

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Springfield, IL

September 23, 2010

PUBLIC POLICY TEAM REPORT

The Public Policy Team (PPT) takes a leadership role on public policy issues that impact ICC member judicatories. The team is vocal on concerns primarily before the Illinois General Assembly and Congress. The team carries out the portion of the ICC's mission statement, "*to make public, prophetic witness to Christ's love for all people, and to address in particular, issues of poverty and racism.*"

The 2010 Public Team consists of the following members: Mr. Robert Gilligan, Chair, Catholic Conference of Illinois; E. Garnet Fay, Religious Society of Friends; Reverend Linda Harrod, The United Methodist Church; Reverend Gary McCants, African Methodist Episcopal Church; Reverend Chris Pierson, The United Methodist Church; Reverend Dan Schwick, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois; Reverend Terry Weavil, Moravian Church; and Reverend Michael Winters, Presbyterian Church – USA.

Members of the ICC Public Policy Team met via conference call on September 9, 2010.

Bob commented on Linda Harrod's resignation from the ICC staff this past June and noted that her position will not be filled. Pamela O'Neal Tackett will take on some of Linda's previous functions. For example, when the ICC signs in on legislation at committee hearings at the Capitol in Springfield, Pamela will take care of this with assistance from Bob and the other Public Policy Team members who work at the Capitol during the legislative session.

Preliminary Recommendations for 2011 Areas of Ministry

The Team next discussed preliminary recommendations on public policy issues and legislation for 2011. The Team members reached consensus on the following:

1. Abolition of the Death Penalty: Consideration of Legislation on abolition of the death penalty is likely to continue in 2011. All the judicatories of the ICC seem to be committed to this issue and would likely be in agreement to continue to support this legislation and related efforts.
2. Articulating and advocating for the needs of the poor and the state's obligation to support a social services safety net: This includes advocating for adequate funding of state programs and state services for the most vulnerable in Illinois. Furthermore, this could become a focal point for efforts to fight poverty, which is a priority of the National Council of Churches.
3. Immigration Reform: While this is primarily a federal issue, there will likely be a need to mobilize support at the state level if federal legislation on immigration reform is introduced.
4. Monitoring legal issues affecting churches: From time to time, there may be legislation introduced or other legal issues that arise that could impact our churches.

In addition to these four priorities, the Team also noted 2 other areas of concern that we should monitor and be aware of:

5. Concern for those incarcerated: Issues may arise regarding the need of ministry to those who are incarcerated. In addition, there may be public policies proposed to address issues impacting the re-entry of ex-offenders, such as barriers to employment due to prior convictions.
6. Healthcare Reform: Issues may arise regarding implementation of the recently passed federal healthcare reform law. However, as this is more of a federal issue, this is not necessarily a "top tier" priority for the Public Policy Team & ICC but is an area we can continue to monitor.