



ACTION ALERT

Faith Community Calls President Obama to Bring About a Just Economic Stimulus

Four days before his inauguration, the Washington Office of Public Policy helped craft a letter to the President, calling for a stimulus package that would expand opportunity and promote economic justice. In his Inaugural Address Tuesday Mr. Obama said: “The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act - not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together.” President Obama’s stimulus package, which his team estimates will save or create 3 million jobs at a cost of \$825 billion over the next two years, has six components:

Immediate Relief for Families

Modernize Federal Infrastructure

Double Alternative Energy Production in Three Years

(Source: Associated Press, Highlights of \$825 billion plan, January 15, 2009)

Expand Health Care

Improve Education

Invest in Science Research and Technology

Some specifics that have been outlined include:

Distributing \$500 in tax credits to single workers (and \$1,000 to families)

Extending child tax credits for the working poor

Expanding the refundable earned-income tax credit to include families with 3 children

Allocating:

\$6 billion to weatherize homes

\$41 billion to school districts

\$20 billion to provide food assistance

Creating \$2500 tax credit for college expenses

Increasing production of renewable energy

Expanding unemployment benefits and government-assisted health insurance.

\$31 billion to modernize federal buildings

\$90 billion to help states with Medicaid benefits for the poor

\$1.5 billion for community health centers

Offering \$7500 for first time home buyers

Providing money for shovel-ready construction projects

Many are pressing Mr. Obama to do more to provide direct aid to homeowners who are facing foreclosure. One idea calls for allowing home owners to renegotiate smaller mortgages where their houses have lost value. Some in Congress are pressing for bankruptcy judges to be allowed to vary the terms of mortgages to help homeowners. The Senate has already voted to make the remaining \$350 billion in Wall Street bailout money available to the new administration, and the President’s chief economic adviser, Lawrence Summers, sent a letter to Congress promising to use up to \$100 billion of that to address the national mortgage-foreclosure crisis.

Raise your voice so that policymakers know you want a shared recovery that targets economic help where it is needed most.



ACTION



What You Can Do

On January 28, 2009 the House of Representatives approved the President’s stimulus package. Contact your Congressional Senators and the White House to urge them to ACT NOW on an economic recovery agenda. Tell them the core principles you believe should guide the process to ensure we meet “the challenges that lie at the root of poverty” and the economic distress confronting America’s families. To contact Congress call (202) 224-3121. To contact the White House call (202) 456-1111.

Read *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2008* ¶ 163. IV. The Economic Community pg. 535.

Learn more about the President’s economic plan by visiting http://change.gov/agenda/economy_agenda/



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN’S ACTION NETWORK

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January 16, 2009

Dear President-elect Obama:

As communities of faith, we are grounded in a shared vision of justice and compassion. We are called to be good stewards of God's good Earth and work for justice for all of God's people, particularly the most vulnerable among us. As you work out the details of a stimulus package to address the current economic crisis, we look for moral leadership that works for justice, stewardship, and sustainability for God's community. The stimulus package should provide resources that not only stimulate our economy, but also fosters a renewal of mutual trust and accountability between our government and all its people, working for the common good.

A stimulus package should work to protect those people living in poverty from slipping further into the economic margins. It also should not recycle the bad practices of the past, but instead invest in a vibrant, sustainable economy that protects God's creation and God's people. In particular, any stimulus package should:

Provide food assistance to the rapidly growing number of working and recently unemployed families who are facing food insecurity.

Protect low-income families, both homeowners and renters, who have lost or are threatened with the loss of their homes as a result of the housing crisis, including support of local and state community development efforts focused on rebuilding communities facing massive foreclosures.

Ensure continued medical coverage for beneficiaries of Medicaid by increasing federal assistance to states.

Care for the growing number of children in poverty, who will be hardest hit by the recession by addressing the nutrition, health, and educational needs of low-income children.

Reflect a commitment to job training and job creation that benefits marginalized populations, with a special emphasis on jobs for low-income minorities and women, particularly in high-tech research and manufacturing and green jobs. In addition, the stimulus package should address racial and gender-based inequality in construction trades to ensure that women and people of color have access to infrastructure jobs. The stimulus package should also provide for jobs and job training that create a green jobs workforce.

Increase funding for workforce education so that those in low-income communities can attain academic skills and job training, particularly for unemployed and low-income students and in urban areas where high school graduation rates are low. In addition, the stimulus package should provide funds to repair crumbling public educational facilities.

Invest in clean, sustainable, and renewable energy sources and technology to improve energy efficiency and provide for a sustainable energy future. Our shared climate will also benefit from funding for transportation projects that provide viable transportation options for low-income people and do not increase our addiction to fossil fuels. In particular, the stimulus package should expand public transit access and redirect patterns of sprawl.

We currently stand at a crossroads and must use the stimulus package to invest in a future that lifts people who are living in poverty from the economic margins, creates an energy future rooted in sustainability, and provides a just transition into a new and vibrant economy that benefits all. Because we all share in the economic health of the nation, those living at the economic margins should be at placed at the heart of any economic recovery package.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service Committee
Center of Concern
Church Women United
Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Missionary Oblates – USA
National Council of Churches USA
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
**Washington Office of Public Policy, Women's Division,
United Methodist Church**

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