

INTERRELIGIOUS WORKING GROUP ON DOMESTIC HUMAN NEEDS

September 28, 2004

Dear Senator:

As you know, the current extension of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) expires on September 30th. As members of the faith community, we have consistently called on Congress to move forward on the reauthorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) by supporting policy that will lift families out of poverty, enable individuals to gain skills needed to work and earn enough to meet basic human needs, and improve child well-being. We recognize that, given the short timeframe, a full reauthorization is unlikely at this time.

As you and your colleagues prepare to vote on legislation to extend TANF, we urge you to

Oppose any short-term TANF extension that includes policy changes (including the Santorum/Bayh bill to add the marriage and fatherhood programs from the Senate reauthorization bill which could divert funding from already declining services). There are several issues still undecided in TANF that deserve a full and thoughtful debate. States need stability, both of funding, and program policies, to maintain quality services.

If Congress has time to consider policy changes to TANF, we urge you to address the immediate needs of low-income families, such as additional funding for quality child care that enables parents to work, and improvements to the child support program offered in the Senate bill.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Carolynn Race, Chair, Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs, at (202) 543-1126 or Alison Prevost, Vice-Chair, at (301) 622-6838.

Sincerely,

American Baptist Churches USA

American Friends Service Committee

Bread for the World

The Central Conference of American Rabbis

Church Women United

Disciples Justice Action Network

The Episcopal Church USA

Equal Partners in Faith

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office

Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
Women of Reform Judaism