

March 21 - VIRTUAL TOWN HALLS ON BAIL, MARCH 23 AND BUDGET, MARCH 24, FAITH LEADER SIGNATURES NEEDED NOW TO STOP RAISE THE AGE ROLLBACKS

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 7:00 PM

BAIL REFORM, DISCOVERY, RAISE THE AGE, CLEAN SLATE AND OTHER CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROVISIONS IN THE BUDGET

[REGISTER HERE!!](#)

Governor Hochul has changed course and has decided she would like to revisit the bail reform law from 2019 in order to make more crime bail eligible and give judges greater discretion. That includes allowing judges to set higher bail based on criminal history and making attacks against public transit workers bail eligible. Both state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie have said they have no appetite to make further changes to the law after some rollbacks in 2020 and made clear they didn't intend to address the issue during session. However, Republicans have continued to blame a rise in crime on bail reform, pointing to individual cases and anecdotal evidence as proof that the reform has failed, despite insufficient data to gauge success one way or the other. Moderate Democrats have also begun criticizing Hochul and others, seeking modifications to the bail law. In addition, the Governor has proposed significant modifications to the Raise the Age Law which prevented New York from Prosecuting and incarcerating 16 and 17 year olds as adults. Finally, the Governor has proposed modifications to the discovery laws which require that the prosecution disclose its evidence to defendants so that they can make an informed choice about whether to take a plea or move to trial.

It gets complicated!

Join us for a forum of legal experts to discuss

1. How theologically and ethically do people of faith view criminal justice reform?
2. What is in existing laws?
3. What is the Governor proposing?
4. What evidence do we have to show that modifications to these laws may be misplaced in addressing crime?
5. What are alternative approaches to addressing crime which may be more effective?
6. What are the opportunities in the next two weeks for faith leaders to make their voice known (rallies, sign on letters, contacting legislators and the Governor)?

We know in the faith community there are different opinions about what to do to address gun violence and prevent crime. We need are offering an exploratory space to look at what is being proposed given a very short timeline (Budget deadline of April 1) and the highly charged political atmosphere which is being exploited by candidates for elected office. We aim to give full information so that faith leaders can act on their conscience in the public square.

NYSCOC STATEMENT ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

The New York State Council of Churches oppose further changes to bail reform on the grounds these proposals will again criminalize poverty, adversely impact people of color, and do little or nothing to increase public safety.

We see no proof of a connection between bail reform and increased levels of violence in New York State. Violence is rising in communities across the country, no matter the state bail laws. This rise seems far more likely to be due to the individual and societal difficulties of negotiating the COVID-19 pandemic, which have affected the poor and those of color most of all.

We object to the scare tactics of any politician or member of law enforcement that serve only to frighten voters and policy makers. A handful of questionable anecdotes and simplistic slogans distract us from addressing the real causes of crime and forging meaningful solutions. Being “tough on crime” is mere posturing and not at all useful in actually reducing crime and in some cases make the crime problem worse.

We affirm the constitutional right of all Americans to be considered innocent until proven guilty. No one should ever be jailed simply because they cannot afford bail.

We affirm our belief that all persons are created in the image of God and should be treated as such. No one should be judged by or forever punished for the worst thing they’ve ever done.

We are committed to shaping a criminal justice system rooted in the premises of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration; not revenge and punishment. We seek to address the root causes of crime including poverty, unemployment, addiction, and the lack of affordable and safe housing.

The goals of the New York State Council of Churches around criminal justice form are to:

- 1) Help people avoid going to prison in the first place by addressing root causes of poverty and violence, including racism.
- 2) Provide the best pastoral and vocational assistance possible to incarcerated individuals so they may be successfully restored to their families and communities.
- 3) Reduce recidivism by dismantling barriers that prevent the formerly incarcerated from finding employment, decent and affordable housing, and a productive role in society.

The New York State Council of Churches is made up of over 7500 congregations in Nine partner denominations.

**IMPORTANT FAITH LEADER SIGN ON TO NOT ALTER RAISE THE AGE.
SIGNERS NEEDED BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23**

[SIGN HERE](#)

1. Read an article on proposed changes in the Gothamist by [clicking here](#).
2. Here is a [statement](#) from Raise [theAge.org](#) which challenges the Governor's proposed rollbacks
3. Please view New York State Council of Churches legislative ask on Criminal Justice Reform by [clicking here](#) and its seminar of Criminal Justice Reform by [clicking here](#)
4. You can lend your voice to stop Raise the Age rollbacks by [filling out this google form](#).
5. [Send an email and calling your legislator in minutes using our Action Alert.](#)
6. [Social media graphics](#) for Raise the Age.

ALBANY ACTION



Clean Slate  **March 23rd**
New York **10am-3:30pm**

ADVOCACY DAY

New York State Capitol
Washington Ave & State St Albany, NY 12224

Join us for a press conference,
rally, and meetings with lawmakers.

Register at bit.ly/cleanslatecantwait

Justice must not be delayed any longer for the 2.3 million New Yorkers shackled by their convictions.
Join us as we fight to end perpetual punishment and pass the Clean Slate Act.

Questions? Email Garrett at gsmith@communityalternatives.org

NEW YORK CITY ACTION



**Tell Gov. Hochul:
Support communities, not
corporations & cages.**

**Say NO! to justice reform rollbacks
Say NO! to \$1B for a football stadium
Say YES! to \$1B for community safety investments**

**Thurs., 3/24 @ 11 AM
Hochul's NYC Office
633 Third Ave., Manhattan**

Co-Sponsors:





Our TOP THREE next steps together:

- Bail, discovery, and raise the age reforms are under attack. Gov. Hochul has proposed horrific roll backs to these hard-fought reforms that we must come together to protect.. On the dates below, we're going to work to support pre-trial freedom and ask you to join us in doing the same. These are the dates: March 21 in Albany, 24 in NYC at Gov. Office, and 28 in Albany. **Can you join us to protect these reforms? RSVP [here](#).**
- We are back to in person lobbying in Albany! It is important to have a physical presence to put pressure on the legislators to move our bills. We have already had success having individual conversations with legislators in Albany this week. Transportation is available. These are the dates: March 22 and March 29. **Can you join us in Albany? If you are able to join us please reach out to TeAna, Dave, and Jared.**
- Join us this Parole Justice & Survivor Justice Advocacy Day April 25th in person! **You can register [here](#).**

We look forward to seeing you at our next Parole Justice Partners meeting March 31st at 11am.

Stay well and stay safe,

Emma Hochfelder

Release Aging People in Prison/ RAPP Campaign

135 West 20th Street, Suite 401

New York, NY 10011



New York State
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

STATE BUDGET VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

March 24, 2022 3:00 to 4:30

[REGISTER HERE](#)

New York State Council of Churches and **New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness** will be holding a Virtual Town Hall to compare the one house budget resolutions to the Governor's proposed budget. Senate Leader Andrea Steward Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie enter budget negotiations with the Governor (Three people in a room) to render a final budget to be voted on by the Senate and Assembly by April 1.

Both the state Senate and the Assembly proposed budgets that differ in a number of key aspects compared to what came out of the Executive Chamber. They both include about more than 6 billion in spending compared to Hochul's plan. Lawmakers also removed many of the governor's non-fiscal policy items, perhaps most notably a bill to legalize to-go cocktails, although they also dropped other big-ticket items like term limits for statewide elected officials with a promise to revisit the issues as separate items after the budget. Both chambers also proposed funding for universal child-care as well as an extension of state-funded health care to undocumented New Yorkers, both of which Hochul did not include.

We want advocates and faith leaders to understand where we are in the budget negotiation process and what they can do to influence the final outcome in the last days to build a more just New York.

Among the topics to be discussed are:

- General Budget Overview
- Economic Development—Reinvent Albany Ron
- Expanded Child Care
- More Affordable Housing
- Environmental and Climate Justice
- Expanded Home Care Wages
- Fair Wages and Wage Theft Prevention
- Health Care
- Excluded Workers Fund

BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES

Please review the 2022 New York State Council of Churches Legislative Ask and accompanying seminars by [clicking here](#).

We invite you to listen to [Brian Lehrer's Interview with State Senator Liz Krueger](#), Chair of the Finance Committee. Here also is a [budget backgrounder](#) by Sam Mellins in New York Focus with some focus on the exclusion of the Excluded Worker Fund from the One House Budget Resolutions but the inclusion of medical coverage for undocumented people. Here is [budget analysis](#) that appeared in the New York Times and another [analysis](#) furnished by Spectrum News. The City also offers its [review](#) of the budget..

Sign On's and Legislative Ask Tools

FAIR PAY FOR HOME CARE

For a good discussion on Home Care view the [State Street Forum](#) featuring Ron Deutsch, New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, Ron Shapiro from SEIU 1199 and several testimonies from Home Care workers

SEIU1199 will be making the case for Home Care in Albany on March 23. If you would like to make visits on legislators in Albany that day, contact. Peter Cook at Pcook@nyscoc.org or call

508-380-8289. Here is an [advertisement](#) which has been running in media markets across the state.

We also invite you to join our partners at **Jews for Racial and Economic Justice** which are organizing a final push to get **Fair Pay for Home Care Workers**.

Fair Pay for Home Care is weeks away from winning or losing, and we have so many people who want to be part of this fight that we need to raise more money this week. **Can you [give to our Fair Pay direct-action fund](#) to help pay for the accessible transportation and accommodations we need** to get hundreds of older adults and disabled people, family caregivers, and home care workers to Albany and other local actions in the next few weeks? (Give through the [links in this email](#) and it will direct your contribution!)

We are unimaginably close to winning a living wage for home care workers and ending the shortage that is pushing older and disabled people out of homes and communities. But we need the people most impacted by this issue to be leading, and that will mean [a little more money](#) and a [little more time](#) from everyone who wants this to happen. That's where you come in, Peter.

[Donate here](#), and sign up to take a [5 minute action-a-day for Fair Pay](#).

Keep reading if you want to help even more

Last weekend, the Senate and the Assembly included a fully-funded Fair Pay for Home Care proposal in their budget recommendations. This is huge. **But the third decision-maker, Governor Hochul, isn't yet on our side.** If we are going to win, we need to change that. And that takes people power!

Here is what you can do to help make Fair Pay for Home Care a reality:

[Donate to help cover costs](#) for accessible transportation, accommodations, food, and art over the next few weeks.

- Sign up to take a [5-minute virtual action a day](#) for the rest of March! If you've already signed up, invite your friends to join you.
- Sign up to [phone bank JFREJ members](#) and invite them to get involved in the campaign for Fair Pay!
- Join us on [Wednesday, March 30th, in Albany](#) for final major direct action!

We have come this far because of people like you, Peter, who are giving what they can to this fight. Now is the moment to keep going. We need you to dig in with us for the next few weeks. Let's win this.

Zahara Zahav, JFREJ Director of Organizing

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

WAR, PEACE, IMMIGRATION HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



From the National Council of Churches:

As we witness the destruction of Ukrainian cities and the continual bombings of residential buildings, hospitals, and schools as well as attacks on a power plant, nuclear waste site, and gas pipeline, we again pray with the world community for peace and an end to Russia's war against Ukraine.

This week we saw the bombing a theater where over 1,000 women, children, and seniors were sheltering with "children" painted on the pavement on both sides of the building. Many of their fates are still unknown as the search continues for survivors. Acts that deliberately target civilians and use disproportionate force are war crimes. The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has announced that an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine since Russia's invasion is forthcoming and European nations have volunteered to document the instances and collect the evidence.

With this week's tragedies in mind, let us pray.

Almighty and Eternal God,

We hang our heads in overwhelming sorrow while witnessing the massive number of deaths in Ukraine and the destruction of its cities.

We deeply mourn these deaths, especially the children who have lost their young lives filled with promise.

Be present with all who weep and cry out in anguish.

With your divine presence, Lord, bring an end to this war by Russia.

Move Russia's leaders to stop the bombardment of Ukraine and the killing of its people.

Give wisdom to world leaders about the most effective ways to intervene and dissipate the harm being caused.

Fill the people of Ukraine with hope and fortitude that peace will prevail and their freedom will endure.

Amen.

Church World Service Calls for Signatures to Support Displaced Ukrainians

Church World Service is circulating a faith sign on letter urging the administration to support Ukrainians and uphold protections for displaced and at-risk populations. The deadline for signatures is Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

Faith leaders can sign on [using this form](#).

Faith organizations (local, state, national) can sign on [using this form](#).

In addition. CWS is urging the administration "to robustly respond to protection needs of all displaced and at-risk populations without discrimination, including displaced individuals of African-descent and stateless people," the specific asks to the administration included in the letter are:

- 1. Do everything in your power to see that the United States continues to invest in humanitarian and displacement assistance and to support UNHCR's emergency response efforts to ensure people have access to shelter, food, medicine, and other forms of humanitarian aid in Ukraine and neighboring countries;*
- 2. Ensure swift processing of pending refugee applications for Ukrainians, and non-Ukrainians who had been in Ukraine, at all potential processing locations and especially in Ukraine's neighboring countries;*
- 3. Facilitate family reunification processing to reunite loved ones, such as by processing Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians who had been displaced in Ukraine with pending I-130 family petitions through the U.S. resettlement program;*
- 4. Support non-governmental organizations in Ukraine and neighboring countries to assist internally displaced individuals or individuals seeking asylum in Ukraine and other host countries;*
- 5. Recognize unique barriers encountered by stateless persons displaced in and fleeing Ukraine and better identify and protect such individuals; and*
- 6. Immediately designate Special Student Relief (SSR) to protect Ukrainian students in the United States.*

SANCTIONS Sanctions are not applied universally on Russia because of their invasion of Ukraine, it is worth noting the different reasons some countries have been reluctant to impose sanctions. Here is an [analysis from NBC News](#).

AFGHANISTAN

Ogletree Denkins, a law practice in North Carolina, offered this analysis on Temporary Protected Status for Afghani refugees.

On March 16, 2022, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the designation of [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) for Afghan nationals](#) for eighteen months. Under the designation, TPS will apply to nationals of Afghanistan who have continuously resided in the United States since March 15, 2022. The TPS designation is based on the ongoing armed conflict by the Taliban and the “extraordinary and temporary conditions” in Afghanistan that prevent Afghan nationals from returning safely. The eighteen-month designation will go into effect on the publication date of the forthcoming notice in the Federal Register.

As a result, Afghan citizens who are temporarily present in the United States are permitted to remain in the United States and apply for work authorization for the duration of the TPS designation. Employers may want to consult the Federal Register for details about how to comply with employment verification requirements.

Ogletree Deakins’ [Immigration Practice Group](#) will continue to monitor developments with respect to these and other policy changes and will post updates on the [Immigration](#) blog as additional information becomes available. Important information for employers is also available via the firm’s [webinar](#) and [podcast](#) programs.

Remember to frequently [visit our website](#) which is updated daily with new information and events

The New York State Council of Churches relies on contributions to carry out its ministry, [please donate](#)

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