Coalition for Smart Justice. Faith leaders retain the option to decline participation in specific campaigns.

The legislative targets for the 2020 Smart Justice legislative agenda can be found by clicking here. Among other goals, the coalition plans to advocate for the remaining bills in the original justice reform package and to oppose the re-imposition of the death penalty.The Coalition will also review and vote to support or oppose any new criminal justice reform bills that are introduced when session resumes in January 2020.

Other projects that to coalition will be working on are:

* Beginning to research additional strategies to reduce mass incarceration more directly (ex: managing technical probation violations and pre-entry/reentry programming), and
* Exploring options for some form of early release or parole program as well as diversion for treatment of drug addiction and mental health problems.

To add your faith organization’s name to this growing list of faith leaders who support the Coalition for Smart Justice, please email Jack Guerin at jackguerin7@gmail.com.

[To learn more about the Delaware Coalition for Smart Justice and for a full list of members, click here.](https://www.aclu-de.org/en/coalition-for-smart-justice)