

A LUTHERAN WITNESS
FOR SUFFICIENCY AND WHOLENESS
IN MARYLAND

The Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Maryland is a partnership ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for advocacy with Maryland's public policy decision-makers. It's supported by the Delaware-Maryland and the Metropolitan Washington, DC synods, and an ELCA Hunger Funds grant through Church in Society.

LOPP/MD has been this church's voice in Maryland public policy discourse since 1985. The Office represents the social statements, resolutions and messages of the ELCA to Maryland elected and administrative officials.

Subject matter includes economic justice, sufficient livelihood, stewardship of resources, care of creation, health and wholeness, public safety, community development, shelter, education, and human rights and justice concerns.

LOPP/MD shares the Ecumenical Advocacy Center with the Baltimore-Washington Methodist Conference, the Presbytery of Baltimore, and the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. We're members of the Maryland Interfaith Legislative Committee, the State's oldest and largest coalition of religious organizations and service providers.

LOPP/MD publishes a *LOPP/Sided* newsletter; sponsors **Faith Night in Annapolis** with the Diocese of Maryland during the General Assembly session; and sends legislative alerts across a listserv. To request LOPP/MD mailings and alerts use the contact information provided in this brochure.

2010 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION PRIORITIES

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD- With employment slow to recover, support for workers and their families is essential. Maryland has not modernized eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits, omitting the most recent quarter earnings. If Maryland modernizes its program with an *alternative base period* method it will be eligible for up to \$127 million in federal funds, a win-win for the State and those who've lost their jobs. We continue to urge maintaining the Temporary Disabled Adults Program (TDAP).

CARE OF CREATION- Legislation establishing a State policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2020 passed in 2009. To become effective this goal has to become part of Maryland's energy policy regime. Currently energy policy is shared by three different departments that are not coordinated. We support making Maryland energy policy accountable to the new greenhouse gas goals. We also support better management of storm water as a first line defense of the health of the Bay.

ENERGY- Advocates support using unclaimed utility funds as a source for Fuel Fund of Maryland energy assistance. We also support the development of alternative payment plans for those in arrears on their energy bills and uniform termination rules to assist customers cut off from their utility service.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE- We support funding for the Medicaid expansion passed two years ago.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH- Children in foster care remain at risk for neglect, and flaws have been revealed in their case management. Two administrative goals, "Place Matters" and "Ready by 21" lack funding and are not yet management policies. Adequate mental health funding and intervention services are a more efficient policy than detention for adjudicated youth. There is also a need for more childcare vouchers and Head Start funds.

APPROPRIATE SHELTER- LOPP/MD supports inclusionary zoning and we urge the State to encourage that policy at local zoning. We also support "fair growth" to companion with State Smart Growth so that low-income households can access housing and transportation as well as job opportunities. We remain committed to ending discrimination based on income in rental agreements.

SPENDING PRIORITIES- It takes five years for state revenues to recover after a downturn, and human service programs often recover last, if at all. We urge protecting vulnerable people from further budget rescission in light of our commitment to "advocate for public and private policies that effectively address the causes of poverty" (Sustainable Livelihood, 1999).



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America engages in moral deliberation on subjects established in national assembly, as did its predecessor bodies. Social statements, messages and resolutions of the church can be found at www.elca.org/dcs/studies/. Predecessor body statements can be found at www.elca.org/dcs/jle/.

State offices of the ELCA represent these public commitments to nineteen state governments. ELCA Advocacy in Washington represents them to the federal government; the ELCA Office of World Community represents them at the UN. There is also ELCA advocacy for Corporate Social Responsibility.

To become an ELCA e-advocate sign up at www.elca.org/advocacy.

The Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Maryland is a ministry of the ELCA Church in Society program unit and two hundred and ten ELCA congregations in the Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, DC and West Virginia-Western Maryland synods. The board of LOPP/MD has members from the supporting synods. To find out more use the contact information in this brochure.

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ELCA Advocacy in Maryland

A Witness
for Sufficiency and Wholeness

2010 Maryland General Assembly Session Priorities



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