

JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

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Number 102

December 2019

Looking Back at 2019 And Forward to 2020

by Nik Mitchell, Ph. D.

JSRI Future Activities

January 17-19

Fr. Fred Kammer, S.J., and Ms. Mary Baudouin will lead the social justice retreat for Jesuit Volunteers of the mid-America region in Dover, Tennessee.

February 3-5

Fr. Kammer will deliver several talks on economic justice to students, faculty, and parents at Jesuit High School in Sacramento, CA.

February 22

Fr. Kammer will deliver the keynote on Environmental Justice at the Texas Mission Conference in San Antonio.

JSRI Recent Activities

November 17

Dr. Sue Weishar gave a guest sermon on *Immigration Through the Lens of Faith* at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans.

November 19

Dr. Weishar co-led a Catholic Teach-In on Mass Incarceration with leaders from Women Determined, VOTE, and the St. Joseph the Worker Life and Justice Committee at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church in Marrero.

November 21

Dr. Dennis Kalob and Fr. Kammer presented the [JustSouth Index 2018](#) at a JSRI press conference held in the Audubon Room on campus. This was the third such annual report.

November 26

JSRI released the report [The Privilege of Plenty: Educational Inequity in Mississippi](#), authored by Dr. Nik Mitchell, assisted by Research Assistant Millicent Eib.

December 10

Dr. Weishar participated in the monthly meeting of the Louisiana Stop Solitary Coalition at the Justice and Accountability Center in New Orleans.

December 12

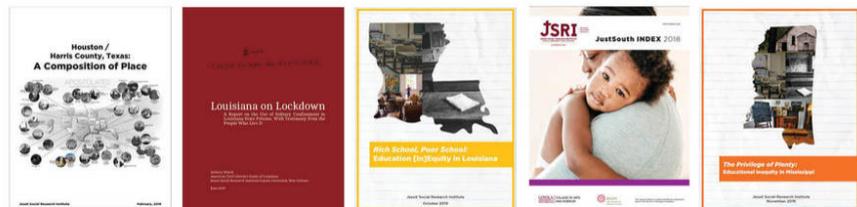
Dr. Weishar participated in the Our Lady of Guadalupe ceremonies at St. Michael Catholic Church in Forest, MS, where many parishioners had been arrested during the ICE raids in August.

December 17

Dr. Weishar participated in the Board of Directors meeting of El Pueblo in Biloxi, MS.

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NETWORK

As 2019 draws to a close, we at JSRI would like to thank the Loyola community for its continued support. In pursuit of our mission of research, education and advocacy, in this monthly newsletter, I would like to highlight recent JSRI reports and then discuss what 2020 may bring regarding advocacy.



Research

In 2019, JSRI staff published research on topics such as criminal justice reform, education, and social justice. These reports are available for download to the public in hopes that it will educate and inform their advocacy on these critical issues.

[Social Analysis Reports](#)—JSRI staff authored eight distinct reports summarizing the socio-economic conditions in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province cities of St. Louis, New Orleans, El Paso, Houston, Dallas, Mobile, Tampa, Denver, and Kansas City.

[Louisiana on Lockdown](#)—In conjunction with Solitary Watch, the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana, and the Roderick & Solange MacArthur Justice Center Louisiana, JSRI Immigration policy and research fellow Dr. Susan Weishar co-authored this landmark report on the conditions of solitary confinement in Louisiana. Loyola students from Professor Ashley Howard's honors history class inputted approximately one-third of survey responses collected from persons in solitary.

[Rich School, Poor School: Education \[In\]Equity in Louisiana](#)—Policy and research fellow for race and racism Dr. Nicholas Mitchell and Research Assistant Millicent Eib authored this holistic analysis of the connections between economic and social factors, educational performance, and educational attainment in Louisiana.

[JustSouth Index 2018](#)—in 2019 under the authorship of Economic Policy Specialist Dr. Dennis Kalob, JSRI released its annual index of all 50 states and Washington, D.C., on nine social justice-related indicators: average household income of poor households, health insurance coverage for the poor, housing affordability, public school integration, white-minority wage equity, white-minority employment equity, immigrant youth outcomes, immigrant English proficiency, and health insurance coverage for immigrants.

[The Privilege of Plenty: Educational Inequity in Mississippi](#)—Policy and research fellow for race and racism Dr. Nicholas Mitchell and Research Assistant Millicent Eib authored this holistic analysis of the connections between economic and social factors, educational performance, and educational attainment in Mississippi.

Advocacy

2019 was a busy year for JSRI staff concerning advocacy. From topics such as the death penalty, to the minimum wage, to immigration reform, JSRI was on the ground and involved in critical social justice issues from the grassroots to the grass tops. I recently asked each of the staff members what they thought would be a major advocacy issue and why:

Dennis Kalob: "Looking ahead to 2020, with economic insecurity and inequality getting more attention, the sorry state of the minimum wage will surely be a critically important part of the debate. The Fight for \$15 is on! And universal health care will most definitely be a top tier issue, as literally tens of millions of people are uninsured or underinsured and healthcare expenses continue to be the leading cause of personal bankruptcies in this country."

Sue Weishar: "In June 2020 the Supreme Court is expected to rule that the legal premise used by the Trump Administration to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was lawful. Such a decision will lead to a renewed push to pass legislation to allow DREAMers to legalize their status. Although in a divided Congress it will be difficult to get any legislation passed, especially if it is perceived as pro-immigrant by President Trump, in poll after poll the majority of Americans in both major parties have consistently shown strong support for a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers. In 2020 the Loyola Community needs to be ready to strongly advocate that Congress passes legislation that would provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers."

Kelsey McLaughlin: "Climate change is becoming a more widely publicized social and political issue as youth climate activists speak up. Environmental justice will continue to be a dominant advocacy issue because the voice of this movement is driven by the next generation. We will begin to see more pronounced effects of climate change affecting marginalized and vulnerable populations and places. Changes need to be made fast, and hopefully there will be enough collective power to push for this."

2020 will be a crucial year in the United States and globally. Regardless of what happens, JSRI will continue to be involved in the thick of advocacy on these and other issues and of continued service to the Loyola University Community.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to jsri@loyno.edu

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