

Understanding the State Budget: A Moral Document

Why should people of faith be concerned about our budget?

- We are called by God to be faithful citizens in the world.
- We are called by God to be faithful advocates for justice so that the injustices of hunger, poverty, and homelessness will be eliminated.
- The state budget affects all who reside in this state.
- The state budget particularly affects the lives of the poor, hungry, and homeless.
- The tax structure, by which the state budget is funded, is a moral issue; as well as the budget itself.

The difficulty of balancing the budget:

- The total of our state budget is \$31 billion, for a biennium.
- The governor and legislature face an almost \$3 billion revenue shortfall.
- Almost \$22 billion is protected from state and federal constitutional mandates; e.g. K-12 education, Medicaid and Higher Education.
- The governor and legislature must cut almost \$3 billion out of \$9 billion from the unprotected part of the budget which is primarily made up of health & human services (DSHS), natural resources, and Dept. of Corrections. This is on top of \$3 billion in cuts made last session; e.g. Basic Health Plan (health care for low income adults) was cut 43%.

What can faith advocates do?

- An all cuts approach to balancing the budget is morally intolerable because more in our state will go hungry, homeless, and without health care – this is not the kind of state we want to live in.
- A revenue package will need to be put together to prevent elimination of critical health and human service, education, and environmental programs.
- Let your three legislators and the governor know you understand the difficult decisions they will have to make in order to balance the budget, but that you support a substantial revenue package to prevent elimination of critical safety net programs. Use the toll-free legislative hotline: 1-800-562-6000. Please publicize this number in your congregation and neighborhood.

For more info contact Paul Benz at 206.390.4133 or lppooffice@lcnsw.org

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