

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Hosts “Ramiah Project” roundtable exploring commonsense ideas to remove barriers from incarceration to work

Posted on Friday, Aug 18, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

OSHKOSH – U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) will host a roundtable at the Urban League of Greater Madison on Friday, August 25 to explore commonsense ideas to remove barriers from incarceration to work. The roundtable will be held in partnership with Jerome Dillard, Tamra Oman, and Shannon Ross who have a long history of working with current and formerly incarcerated individuals. Senator Johnson’s work with The Joseph Project, a jobs program he cofounded in Milwaukee, Green Bay, and Wausau, has highlighted the need for discussion on the barriers that exist which prevent people from a successful transition to work after incarceration. This event will focus on some of those barriers in the areas of work release, child support, and fraternization. Wisconsin Department of Corrections Secretary Kevin A. Carr will be in attendance along with several state legislators.

The Ramiah Project roundtable is inspired by Sen. Johnson’s relationship with Ramiah Whiteside. The senator met Ramiah in 2015 while visiting a Wisconsin prison program called “Stories of Change.” Ramiah was paroled in 2019 after serving 24 years in prison. He met with the senator several times about ideas to remove barriers for successful transitions from incarceration back into society and the workplace. Ramiah was an inspiration to Senator Johnson and to so many more. In December 2022, at the age of 47, Ramiah passed away from the very types of complications brought on by reentry from incarceration that this roundtable will discuss. This event will be held in his honor.

Sen. Ron Johnson and Ramiah Whiteside in January 2020.

Sen. Ron Johnson visits “Stories of Change” at the Wisconsin Resource Center in Oshkosh in 2015. Ramiah Whiteside is to the left of the senator.

What: Sen. Johnson’s “Ramiah Project” Roundtable

When: Friday, Aug. 25, 2023 10am-Noon

Where: Urban League of Greater Madison, 2222 S. Park St. (first floor conference room), Madison, WI 53713

RSVP: Please RSVP by Thursday, Aug. 24 at Noon CT with name, outlet, email and phone number to press@ronjohnson.senate.gov

Speakers:

1. Jerome Dillard, Executive Director EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing)
2. Kyle Wicks, Wisconsin Resource Center Stories of Change alumn
3. Ryan Ramnarace, Peer Support Supervisor assisting clients with substance-use disorders
4. Stephanie Couillard, Wisconsin Department of Corrections work release program participant
5. Shannon Ross, Executive Director The Community
6. Tamra Oman, Statewide Director EXPO, former DHS Human Services Program Coordinator Recovery Support Specialist, first “peer” to be hired in Wisconsin to work in a prison
7. Marianne Oleson, Executive Assistant EXPO
8. Frank Woods, President/Executive Director Genesis in Milwaukee