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## Voting While Incarcerated

By Pam Gates

*Want to help make sure that all eligible voters cast their votes in the next election? Here's how to get started!*

### Voting is a Constitutional Right

In the most recent election, only 50 of the 13,000 people in Wisconsin jails at the time actually voted. But voting is a constitutional right. Convicted felons lose that right in Wisconsin until they have done all their time, but most of those in our jails are not convicted felons.

This summer, the ACLU of Wisconsin held two webinars on voting while in jail. The first session offered training for volunteers who want to help people in jail register to vote and request a ballot. This session offered an impressive array of materials developed by Chippewa Valley Votes (CVV), materials that should capably guide any group that wants to assure eligible Wisconsinites who are in jail at election time equal access to voting. The second webinar offered an overview of voting rights for incarcerated citizens. Participants included ACLU-WI advocacy director Tomás Clasen (who emceed), Shantee Nelson of All Voting Is Local, Eileen Newcomer of the League

of Women Voters (LWV), and Karen Voss, CVV volunteer coordinator.

"For democracy to work for all of us, all of us must vote," Nelson declared. Jail administrators are de facto election administrators, she said. In fact, some localities (though not in Wisconsin) allow in-person voting in the jails. And there has been a promising increase in the number of Wisconsin county jails with voting policies in place. In 2020 fewer than half had such policies, but in 2021 two-thirds did.

*For democracy to work for all of us, all of us must vote.*

To vote while in jail, LWV's Newcomer said, people need access to the MyVote website and to information about the candidates and the issues. They also generally need assistance from election officials. The photo-ID law can be a stumbling block, because sometimes that document is confiscated by jail personnel. However, it can be requested for the purposes of voter registration and voting.

### Helping People in Jail to Vote

CVV's Karen Voss said that the Eau Claire County jail administration was very interested in getting people in jail to vote. "We met with jail administrators, who looked through the guidelines to develop a plan,"

### Executive Committee

Rachel Kincade, President  
Saundra Brown, Vice President  
Cindy Lovell, Secretary  
Fawn Bilgere, Assistant Secretary  
Pat Watson, Treasurer  
Joan Duerst,  
Faith Leaders Caucus

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Justice System Reform Initiative  
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Jeanie Verschay  
Racial Justice for All Children  
Barbie Jackson  
Saundra Brown  
Public Safety  
Gloria Stevenson-McCarter  
Tina Hogle

### WISDOM Task Forces

Post-Release  
Prison Prevention  
Old Law Parole  
Conditions of Confinement

### MOSES Operational Team Leads

Communication Team Contact  
Margaret Irwin  
Fundraising  
Rachel Kincade  
Joan Duerst  
Member Engagement  
Karen Julesberg

### MOSES Caucus

Faith Leaders Caucus  
Joan Duerst  
Michael Marshall

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she said. Part of the plan was volunteers meeting one-on-one with people held in the jail. They used the MyVote app and found it worked well for requesting an absentee ballot. “It’s my feeling that we’re just getting started,” Voss said. “We’re developing a voter’s manual. We’re going to hold voter-education events in the fall, meeting with about 20 people at a time. Every jail resident goes back to a community, and 75 percent of jail residents are there 10 days or less. We need a process like this for hospitalized voters,” she added, noting that “anyone can do this [voter assistance], if they’re willing to dig in.”

*The basic needs are a receptive jail staff, volunteers to help register voters, and community support.*

from one’s own experience are excellent persuasion techniques.” “We have 20 local Leagues around the state,” Newcomer said. “We’ll help you get started. Read the Toolkit. Now is a great time to build a relationship with jail administrators and county clerks.

Connect with the sheriff, the jail-exit coordinator, county board members, faith-based groups. Get to know people. The League of Women Voters can be helpful in connecting you.” Nelson recommended connecting with other groups that work on rights restoration, even group homes. “Think outside the box,” she urged. ■

## 2020 Toolkit

“There’s a momentum right now,” Voss continued. “We have more information now than even just a couple of years ago. Our 2020 Toolkit lays everything out. The basic needs are a receptive jail staff, volunteers to help register voters, and community support.” To get started, Voss said, make use of the resources she’s mentioned, including 2020 and 2021 reports from the League, the ACLU, and All Voting Is Local.org, and talk to the county clerk. Join an advocacy group such as the LWV. Educate yourself and formulate the process you’ll need to help people gain access to a right they actually have, the right to vote.

“Consistency is key to dealing with everybody,” Nelson said. “Find out who’s been impacted by voter restrictions and get them to join you, to add their perspective. Storytelling and speaking

## Resources to help you get started:

- **ACLU Website**: A jail-based-voting report and a jail-voting toolkit
- **League of Women Voters** website
- **All Voting Is Local**: A report on voting in Wisconsin jails
- **Wisconsin Elections Commission** website
- **Eau Claire County Manual for Voting**: Located on the Eau Claire County website
- **Chippewa Valley Votes**: 2020 Toolkit

# “We’re in this for the long haul” - The WISDOM (and MOSES) Legacy Fund

*By Ann Lacy*

The work of WISDOM could be summed up as an unending effort to build up the Beloved Community. This work is not going to be finished soon. As David Liners, WISDOM State Director, stated in an August email, “We’re in this for the long haul.” Anyone who has been through a WISDOM training appreciates that organized people and organized money are the keys to a successful organization.

Thanks to a generous anonymous donation, this spring WISDOM was able to set up the WISDOM Legacy Fund, which will be overseen by the WISDOM Fundraising Committee. WISDOM invested \$150,000 in a socially responsible



fund through the Greater Milwaukee Foundation on behalf of WISDOM itself and WISDOM affiliates around the state; MOSES invested \$10,000. Should we need to access our contribution or should we wish to add more to the fund, withdrawals and deposits are possible twice a year, on October 1 and April 1.

Meanwhile, what we have invested in the fund grows, helping to ensure that MOSES and WISDOM will endure and thrive long into the future. Individuals are also able to donate to the fund at any time. For more information, please contact MOSES Treasurer, Pat Watson, [treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com) or the WISDOM office, [office@wisdomwisconsin.org](mailto:office@wisdomwisconsin.org). ■

# Organizer's Corner: Thoughts on SB411 and Critical Race Theory

By Eugene Crisler 'El

I recently attended a listening session on Senate (and Assembly) Bill 411 in the State Capitol. SB411 prohibits schools from teaching anything about race or sex stereotyping and prohibits requiring any employee to attend training on race or sex stereotyping.

## Procedural Issues at the Hearing

There were many procedural issues at the hearing. For one thing, the order in which voices would be heard did not follow the order in which they'd signed up.

Supporters of the bill went first and got the most speaking time. I felt an overwhelming energy in the room, an energy filled with pushback and extremely irrational statements that were used to justify banning study of the racial history that has brought us to where we are today. I heard someone say that this hearing was just theatre, and they walked out. Many other people sat for hours waiting to have their voices heard, but never were.



Eugene Crisler 'El

## Banning the Teaching of Critical Race Theory

I have found that many individuals favor banning the teaching of critical race theory (CRT), which wasn't exactly what was being addressed in SB411. I know many who would prefer to keep a simpler version of our American history unchanged, even though so much of our history is much clearer in these modern days. We need to be able to understand why and how we as a society have been indoctrinated into this false sense of race that was formed into a reality.

The reality is that even within our own state government we are fighting with race issues. When the only Black female representative on a committee stands up and states that Wisconsin incarcerates more African Americans, percentage-wise, than any other state, she is silenced by an opposing party that clearly wishes to ban such questions along with CRT.

## Voices Need to Be Heard

There is also something wrong with tokenizing someone of another complexion, an individual who may not understand CRT, and asking him, because he was not afforded the opportunity to speak in person, what version of CRT he knew. A white man uses a Black man's video, but the Black man may not know or understand his own reasoning for supporting the banning of CRT. I've witnessed how strategic

the parties are about which voices need to be heard and which issues should have the most support. In this case, the purpose wasn't to keep CRT, but to eliminate it.

## We Are All One

How do we move on from what many African Americans may not know about their ancestors? We are all one and from one body, this we know; but we also know and understand that there was a creation of rather than "race" and now we have made that a reality. This isn't something that goes away just by thinking it away. How do we as a people act on CRT, and understand that maybe it can be applied to any "race"? A professor at the hearing said if we are going to keep CRT, then we need to speak about racial injustices by all groups of people. Although he was very strong spoken he had a point that I agreed on. How do we teach CRT in a manner that can be received without feeling like one race is superior to the next? How can we teach hard truths without looking to hate one another? For starters, Love Thy Neighbor as you Love your Higher power. ■

## Upcoming Meetings (via Zoom)

### MOSES Meetings

#### General Membership

- Sunday, November 7, 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, December 5, 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 9, 2:30 p.m.

#### Leadership Board

- Saturday, November 20, 9-11 a.m.
- Saturday, January 15, 9-11 a.m.

### Task Forces

- **Justice Reform Initiative (JSRI)**, October 14 & November 11, 6:30 p.m.
- **Public Safety**, October 21 and November 18, 6 p.m.
- **Racial Justice for All Children**, October 5 & November 2, 4 p.m.



# What is the WISDOM “Re-set” and What Does it Mean for the ROC Campaign and for MOSES?

By Ann Lacy

**W**ISDOM is using the second half of 2021 to step back and take a really good look at how things are working in the organization: is WISDOM organized in the best way to get where we want to go? This evaluation process, the “WISDOM Re-set,” involves brainstorming among and within WISDOM affiliates on how to create effective lines of communication within the organization and how to more effectively coordinate the work that is being done by each affiliate to enable more opportunities for us to learn from and with each other.



A key component of the re-set, and one that will be of particular interest to MOSES members because of our focus on reforming the justice system, is looking at the Restoring Our Communities (ROC) Campaign. The ROC Campaign is the follow-up to WISDOM’s 11x15 Campaign, which had as its goal reducing

Wisconsin’s prison population to 11,000 by the end of 2015. WISDOM’s four statewide criminal justice task forces fall under the ROC umbrella.

## These are the goals for the ROC re-set:

- Collect and understand everything we have done and are doing in the campaign, on every level.
- Build our capacity to cause significant change in Wisconsin’s Justice System.
- Improve our ability to coordinate efforts across all parts of the ROC campaign, and improve internal communications.
- Improve external communication so that WISDOM members, the broader public, potential funders, and potential allies and adversaries have a better sense of what we do and who we are.
- Create a “center” for the campaign – a coordinating team, or something similar (NOT to be the people who tell everyone what to do, but to be the people who are in communication with everyone).

The process of assessing ROC and other justice reform work in WISDOM organizations is underway. To learn more, join the ROC re-set Zoom on the second Tuesday of each month at 5pm (when the Prison Prevention Group used to meet.) Email David Liners ([david.liners1@gmail.com](mailto:david.liners1@gmail.com)) for the meeting link. The end result of the ROC re-set should be a stronger and more effective ROC campaign. ■

# Thank you to our monthly sustaining donors!

By Pat Watson and Ann Lacy, for the Fundraising Team

**W**e are grateful for every contribution that MOSES receives, large or small. Donations of money are welcome, and so are donations of time and skill. We appreciate that so many MOSES members have stepped up time and again. As our Treasurer, Pat Watson, explained in the May/June newsletter, our monthly sustainers—the people who contribute a set amount to MOSES each month—are valuable because of the continuing income they provide, which helps us meet our monthly bills.

Rachel Kincade and the MOSES Fundraising Team began running annual drives for monthly sustainers in 2017; in five years, this giving opportunity has grown from zero participants in 2017 to 37 in 2021! Three of these monthly sustainers are new this year and six sustainers increased their monthly contributions. In celebration and gratitude, we brought these monthly sustainers together at the Burrows Park Shelter on a hot evening in August to meet and socialize with each other. Thank you, monthly sustainers! ■

Monthly sustainers together at the Burrows Park



# *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy*

By Ta-Nehisi Coates • 2017, Random House, 367 pages

Reviewed by Carol Rubin

*We Were Eight Years in Power* is a fascinating read. The author, Ta-Nehisi Coates, is a journalist with *The Atlantic* and the author of *Between the World and Me*, a huge bestseller about growing up Black in the U.S. *We Were Eight Years in Power* was named one of best books of 2018 by almost every major newspaper and magazine. In this volume, Coates includes one of his *Atlantic* essays from each year that Barack Obama was President and then adds current personal reflections about how and why he wrote the essay and what he would change if he were re-writing it today.

His most prominent essay is “The Case for Reparations,” which appeared in *The Atlantic* in 2014. Coates summarizes the century-long “plundering” (his term) of Blacks by tracing the life of Clyde Ross. Born in 1923 in Mississippi, Ross originally lived with his large family on a forty-acre farm with lots of animals but was repeatedly robbed by Southern society. Ross was one of 406 Black victims who had 24,000 acres of land, valued at tens of millions of dollars, stolen from them in the South. Ross came to understand that “he lived under the heel of a regime that elevated armed robbery to a governing principle,” and that any attempt to change that system legally would bring violence on his whole family.

So his family fled to Chicago in the Great Migration. He found employment but longed to buy a home. Coates notes that from the 1930s through the 1960s, Black people were excluded from legitimate home-mortgage markets such as FHA or the GI Bill because of “redlining” based on race. Ross, like many Blacks, fell into the trap of buying “on contract,” a predatory agreement that combined all the responsibilities of homeownership with all the disadvantages of renting. In 1968, Ross joined Chicago’s Contract Buyers League, a collection of Black homeowners who sought reparations for the systemic predation they had experienced; all their lawsuits were thrown out of court. Moreover, Social Security and unemployment insurance were effectively denied to 65 percent of African Americans nationally because farmworkers and domestics were excluded from coverage.

Later, Blacks were directed into the credit morass of sub-prime loans, causing them to eventually lose their homes. A 2012 study

## MOSES BOOK REVIEW

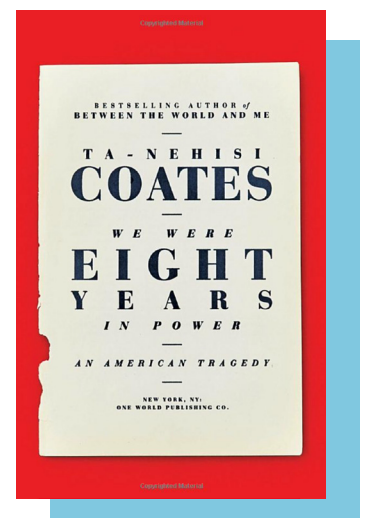
*The income gap between Black and white households is roughly the same today as it was in 1970, with white households worth roughly twenty times as much as Black households.*

found staggering differentials in credit rates. Thus, says Coates, “African Americans were locked out of the greatest mass-based opportunity for wealth accumulation in American history.” “The income gap between Black and white households is roughly the same today as it was in 1970, with white households worth roughly twenty times as much as Black households.” The discriminatory “plundering” continues into the present. In 2011, Bank of America agreed to pay \$355 million to settle discrimination charges for a sub-prime loan scheme in which 70 percent of the customers were Black. A year later Wells Fargo settled discrimination lawsuits for more than \$175 million for what they called “ghetto loans.”

Coates discusses some historical cases when reparations were paid. In early American history, Quakers made membership in their faith community contingent upon compensating one’s former slaves. Coates also describes the major reparations eventually paid by Germany to Israel after World War II: Germany agreed to pay more than \$7 billion dollars, “which funded a third of the total investments in Israel’s electrical system, which tripled its capacity, and nearly half the total investment in the railways.” This led to Israel’s GNP tripling during the twelve years of the reparations agreement.

Coates’ “Epilogue: The First White President” is also essential reading, making the case that “racism, as it has been since 1776, is at the heart of the country’s political life.” Coates is highly persuasive in discussing “the myth of the virtuous white working class” and the repeated blindness of even the political left in diagnosing the racist undercurrent of their own analyses.

The election of Donald Trump and the fact that the income gap between American whites and Blacks has not improved in 50 years are some of the damning facts Coates addresses in arguing that white supremacy continues



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to be the primary source of injury to Blacks. He also notes that for the past 25 years, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., introduced in every session of Congress a bill calling for “a congressional study of slavery and its lingering effects as well as recommendations for appropriate remedies.” Yet Congress has refused such a study. We owe it to Ta-Nehisi Coates to deeply engage with his conclusions both that reparations are necessary and that our country will remain “an American Tragedy” for many more years. ■

## Follow

@MOSESMadisonWI



**Join our Facebook Group: MOSES**  
Madison: for Criminal Justice Reform



## Transformation Celebration 2021

**November 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30-8 pm**

Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity  
announces the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual

**MOSES Transformation Celebration Fundraising Gala**  
at

**November 20, 2021 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM** MOSES will recognize three previously incarcerated individuals who have successfully worked through stigma and disparity to transform their lives. MOSES will lift up the stories of these individuals, their humanity, and their ability to change and give back to the community.

Through this celebration, MOSES hopes to inspire other previously incarcerated people to live their dreams.

**Join us as we come together virtually to hear the inspiring stories of our three honorees, to celebrate their accomplishments, and to learn more about the work of MOSES.**

The cost to register is \$50, and every dollar goes to support the work of MOSES, thanks to our event sponsors.

To register, click on the link below.

<https://mosesmadison.org/give/gala/>

**And on November 20<sup>th</sup>, dress up, order out, have a cocktail (or a mocktail), and ... prepare to be inspired**



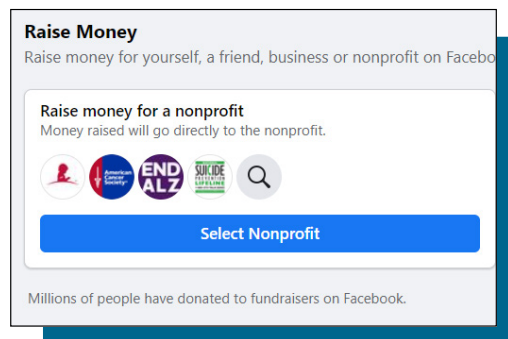


# How to Have a Facebook Fundraiser for MOSES

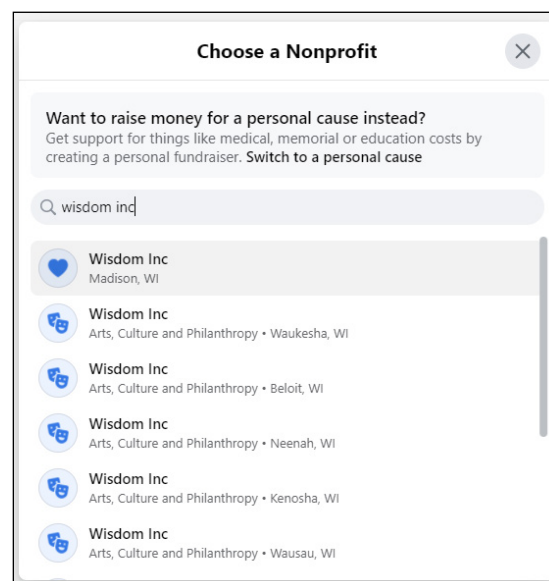
By Bonnie Magnuson

If you use Facebook a lot you have probably seen fundraising posts from friends celebrating a special event in their lives. Births, anniversaries, graduations, births, new jobs, retirements—all are fun to celebrate with friends. This summer, I had a Facebook fundraiser for MOSES—and once you’ve read this article, you’ll be able to use Facebook to raise money for MOSES too!

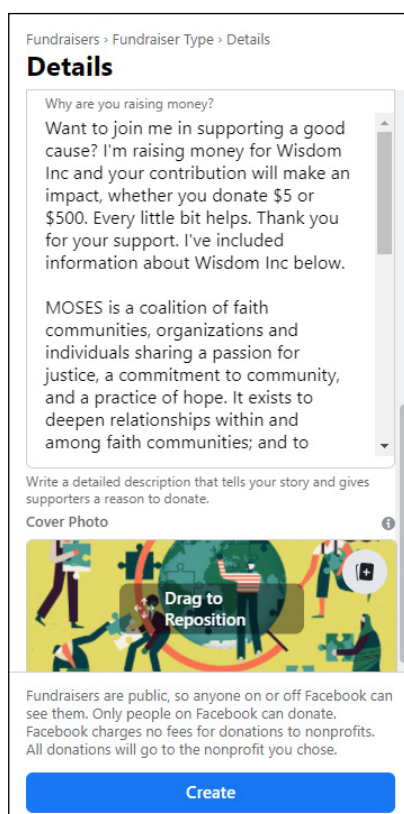
**1** To create your fundraiser, open your Facebook page and scroll to “Fundraisers” in the menu. You may need to select “Raise Money for a Nonprofit”.



**2** Because MOSES has its 501 (c) 3 designation through WISDOM, we appear as “Wisdom Inc, Madison, WI” in Facebook’s list of approved nonprofit organizations. To save time, search on this name. (You may also want to mention WISDOM Inc in your posting so your friends don’t think they have made a mistake in the name).



**3** Once you have chosen MOSES (as “Wisdom Inc, Madison, WI”) as your nonprofit, you will be able to edit the Details of the fundraiser. Rewrite the description to make it personal to you. When it meets your approval, hit the Create button at the bottom of the page and select the recipients.



## A Couple of Tips from Bonnie Magnuson

First, read the directions. They are very good. Then, don’t be shy. You are giving your friends an opportunity to support a cause you believe in. What I did not do was invite enough people. I think I thought that posting would somehow indicate that I had especially selected them. In fact, your request for funds will come across as a regular post. You can invite all your friends, or just selected people (but nobody who is not on Facebook).

Don’t hesitate to use the full amount of time Facebook recommends for your fundraiser and be sure to invite lots of people!

Then wait for the gifts to come in! It’s easy! Facebook will notify you each time someone makes a contribution. And don’t forget to thank your friends! ■

## Why I Am a Sustaining Member

By Alice Jenson

Several years ago, my husband and I were planning a trip to Australia. When I learned how long that trip would be, I panicked. I told John I would not go unless we had our wills finished. That led to a good discussion about causes that we both shared. We also realized that many of these causes would benefit from support now, while we are still alive! Every organization needs money for operating expenses – salaries among many more things.

When I joined MOSES several years ago, I learned about many practices that were treating people of color unfairly. Growing up in South Dakota, I knew little about discrimination. It was there, of course; I just wasn't aware of it.

That reminded me of the year I taught on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Gallup, New Mexico. I saw instances of discrimination, sometimes against Indians and sometimes against whites. But joining MOSES really opened my eyes.



Alice Jenson

I realized how much I didn't know about prison conditions and prison reform. How quickly I learned from attending the monthly meetings! I knew nothing about solitary confinement and how long men and women were confined to those cells. Now I know that is torture. Another shocking fact was when I heard pregnant women

in prison were being shackled when they were taken from their cells during exams, labor, and delivery!

In addition to the monthly meetings, we often had opportunities to talk to formerly imprisoned people in our organization. I learned about ankle bracelets that were faulty, resulting in arrests that were unwarranted.

Learning doesn't just happen in our heads. It happens in our hearts. I am moved by the stories of those directly impacted by the criminal justice system as well as the sharing by other MOSES members. I have met such interesting people in MOSES. I understand and share their concerns. But we can do more. We can become sustainers, which means donating every month. I recently increased my monthly amount. I will likely do that again. ■

*Learning doesn't just happen in our heads. It happens in our hearts. I am moved by the stories of those directly impacted by the criminal justice system as well as the sharing by other MOSES members.*

### How do you become a sustaining member?

It's easy! Decide how much you wish to contribute to MOSES each month (there is a \$10 monthly minimum to participate through electronic funds transfer), then download and fill out this [form](#), and mail the form with a voided check to MOSES, PO Box 7031, Madison, WI 53707. As an affiliate of WISDOM, MOSES shares in WISDOM's 501(c)3 status. To ensure that donations are tax-deductible, WISDOM coordinates the monthly electronic giving program through electronic funds transfer.

### Questions?

Contact [treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com).

### Thanks to MOSES Sponsors

