



Transforming our community together toward equity and justice through community organizing.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- What is RocActs
- What's New at RocActs
- Board Members
- New Organizations
- Voting Rights
- Leadership Assembly
- How to Get Involved
- *King's "Drum Major Instinct" and Us*
- *Not a Good Year for Voting Rights*
- RocACTS Justice System Task Force

GET INVOLVED

To learn more about Trainings, RocACTS Task Forces, and how to become a member, visit our website at: rochesteracts.org/get-involved



Visit our [Website Here>>>](http://rochesteracts.org)

King's "Drum Major Instinct" and Us

Among the many wisdom legacies of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is his understanding of this most basic aspect of our human nature. Rev. Dr. King reminds us of the drum major, being first instinct of the new born baby, crying out, "Me first!". We are simply made that way. We, in the greater Rochester Area, know it well. When it comes time to stand up for a community need for justice, organization after organization says, "Me first!", wanting to be the leader, the center of attention, often even forgetting that the community and its needs should be first, and that the community, God's Beloved Community, needs a whole team of "Drum Majors for Justice", rather than individual groups for only seeking their own reputations. Our wider Community needs a drum major for listening, a drum major for cooperative thinking, a drum major for building participation and partnership, a drum major for support and resources, a drum major for looking at how we, together, are working toward justice and a drum major for celebration. As we build the ministries of Roc ACTS, deepen our cooperative spirit, recognizing the gifts of each, committing our individual and organizational gifts to community building. Remember that there is no drum major without the band of marchers, drummers, trumpeters, and drum majors with a heart for public love, which Dr. King called justice.

Rev. Dr. William Huston Wilkinson
Vice President



VISION

An empowered and engaged community, grounded in shared values, working to build and sustain an equitable, just and moral society.

MISSION

Transforming our community together toward equity and justice through community organizing.

CONTACT US

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Not a Good Year for Voting Rights

Starting from 1965 when the Voting Rights Act was passed, one might have felt that universal voting rights were secure in law. The VRA gave the US Justice department extensive powers to intervene in state voting procedures to prevent virtually any measure that would have the effect of making voting more difficult for members of racial minorities. The act was strongly written, proof of intent was not required, only effect. The act was renewed by overwhelming majorities several times, most recently in 2006, when it was renewed by 98-0 in the Senate and 390-33 in the House. Alas, times changed.

The VRA was gutted by the Supreme Court in *Shelby v. Holder* in 2013, leaving states free to change their voting procedures as they see fit, right around the same time as the redistricting following the 2010 census saw unprecedented levels of gerrymandering in Republican-controlled states. The litany of restrictions on voting in Republican controlled states is long: voter ID requirements, restricting early voting times and locations, inadequate polling sites in Black neighborhoods, specious voter purges, and restrictions on absentee voting are all notorious and common.

Why is it so hard to fight these restrictions?

- Marginal voters are Democrats. Republicans turn out far more consistently than Democrats, so high turnout almost always favors Democrats. In Republican states, any measure that makes voting more difficult changes the results of the vote. In Republican-controlled states, Republican self-preservation favors restrictions on voting.
- Republicans have sufficient control at the Federal level to block federal legislation. As long as Republicans control the Senate (or even 40% of it, given the Senate rule that allows a minority to block action using the filibuster) no bill will be passed to require states to protect universal suffrage, as the Voting Rights Act did.

Though New York is a Democratic-controlled state, we are not immune from Republican voting-restriction hysteria. In the last election, the Conservative party spent a lot of money on TV ads scaring Republican New Yorkers enough to cause them to turn out in big numbers to reject amendments which could have given us same-day registration and no-excuse absentee voting.

Barbara Grosh

President of the Rochester Chapter of the League of Women Voters

LWV-RMA.org

ESL AND WILSON GRANTS FURTHER THE MISSION OF RocACTS



For More information, contact the
RocACTS office at 585-546-7669

WELCOME TO RocACTS

We would like to welcome the following organizations to RocACTS:

Presbyterian Church of Medina
League of Women Voters
Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester

WELCOME

INTERNAL ORGANIZER

Joanne Balliet – RocACTS Office



Ralph Carter
Third Presbyterian Church

Roberta Davis/ Secretary
Indigenous Spirituality

Virginia Fifield
Sisters of Mercy

Barbara Green, Treasurer
Church of the Assumption

Rev. Lawrence Hargrave
1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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St Joseph's Church, Penfield

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Tiffany Moore-Corteville
The League of Women Voters

Windsor Wade
Downtown United Presbyterian Church

Gaynelle Wethers
1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

Rev. Dr. William Huston Wilkinson, Vice-President
Center for the Welcoming Way

RocACTS Justice System Task Force

Third Church Anti-Racism Team

Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester and Baber AME

To create safe spaces that enable difficult conversations in order to understand, educate, empower, and advocate for policy change and provide a venue for lifting the voices of people experiencing gross injustice.

Legislative Initiatives:

Daniel's Law for mental health emergencies
Remove discipline from collective bargaining
Terminate offices for just cause
Elder Parole Act
Fair and Timely Parole
Access to Pell Grants while incarcerated
End qualified immunity



Accomplishments

- Organized viewing "The Interview" documentary at the Little Theater as a cosponsor. Participants were able to confront their feelings about justice and mercy, with testimonies from panelists who have navigated the parole process.
- Organizing virtual town halls with area congregations in February to support Fair and Timely parole and Elder Parole Bills.
- Working with Senator Sandra Brouke (Pittsford) to establish regional responses units for Mental Health Emergencies.
- Working on an online petition via Color of Change to enable public advocacy.
- Working on family transportation to the Children's detention center in Rush which has none.

**Interested in getting involved?
Interested in any of these issues?
Interested in getting more information?**

Contact Ralph Carter
rcarter56@gmail.com

PURPOSE

RocACTS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, interfaith community organization working to transform our community for the common good by:

1. Breaking down the barriers that divide us by working to eliminate systemic racism and other forms of discrimination in order to promote social and economic justice.
2. Training community members as leaders and preparing and supporting them in public engagement initiatives.
3. Addressing the issues that impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods and community, both independently and in collaboration with other like-minded organizations.
4. Promoting a faith-community centered model of community organizing

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