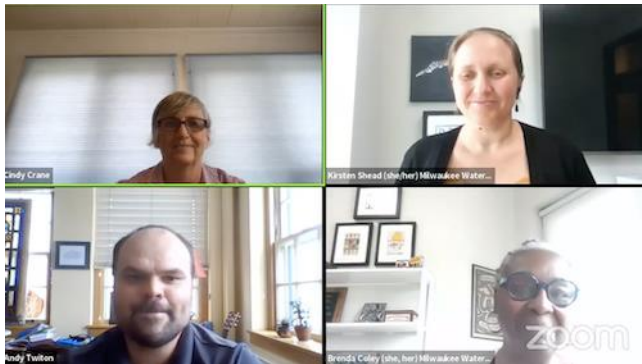




September Updates



Wednesday Noon Live
Co-Executive Directors Kirsten Shead
and Brenda Coley of the Milwaukee Water Commons offer great insight related to the following:

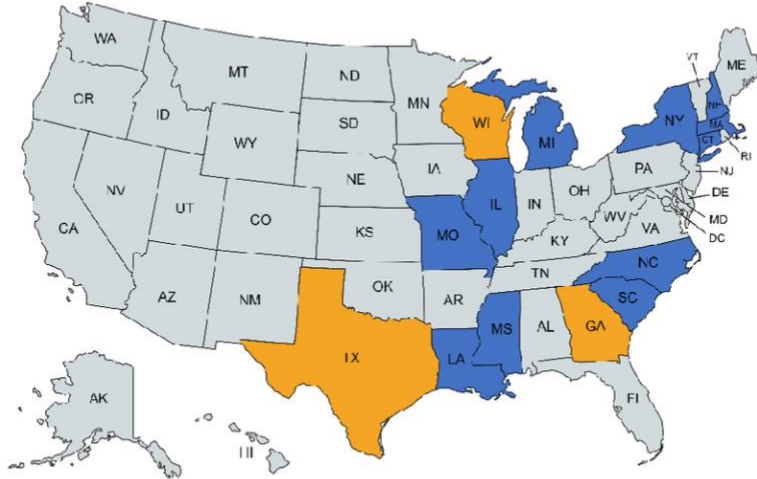
- the state of water quality in Milwaukee and other parts of Wisconsin
- the meaning of environmental justice
- the intersection of climate change and water
- hope locally and federally



Welcome to our new Hunger Advocacy Fellow, Frances Dobbs, who started with LOPPW this week! Frances joins five other 2023/24 fellows serving in Pennsylvania, New York, Washington, D.C., Arizona, and Washington. Hear a few words from Frances: [**Meet Frances!**](#)



Raise the Age (RTA) Is Right for Wisconsin



SUPPORTED BY VOTERS

- Forty-seven states process 17-year-olds in their juvenile justice systems. Only Georgia, Texas and Wisconsin do not.¹
- Deep red states such as Louisiana and South Carolina, blue states such as New York and Massachusetts, and purple states such as Michigan and North Carolina have all passed RTA legislation in the past 10 years.

Update on Raise the Age

Returning 17-year-old youth to the juvenile justice system

Two Republicans have authored a bill returning youth 17 years old to the juvenile justice system. This bill, not yet public, has bi-partisan support, but we are still concerned that within one party it may run into barriers. Next week, LOPPW staff and the chair of the Raise the Age Coalition will meet with one of the bill's authors to gather more information about the bill's status.

How does Wisconsin compare to other states and why is it important to treat youth who are 17 years old as youth?

Wisconsin, Georgia, and Texas are the only states that automatically send youth 17 years old into the adult criminal justice system. States who Raised the Age for being tried as an adult to 18 have seen crime rates plummet and improved outcomes for youth in the system. These outcomes include a growth in high school graduation rates, lower racial disparities, and improved mental health care. States are also seeing these improved outcomes translate to fiscal savings. All told, raising the age has been proven to keep communities safer, decrease government spending, lower racial disparities, and, most importantly, improve the lives of youth caught in the criminal justice system.

Racial Disparities

Wisconsin has the second highest black-white incarceration disparity in the country. While this disparity needs to be addressed at all levels of the system, reforming how we treat the youngest people in our criminal justice system can have compounding effects in reducing racial disparities across the board. Kids Forward has found that the automatic transfer of young people into the adult system disproportionately affect youth of color. And once they are in the adult system, black and Native American youth “are more likely to face conviction in adult court, especially for drug-related crimes.” Bringing youth back into the juvenile system and funding effective rehabilitation and diversion programs reduces racial disparities within the criminal justice system and ensures that the lives of our youth aren’t destroyed by a mistake made in their adolescence.

All of the above information and more can be found on the [Raise the Age](#) website, to which several organizations have contributed and is managed by LOPPW.

Stay tuned for action alerts. In addition, feel free to contact us about presentations.



God's Work Our Hands Sunday is on September 10, but we are aware that many churches recognize the Sunday on a different date. Here are some [GWOH Advocacy Resources](#).

God's Work Our Hands resources include a sample letter on the Farm Bill. In addition, find more

information on the Farm Bill and an additional sample letter at the top of [this page](#).

Wisconsin U.S. Representatives - [Wisconsin Congressional Map](#)
Or, look up your government officials [here](#).

- 1st district: Bryan Steil - <https://steil.house.gov/>
- 2nd district: Mark Pocan - <https://pocan.house.gov/>
- 3rd district: Derrick Van Orden - <https://vanorden.house.gov/>
- 4th district: Gwen Moore - <https://gwenmoore.house.gov/>
- 5th district: Scott Fitzgerald - <https://fitzgerald.house.gov/>
- 6th district: Glenn Grothman - https://grothman.house.gov
- 7th district: Thomas Tiffany - <https://tiffany.house.gov/>
- 8th district: Mike Gallagher - <https://gallagher.house.gov/>

Wisconsin U.S. Senators

Tammy Baldwin - <https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/>
Ron Johnson - <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/>

Upper Peninsula of Michigan District Representative

1st district: Jack Bergman - <https://bergman.house.gov/>

Michigan U.S. Senators

Debbie Stabenow - <https://www.stabenow.senate.gov/>

Gary C. Peters - <https://www.peters.senate.gov/>

You are also able to use the above contacts to support the **Protect-Vulnerable-Immigrant-Youth-Act-of-2023**: Tell Congress to address the tremendous backlogs within the EB-4 category, which impacts religious workers in our communities. One concrete way to address the problem and to also help youth would be to pass The Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act (learn more here: [Protect-Vulnerable-Immigrant-Youth-Act-of-2023](#)). The act would bring overdue reforms to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) by exempting vulnerable youth from annual visa limits misaligned with the congressional intent behind this humanitarian classification. By doing so, the act would help ensure access to vital protections for young immigrant survivors of trafficking, abuse, domestic violence, and other harms. The act would also ease backlogs and free up visas for people such as religious workers, while allowing the children to continue life in the United States as lawful permanent residents. Read more in [this article](#).

Afghan Adjustment Act

In addition, please consider supporting the bi-partisan Afghan Adjustment Act now by clicking onto the link, and/or on God's Work Our Hands Sunday. This bill would allow Afghans who sought refuge in the United States to apply for permanent legal residency after undergoing additional vetting. Respond to this [Action Alert](#).

Thank you for taking time with us!