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Institute Pastors'
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*Associated Ministries of
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*Friends Committee on
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*Intercommunity
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*Washington Association
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*Washington Coalition of
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January 12, 2009

To: Honorable Members of the Washington State Senate and House of Representatives

**Re: 2009 Religious Coalition for the Common Good
Legislative Priorities**

The Religious Coalition for the Common Good (RCCG) represents a broad coalition of ecumenical and interfaith religious communities. We have built a consensus on the attached priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session.

Our faith traditions compel us to call on our elected officials to ensure that the basic needs of all of the people of our State are met. Legislators serving the people of the State are called to act on behalf of the common good, especially for those who are low-income and on the margins of society.

We recognize that the budget is a moral document reflecting the values and priorities of our state. Given the sizeable deficit projections, legislators must exercise leadership that:

- ✦ Develops increased revenue sources toward a balanced budget;
- ✦ Determines expenditures that reflect protection of basic services for the vulnerable.

In this time of economic crisis the Prophet Daniel reminds us that "Those who lead the many to justice shall shine like stars forever." We are confident that you will understand that the legislative priorities that we ask you to support in this Legislative Session are a matter of justice and the common good.

It is our responsibility, as religious leaders and legislators, to stand with and for the most vulnerable. It is our hope that we will work in partnership for the common good.

With your leadership, Washington State will make significant progress toward justice and the common good.

Sincerely,

Religious Coalition for the Common Good

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2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**Budget**

- ✦ Seek new revenue solutions for a fair and adequate budget
- ✦ Provide local governments with the tools they need to meet obligations in the provision of human services
- ✦ Support an economic stimulus package that includes a Green Jobs program for low income people

Affordable and Accessible Housing

- ✦ Maintain the Housing Trust Fund at the current level of funding
- ✦ Protect Housing Programs for People Coming out of Prison, Mental Health Institutions or the Foster Care System
- ✦ Protect Rental Assistance, Support Services and Emergency Shelter (THOR , ESAP)

Affordable and Accessible Healthcare

- ✦ Maintain the Health Insurance partnership (HIP)
- ✦ Maintain the current funding levels for "Cover All Kids" Law (Apple Health)
- ✦ Maintain the current funding levels in the basic health care plan

Economic Justice/Poverty Reduction

- ✦ Increase funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)
- ✦ Maintain all General Assistance line items (e.g.: GA Unemployable)
- ✦ Support the Feeding Hungry Kids Bill

Public Safety and Restorative Justice

- ✦ Reformation of the three-strikes law
- ✦ Support for job training and access to higher education in prisons
- ✦ Restoration of voting rights for those who have served their term

Environment

- ✦ Support cap on greenhouse gasses and invest in clean tech innovation; including energy assistance for low-income families
- ✦ Plan cities that are livable, affordable, and sustainable
- ✦ Restore health of Washington's Waterways through pollution-pay fees