

MOSES



Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity
for Criminal Justice Reform

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Madison Action Day Goes Virtual This Year!

By Katie Mulligan

In previous years, Madison Action Day brought the logistical challenge of transporting people from around the state for a one-day effort to persuade legislators of the importance of WISDOM's priorities. Some participants boarded buses for the event as early as 5:30 a.m. Everyone sat together in a rousing plenary session that offered inspiration for their afternoon advocacy.

For Madison Action Day this year, on April 15, the challenges were different. Event planners needed to build enthusiasm and create a sense of united purpose among people who were sitting in their homes and participating via Zoom. Planners also wanted a chance for legislators and their constituents to interact in real time, although they were not in the same rooms. Here's what they decided.

The day will open at 10 a.m. with a roll call, in which each WISDOM affiliate will present a one-minute video that "lifts up something interesting about the group," says WISDOM Director David Liners. The MOSES video features Paul Saeman, co-chair of the Justice System Reform Initiative Task Force; Barbie Jackson, co-chair of the Racial Justice for All Children Task Force; and Designated Vice President Sandra Brown.

Saeman describes work of one of MOSES' first task forces, which is

focused on reform of the Dane County jail and the county's criminal justice system. Jackson highlights accomplishments in mental health, restorative justice, and responses to the COVID virus. Brown tells of more recent efforts to take on the school-to-prison pipeline and to improve public safety.

After the roll call comes the plenary session, which has been organized around a values statement in the "WISDOM Priorities for Wisconsin" booklet. The document begins with this quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: "Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our hearts."

In order to create the beloved community, Dr. King said, "we must transform ourselves and our organizations." For WISDOM, the three guiding values for this transformation are radical inclusion, costly reconciliation, and living for the seventh generation. Each of these values will be highlighted and linked to the WISDOM priorities by one or more speakers. Breakout rooms will give participants a chance to share their thoughts about the values and how to implement them.

At 1 p.m., participants will gather virtually for the MOSES segment of

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Executive Committee

Rachel Kincade, President
 Sandra Brown,
 Designated Vice President
 Eugene Crisler' EL,
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 Cindy Lovell, Secretary
 Pat Watson, Treasurer
 Joan Duerst,
 Faith Leaders Caucus

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 Fundraising
 Rachel Kincade
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 Member Engagement
 Karen Julesberg

MOSES Task Forces

Justice System Reform Initiative
 Paul Saeman
 Jeanie Verschay
 Racial Justice for All Children
 Barbie Jackson
 James Morgan
 Public Safety
 Gloria Stevenson-McCarter
 Tina Hogle

MOSES Caucus

Faith Leaders Caucus
 Joan Duerst
 Michael Marshall



Organizer's Corner

By Mark Rice, MOSES Community Organizer

After much consideration, I have accepted an offer to serve as the communications coordinator of EXPO. This position is a better fit for my career moving forward.

It has been a pleasure working with the leaders of MOSES. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities I had to grow and learn during my time here.

I would like to help during this transition and make it as smooth as possible. I plan to assist with Madison Action Day and other pending work as much as I can during the transition. I wish MOSES continued success in the future.

My last few months with MOSES have been very busy. I spent a lot of time meeting with leaders of MOSES task forces and assisting with the preparation for the MOSES sentencing forums and WISDOM's state budget advocacy activities. The first sentencing forum was an outstanding event that brought together university professors, local public officials, and directly impacted people for a crucial



Mark Rice

conversation about the need to overhaul local and state sentencing policies and practices.

In his state budget proposal, Gov. Evers proposed expanding funding for community-based alternative-to-revocation programs, the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program, and the earned early release program. These are all important state budget issues which will help decrease the prison population and help us get closer to our long-term goals of closing prisons and creating a justice-reinvestment fund to build safer, healthier, and stronger communities across Wisconsin. Please get involved with the upcoming Joint Finance Committee hearings and Madison Action Day to help ensure that these important initiatives move forward this year.

I am excited to see how MOSES will build on this work in the coming months. I hope that EXPO and MOSES will be able to strengthen their partnership and find even more ways to collaborate in the future. ■

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Madison Action Day. This will be a time for dialogue between legislators and constituents and an opportunity to persuade our representatives of the importance of our legislative and budget priorities. David Liners and others distributed hard copies of "WISDOM Priorities for Wisconsin" to legislative offices during the first week in April to provide legislators with background for those discussions. He also encouraged WISDOM members to write letters to their representatives, which were distributed with the booklets.

This session will open with a brief description of the priorities, followed by assignment to one of three breakout rooms. Each breakout room will include senators and representatives, and participants will go to the room that includes their legislators. Organizers hope for a lively dialogue in which legislators and constituents learn from each other and move ahead with new energy for WISDOM's priorities.

Click [here](#) for the link to the "WISDOM Priorities for Wisconsin" booklet.

Click [here](#) for the link to register for the MOSES segment of the event. ■

MOSES Madison Mission

Our mission is to build collective power to dismantle the systems of mass incarceration and mass supervision and to eradicate the racial disparities in our community that contribute to them.

We envision:

- an end to the systems of mass incarceration and mass supervision;
- an end to systemic racism;
- a reallocation of resources to create racial and economic equity;
- a just society without discrimination in which all people thrive.

MOSES Sentencing Forums Draw Large Viewership

By Alison Mix and Eric Howland

On March 16 and March 23, MOSES hosted two forums on the subject of sentencing. Led by Barbara Benson and Eric Howland, this was a project of the Diversions Focus Group of the JSRI Task Force. The two-part program – and an accompanying [White Paper](#) – were the culmination of nearly a year of research by the group into the question of sentencing.

The project was triggered, in part, by a 2019 consultant’s report to Dane County, which pointed out the strong effect that sentencing has on the number of people incarcerated in the Dane County jail, and in part by the EXPO campaign to reduce the number of people caught up in the supervision aspect (probation, parole, and extended supervision) of Wisconsin’s criminal justice system. It all came together with the insight from one of the speakers, Michael O’Hear, that Wisconsin judges are not bound by mandatory minimums, and that the sentences imposed are largely dependent on an agreement between prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges.



Study after study shows that crime is predominantly committed by younger people and that people age out of crime. “The evidence shows that very long prison terms are rarely justified from a public-safety standpoint,” he said.

The next speaker, UW-Madison law professor Cecilia Klingele, focused on the labeling of people who have committed violent crimes, her thoughts having been influenced by O’Hear’s research. Building on Dr. O’Hear’s data, Klingele commented that when we look at our own experience, fleeting acts of violence — shouting, pushing, breaking something violently — are fairly universal. “When we recognize the universality of human violence, as well as the fact that violence is frequently transient and can be altered and changed across a lifespan, we must question whether or not it makes sense to consider those people who’ve engaged in . . . violence [only when it] has been noticed by the criminal justice system,” she said.

Sentencing Part I: Impact and Opportunities for Reform

The first forum featured two academic researchers, followed by five presentations by MOSES, Nehemiah, and justice-impacted people.

Michael O’Hear, author of *Wisconsin Sentencing in the Tough on Crime Era*, grounded the forum with data on sentencing. He noted that since 2016 imprisonment rates in Wisconsin have surpassed the national average, with racial disparities even greater than at the national level. O’Hear asked whether great reductions in the prison population could be achieved without endangering public safety, and his answer was a decisive yes.

“When we recognize the universality of human violence, as well as the fact that violence is frequently transient and can be altered and changed across a lifespan, we must question whether or not it makes sense to consider irredeemable those people who’ve engaged in . . . violence [only when it] has been noticed by the criminal justice system.”

At the same time that some people are labeled irrevocably violent and subject to lengthy or life imprisonment, violence by police and prison guards, and psychological harm such as diminishing people in the courtroom, locking people in cages, and imposing sensory deprivation are not also recognized as violence. If, Klingele asked, society recognized the harm the criminal justice system is inflicting, would we behave differently, perhaps modeling the kind of behavior we are hoping to see in those with whom we are intervening?

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EXPO member Ramiah Whiteside spoke about being given a maximum sentence, which held him in prison for 12 years after he was eligible for parole. “If [the goal] is to rehabilitate me and hold me accountable, a lengthy incarceration does not help that!” Whiteside said. “If the goal is just to punish me, punish me, punish me, then, a lengthy incarceration — that’s your go-to tool. Was I able to be released in 2007 and have a measurable amount of success? The answer is yes. The additional time was very traumatic, and if it wasn’t for my faith and support system, I wouldn’t be on this call tonight.”

Carl Fields, another EXPO member, focused his presentation on his long period of community supervision. After describing the awards that he has gotten in Racine since being released, he said: “There is a cost to me continuing to be connected to community corrections. The pie chart that was put up [by O’Hear] was very telling to me, in that it showed that the vast majority of the people in the system are labeled violent crime, violent offenders, etc., etc. And yet most of what we would call off-ramps, that get people out of the system, relate to and are statutorily crafted toward the low-hanging-fruit [nonviolent, non-sex-offender] category.”

Sentencing Part II: Judicial Candidate Forum

If the goal of the first forum was to argue for reducing sentences, the goal of the second forum was to get the eight judges who were up for election in April to publicly commit to bending the courthouse culture of sentencing toward shorter sentences.

With that goal in mind, after the judges introduced themselves, the first question for them was to ask their reaction to the first forum. Most judges were aware of the work MOSES does, and several judges praised MOSES for the seriousness with which it takes on complicated issues. There was some pushback from the judges about a general reduction in sentence length, because, they argued, sentencing is by law determined for each individual case, with consideration of the unique circumstances.

In spite of this pushback, we heard from the judges some of the same points raised in the first forum. What should be achieved with incarceration and supervision? What treatment options exist? What treatment courts exist? By law, all judges need to consider probation, but there are long waiting lists for the community services people need to succeed on probation. The short answer is that people don’t get the treatment they need, either during supervision or in prison. The Department of Corrections staff is incredibly overworked. So many people are on supervision, yet so few people are available to help them. Supervision needs to foster the rehabilitative aspects.

During the debriefing, the Diversions Focus Group concluded that the forums and the White Paper very successfully met the goal of bringing sentencing issues and concerns not only to the judges, but also to key participants in the legal system, such as District Attorney Ishmael Ozanne and Public Defender Catherine Dorl, and to the general public as well. Despite this success in raising awareness, actually reducing sentences will require continuing this campaign. ■



Juan Colas



Julie Genovese



Nia Trammell



Josann Reynolds



David Conway



Mario White



Chris Taylor

Judicial Candidates from Sentencing Part II Forum

EXPO Brings State Superintendent Candidates Together in Town Hall Forum

By Patricia Hilner

On March 10, the WISDOM affiliate group EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing) hosted an online town hall forum to give voters an opportunity to learn more about Deborah Kerr and Jill Underly, the two candidates running for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in the election on April 6. EXPO member Jerome Dillard served as moderator for the event, which focused on how each candidate proposed to address issues contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

After Kerr and Underly briefly introduced themselves, five EXPO members shared personal stories about their experiences with the school system and posed related questions to the candidates. Both educators seemed well acquainted with all of the programs referenced, such as the ACE scale and trauma-informed care, Know Your Rights training, and Truancy Abatement and Burglary Suppression (TABS) initiatives.

The candidates agreed on many issues, recognizing the importance of helping parents learn how to advocate for their children; making sure parents, students, and school personnel are all aware of students' rights, especially as they relate to interacting with school resource officers; and finding ways to increase the number of school social workers in the state, so that every school has a social worker on staff to help students and address issues as they arise. Both candidates talked about the need for equity audits to find and address, for example, educational and disciplinary inequities, which often fall along racial lines.

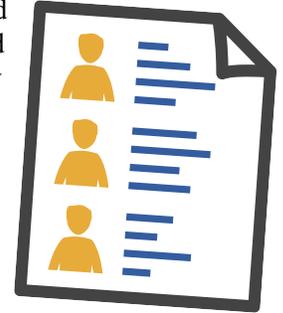
Underly, who is currently the school district superintendent in Pecatonica, mentioned several times the importance of increasing funding for mental health resources. When answering a question about supporting advocacy training for parents, she expressed her interest in the Harlem Achievement Zone and Baby College model described by Paul Tufts in his book *Whatever It Takes*, which describes his experience of dramatically increasing parents' involvement in their children's education.

Kerr, who used to be the superintendent in Brown Deer, answered a question about ways to end out-of-school suspensions and expulsions by sharing stories from the character-education program she implemented in her district. According to Kerr, after weekly lessons of trust, respect, tolerance, diversity, and acceptance, records showed a dramatic decrease in suspensions and expulsions,

which Kerr and her staff realized had been given out to Black and brown students more frequently than to white students.

Kerr and Underly differed slightly on the issue of police in schools or school resource officers (SROs). Kerr emphasized the school-partner and resource relationship of SROs, indicating that she had a positive experience with them in Brown Deer, but adding that she would be open to talking with EXPO about removing them from schools. Underly also felt there might be a place for SROs, but felt the priority should be on strengthening other services, such as restorative justice, social services, and mental health professionals. Underly was also willing to work with EXPO on this issue.

Dillard concluded the hour by telling the candidates that "You have heard from EXPO," and stating that EXPO wants to be a partner and part of the solution and is looking forward to working with whoever is elected on April 6. ■



Upcoming Meetings (via Zoom)

MOSES Meetings

- [General Membership](#)
 - Sunday, April 11, 2:30 p.m.
 - Sunday, May 2, 2:30 p.m.
 - Sunday, June 6, 2:30 p.m.
- [Leadership Board](#)
 - Saturday, May 15, 9-11 a.m.

Task Forces

- Public Safety, April 15, 6 p.m.
- Racial Justice for All Children, May 4, 4 p.m.
- Justice System Reform Initiative, May 13, 6:30 p.m.
- Public Safety, May 20, 6 p.m.

Meet Returning Citizen LaToya Greer

By Cindy Lovell

If you ever have the privilege to meet LaToya Greer, you'll no doubt notice her intelligence and strong beliefs. She talks with energy and has an infectious smile. Less visible, behind her confident exterior, is all the pain and growth that led her to be the person of love and hope that she is today.

Born in 1989, Greer grew up on the tough west side of Chicago. As a child, she thought it was normal to get low when gunshots were heard. When the gun fight ended, people would go back to their business. She saw her first dead body outside her front gate at age 9.

Inside her home was not much safer. Greer initially lived in a multigenerational household with her grandmother, mother, two aunts, an uncle, and many cousins. She always felt like an outcast in her home. Nobody wanted to deal with any personal, tough issues, such as substance abuse.

When Greer was 12 she told her mother that she had been molested by multiple people since she was 7. Although the sexual abuse stopped, no one besides her mother really believed her. She learned to not say what she felt and developed a closed-off armor to protect herself. She felt even more estranged from her family.

To escape her chaotic home life, Greer became involved with gangs. This also allowed her to spend more time with her cousins, whom she admired and wanted to emulate.

Greer bounced around where she lived and with whom. After eighth grade, her biggest fear was realized when she had to live with her mother. They moved a lot, and Greer attended four different high schools. Some places they lived, such as East Chicago, Ind., were very racist. Greer rebelled; she drank alcohol and did drugs.

However, she had to act more responsibly when her brother was born. Her mother was battling a tough past and addictions and had difficulty caring for her children. Greer often missed school because there was no other babysitter available. It was up to her to put food on the table and keep the lights on, so she started selling drugs and her body.

Greer's first arrest was at age 7. At age 15, she was arrested because her mother called the police on her. Greer had refused to leave a neighbor's house because her mother had been drinking and was going to beat her. The police told Greer that she had two choices: return home or go to jail. Greer chose jail.

At that point, she started working on straightening up her life. She eventually attended community college and became a CNA. In 2016, Greer moved to Madison. Her last time behind bars was that same year.



LaToya Greer

In Greer's neighborhood, she noticed that children were frequently hungry, coming to her (whom they called "Tee-Tee") for snacks. She and a friend from church started providing bagged lunches for the children.

When another friend of hers was shot and killed, Greer felt called to do more for her community. Through her work as an IHOP waitress, she had met Caliph Muab 'El, a community activist and a former MOSES designated vice president. Greer asked him how she could do similar work. Muab 'El introduced

her to local organizations, and through her new connections she found ways to channel her pain and anger.

Greer started by coordinating meetings with local agencies to develop the MUNCH (Madison Unites to Nourish Children at Home) Truck. This program, run by the River Food Pantry, distributes free lunches to children and teens on Madison's north side when the Madison Metropolitan School District is not in session. She now works at the Tenant Resource Center and is the Madison organizer for the FREE campaign, which is part of EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing) and supports women impacted by incarceration. Greer finds fulfillment in helping others and is grateful to have a salary, to finally not have to worry about money.

Greer would like those who are incarcerated to hear the message of Marcus Mosiah Garvey: If you liberate your mind, then ultimately your body will follow. She believes people can free their minds with knowledge. She herself is on a journey of learning, not just about herself, but about things that she never used to care about, such as law, government, and politics. She is proud of her library of books.

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“Although people in prison are in a certain space,” she asserts, “that space is not who they are. When they come home, we need their minds to be lifted so they can help liberate others. All of the experiences that we encounter are not just for ourselves. We can use them to lift up others.”

When asked what she would like people in MOSES to know, Greer quoted Timothy Drew Ali: “Learn to love instead of hate.” She said MOSES does great work and wants MOSES members to remember that the prison system is made up of *people*, who need to feel valued, loved, and worthy. They do not want to be seen as labels — “criminals” or “minorities” — or to be objects of pity. She reminds MOSES members to continue to look at themselves, because we are all somehow impacted by the criminal justice system, even if not directly.

Through training by Gamaliel (a national network that WISDOM

belongs to), Greer learned that the only barriers in her life are the ones she creates. She no longer sees barriers and realizes that anything is possible. “Where I am now was only a vision I could see,” she says. “I couldn’t really see it as possible, but it was. *It is!*”

Although people in prison are in a certain space, that space is not who they are.

Faith is what helps Greer the most. She believes strongly that faith without works is dead. Her faith is alive with loving actions in her neighborhood, her career, and her family.

Greer now lives with her 5-year-old daughter and is working to gain custody of her 11-year-old nephew. She also treasures her “street family,” who may not be blood, but who are full of love. She continues working on her relationship with her mother.

LaToya Greer isn’t just a survivor; she’s an articulate, faithful, sincere, and ever-growing citizen, full of passion, who uses her gifts to advocate for others. ■

First Unitarian Hosts Virtual First Friday Film Event

By Pam Gates

On Friday, March 5, First Unitarian Society showed the film “Trapped: Cash Bail in America” via Zoom and provided a panel of three experts in the field to answer audience questions, again via Zoom. Kathy Luker and Lisa Munro of the FUS MOSES team presented the questions to panelists Kelli Thompson of the state Public Defenders Office, Dee Hall of Wisconsin Watch, and UW-Madison law professor and MOSES member Dr. Pamela Oliver.

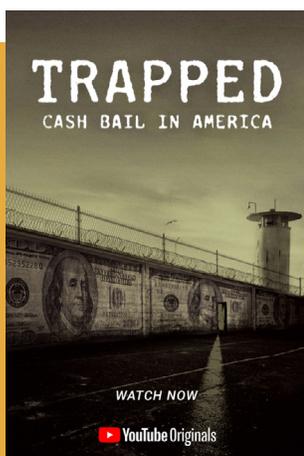
The bail system in America, the film and the panelists made clear, bears a strong resemblance to the supervision system in America, and it is very difficult for those of little means to deal with. The first word in the film title is telling: People truly are trapped if they cannot post bail, and they may be trapped even if they can.

They are held in jail without being convicted, and possibly without even being charged, while they await a hearing. Even if they do post bail, rules may be added to their bail terms, creating situations very similar to being on supervision. Bail jumping, which according to panelist Dee Hall is one of the top charges in Wisconsin, can simply be a deliberate or an inadvertent failure to follow one of those rules. For example, the person out on bail may have to avoid drinking or avoid certain areas or certain persons.

The filmmakers presented many aspects of the bail system and interviewed activists from different parts of the United States. Challenges to the cash bail system began in 2015, starting with the assertion that the system is unconstitutional as practiced. Harris County, Texas, where Houston is located, recently chose to eliminate cash bail; a judge who was elected on that platform said people *want* to go to their hearings and take care of their business. A group in Philadelphia set up a Mother’s Day bail fund so moms could be home for Mother’s Day. Bail bond company spokespersons presented their side, at least claiming that they operate as friends to the defendant. (There is an explanation of bail bonding in this issue’s book review. The practice is not allowed in Wisconsin or in three other states but is a legitimate business in the rest of the country. The only other country in the world that allows bail bonding is the Philippines.)

The three panelists addressed some of the local issues around bail. They cited different bail funds around Wisconsin, e.g. in Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee. In Dane County, Free the 350 has set up a bail fund, and most of those freed through that fund since last summer have honored the terms of their bail. Panelists also made the point that the actual cost of incarcerating people is very high, and that prisons are the largest, least effective, and most expensive mental hospitals in the state.

You can access “Trapped: Cash Bail in America,” a very interesting, thought-provoking film, on [YouTube](#). ■



Evers' Budget: Encouraging Signs from the Governor's Office

By Katie Mulligan

Gov. Evers and his appointees have been listening to advocates for criminal justice reform. That is the hopeful message from two virtual presentations about the governor's budget.

In a Department of Corrections (DOC) Town Hall meeting, Secretary Carr supported ideas that our members have long advocated. He emphasized the importance of "implementing alternatives to incarceration whenever possible to do so safely" and "enabling people in our care to function better in the community."

Carr directed staff to identify areas that would make the biggest impact on Evers' efforts to bring about criminal justice reform. The Earned Release program rose to the top of his list. "Without comprehensive criminal justice reform, [it] is one of the few methods we have internally to reduce our prison population," argued Carr.



The Earned Release budget would increase \$ 3.4 million over the two-year period, allowing programming for an additional 990 participants each year. The program provides evidence-based vocational, educational, and treatment programs that enable participants to decrease time in prison and function more effectively upon release to their communities.

Here are other programs highlighted in the Town Hall.

Opening Avenues to Reentry Success – The budget would increase by \$5.3 million over the two-year period, permitting enrollment to expand by an additional 167 participants each year. The program supports the prison-to-community transition of people with a serious mental illness who are at medium-to-high risk of reoffending.

Community Alternatives to Revocation – The budget would increase by \$3 million over the two-year period. The program supports community-based mental health and substance abuse services that allow a person subject to revocation to participate in court-ordered alternatives that promote success outside of prison.

Medication-Assisted Treatment Expansion – The budget would increase by \$1.6 million over the two-year period. The program treats substance abuse with medication and is open to people nearing prison release or on community supervision who have self-identified an opioid use disorder or been arrested for an opioid-related crime.

Windows to Work – The budget would increase by \$500,000

over the two-year period, permitting enrollment to expand by an additional 90 participants. The program provides pre- and post-release help in finding jobs. Participants receive job training while in prison, personalized help from a job coach, and access to community resources, including housing.

In their forum on the budget, titled Forward Wisconsin, Assembly Democrats highlighted increases in the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program. WISDOM played a key role in creating the program in 2005 and pushed for steady increases in funding. Evers' budget shows a great leap forward with his request of an additional \$15 million over the two-year period and expansion of eligibility to people in need of mental health services. TAD offers an array of cost-effective treatment and diversion programs that have proven successful in keeping people out of prison.

Assembly Democrats also advocated for a proposal that would bring WISDOM's idea of a justice reinvestment fund close to reality.

Legalize and tax the recreational use of marijuana – If enacted, it would produce \$165.8 million in annual tax revenue. Sixty percent of those funds—approximately \$80 million— would go to a new community reinvestment fund. That money would support grants to promote diversity and advance equity, funding community health workers, equity action plans, and businesses in underserved communities.

These positive developments come with an important caveat. Since Evers presented his budget proposal, Republican leaders of the Joint Finance Committee have announced plans to develop their own budget proposal. Evers' budget offers ideas for advocacy and a guide to the kind of proposals that will attract the support of his administration. ■

Save the Date for a Virtual Lunch and Learn!

Friday, May 14, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Myra McNair, founder and director of Anesis, will speak to us about trauma therapy. Trauma is often a root cause of why a person ends up in the criminal justice system.

This event is free and open to the public.



The Shadow System: Mass Incarceration and the American Family

By Sylvia A. Harvey, 2020

Reviewed by Pam Gates

Sylvia Harvey lost her mother to asthma when she was 3 and her father to prison when she was 5. Raised by her grandmother, she survived this wrenching start to become an award-winning journalist. Events of her childhood are likely the motivation behind this book, which follows the fortunes of several families as they deal with an incarcerated loved one who is also a parent.

Harvey observes each family with compassionate interest, chronicling their ups and downs as they interact with their loved one and deal with the confines of the system. She does not excuse foolish or harmful and illegal behaviors, though she may offer explanations for such behaviors. Her message, though, concerns the difficulty of maintaining parent-child relationships under prison conditions and how the system punishes the family as well as the offender.

The incarcerated parents Harvey follows are, for the most part, determined to have a part in their children's lives, even though some are lifers. She describes the resourcefulness of both the parents and the families: how the phone is a godsend, how organizations that facilitate prison visits are another godsend, how a transfer to a prison located hours away can make the parent-child relationship even more difficult by making visits impossibly rare.

Harvey describes, as well, some very compassionate arrangements, such as one in Mississippi's Parchman Prison: family-visit areas, where families could stay with their loved one for extended visits, including overnights. That program has been terminated, ostensibly, at least, due to costs.

Speaking of costs, having a loved one in prison is expensive. There are costs associated with visits (e.g., gas), unconscionably high telephone expenses, loss of the incarcerated person's income or potential income, court costs, parole fees, and lawyer costs for anyone besides a public defender.

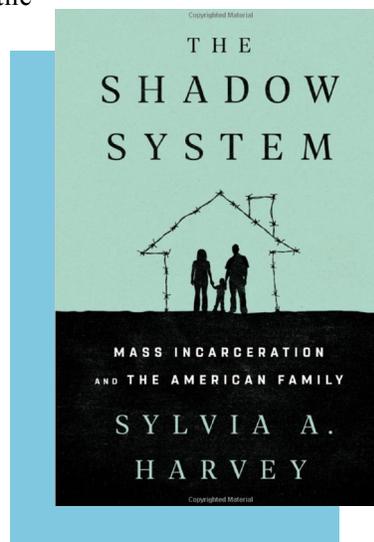
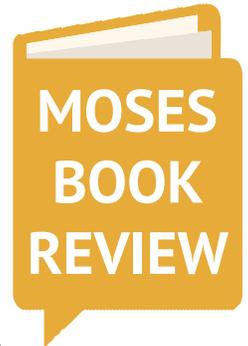
A huge cost that I was not aware of is bail bonding, which fortunately is not allowed in Wisconsin; we are one of only four states that do not allow it. But its cruel, predatory nature is obvious. I'll use Harvey's example to demonstrate this:

The youngest son of one of "her" families is involved in a bungled robbery attempt. It's a classic case of youthful lack of judgment, though this youth is 20 and thus beyond any hope of juvenile court. Bail is set at \$250,000, which Harvey deemed punitively high, for no one had been hurt and the money was recovered. Race, she felt, was a factor in the oversized bail amount.

A bondsman would pay the bail so the young man could be free to carry out his responsibilities while awaiting court appearance, but the bondsman would keep 10 percent, or \$25,000. This family did not have anywhere near that much money. Some families put up collateral, such as homes or vehicles, but these were, probably fortunately, not possibilities for this family. A family of low means that can and does put so much in hock becomes even more victimized by the whole system, and any hope of moving beyond this enmeshment appears even more hopeless.

The overall impression one gets from *The Shadow System* is a growing awareness that we are an extremely punitive society, and that our will to punish extends well beyond the person who has been convicted: to the families, to the communities, and especially to the children. Harvey is sympathetic to the families and their struggles but maintains a dispassionate air in her observations. We draw our own conclusions from her presentations of facts. We also learn that there are ways to make these struggles easier.

We in MOSES are gaining awareness of just how severely America's mass incarceration system afflicts not only those being directly punished, but their families and their communities as well, and, ultimately, all of us in the wider community. *The Shadow System* lays out the family aspects clearly. I highly recommend it. ■



Why I Am a Sustaining Member

By Nancy Kosseff

As a large animal veterinarian, my dad needed to live near his farm clients, so I grew up in small rural communities. I had little exposure to people of color as a child, and no real awareness of racial disparities. I gained more insight as a result of several significant experiences during high school and college, and during a career in social work in diverse low-income communities.

Through our Unitarian congregation, I had been involved in social justice work for years prior to my encounter with MOSES; however, it was largely service work, such as helping at homeless shelters and supplying food pantries, or bearing witness by showing up for Pride parades and peace vigils. While these activities are important, I know that they are not enough, without strong advocacy to change the policies responsible for injustice in the first place.

I encountered MOSES 9 or 10 years ago, not long after its formation. I remember being moved by a 2010 sermon from our minister, Michael Schuler, which focused on the extreme racial disparities in jail and prison, and over-incarceration, particularly in Wisconsin.

Not long after, Carol Rubin, who became our first MOSES president, came to our congregation with a presentation about MOSES. Carol's presentation, along with a press conference at the Capitol announcing WISDOM's 11x15 campaign, led to my participation, and to the formation of a MOSES ministry team within our congregation.

I have been deeply inspired by the committed advocates I have met through MOSES. I love being part of an interfaith group of people with diverse life experiences

but a common purpose. I have been privileged to watch MOSES grow from a fledgling group of a few committed individuals into a larger, well-organized, and highly effective change agent in Madison and Dane County. I am glad that MOSES elevates the voices of those most impacted by injustice in our jails and prisons and by the racial inequities in our community. Organizations like MOSES need an ongoing and dependable stream of funds to continue to operate effectively. I want MOSES to survive and to thrive for years to come. That is why my husband, Andy, and I are glad to support MOSES with a regular monthly contribution and with periodic one-time gifts. ■



Nancy Kosseff

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Please Consider a Monthly Contribution to MOSES

Download the form from the [MOSES website](http://www.mosesmadison.org), fill it out, and mail it with a voided check to MOSES, PO Box 7031, Madison, WI 53707. If you have any questions, direct them to treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com.

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