

*Dear Faithful Texan,*

Since ancient times, people of faith have heard the prophets' calls to do justice—to speak the truth with love and courage to those in power.

Today in Texas, there are some truths our leaders would rather not have to hear. Children go hungry and homeless, victims and offenders go unreconciled and unrestored, natural resources are damaged and depleted. The narrow self-interests of the wealthy and powerful too often trump the common good and the welfare of the vulnerable.

But it doesn't have to stay this way. Our faith assures us that God loves us and wants us to mend what is broken in the world.

Texas Impact calls on people of faith to stand up in the public square for our shared values of family and community. We promote an agenda of freedom, justice and economic opportunity for all people.

**Testify to your faith and vision for Texas!** We can help you raise your voice. Texas Impact has the facts you need to state your case clearly, and we can help you get your message to the people who need to hear it.

Visit [www.texasimpact.com](http://www.texasimpact.com) to learn more about the challenges facing Texas, the strategies we advocate, and the faith that guides us. Email [justice@texasimpact.com](mailto:justice@texasimpact.com) or call 512.472.3903 to find out how to get involved.

## LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2005-06

*During the 79<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative session, Texas Impact is especially committed to the following issues and positions:*

### STATE REVENUE

#### “Fair and Enough”

- Texas should restructure its revenue system to be fair and equitable. The system should provide enough revenue to fund key services fully. Texas should maximize the federal funds state programs draw down and invest in programs and services that contribute to the overall well-being of our state.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

#### “Fund the Future”

- Texas should guarantee every child in our state equal access to quality public education. Texas public schools should perform at or above national averages on common accountability measures such as test scores and graduation rates. Texas public school teachers should be paid at or above national average teacher salaries.

### HEALTH CARE

#### “Secure for All”

- It should be a legislative priority that Texans are insured in numbers in proportion to the national average. Lawmakers should expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to serve as many children as possible and develop innovative strategies to bring health insurance to more Texans by building on existing programs.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### “Trust and Community”

- Lawmakers should give a full range of sentencing options to juries. Lawmakers should build on existing programs to ensure that every accused person has access to competent legal counsel regardless of ability to pay.

## ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

### “Clean and Safe Today and Tomorrow”

- Lawmakers should affirm that protecting human health is the primary goal of environmental law enforcement, and strengthen enforcement policies so they are potent deterrents to would-be offenders. Lawmakers should commit to a clean, affordable and reliable energy future for Texas by promoting clean, safe renewable power and beginning the process of improving the state's power grid.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE

### REFORM

#### “Every Voice Equal”

- Texas should strengthen the prohibition against corporate and union campaign contributions and create reasonable limits on individual contributions to political campaigns. Texas should enforce legislative accountability for state elected officials through a stronger ethics commission and a constitutional requirement to record all non-ceremonial votes.

*Texas Impact holds historic positions on many social policy issues that reflect consensus positions of mainstream religious traditions. We affirm and advocate these historic positions.*

# Legislative Principles

As followers of a faith that calls us to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God,” Texas Impact works in the legislative process for laws that enhance freedom, justice and economic opportunity for all people.

## We support fair and sustainable public policies that strengthen the community of Texas and promote the fellowship of all people.

- Fair and sustainable policies establish systems to care for all God’s children—and provide the resources to maintain those systems.
- Fair and sustainable policies create legacies that benefit future generations while providing for today’s needs.
- Fair and sustainable policies build relationships and restore broken relationships between individuals and communities.
- Fair and sustainable policies make demands on members of the community proportionate to their resources.
- Fair and sustainable policies preserve the natural world both to protect human life and because the whole creation has intrinsic worth.

## Texas Impact Member Organizations

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):** Southwest Region, Bluebonnet Area, Central Area, Coastal Plains Area, North Texas Area, Trinity-Brazos Area • **Episcopal Church:** Diocese of West Texas • **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:** Northern TX-Northern LA Synod, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, Southwestern Texas Synod • **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):** Grace Presbytery, Mission Presbytery, New Covenant Presbytery, Palo Duro Presbytery, Tres Rios Presbytery • **United Methodist Church:** Central Texas Conference, North Texas Conference, Northwest Texas Conference, Southwest Texas Conference, Texas Conference • **United Church of Christ:** South Central Conference • **Society of Friends :** South Central Yearly Meeting • American Jewish Committee • American Jewish Congress • Jewish Federation of Dallas • Arlington Ministerial Association • Austin Area Inter-religious Ministries • San Antonio Community of Churches • Tarrant Area Community of Churches • Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston • Greater Dallas Community of Churches • Interfaith Coalition for Environmental Justice • United Methodist Women • Church Women United in Texas • Freedom and Justice Foundation of Texas • National Council of Jewish Women

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 Texas Impact provides concrete strategies for people of faith to work for justice in Texas. Through issues education, advocacy training and grassroots organizing, Texas Impact gives you the information and skills you need to be an effective voice for freedom, justice and economic opportunity for all people.

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Visit us online at  
<http://www.texasimpact.com>

Call us at  
**512.472.3903**

Email us at  
[justice@texasimpact.com](mailto:justice@texasimpact.com)

Write to us at  
**700 West Avenue, Austin Texas 78701**



**TEXAS IMPACT**  
*people of faith working for justice*

# Legislative Agenda 2005-2006

*Charity is a matter of personal attributes, justice a matter of public policy. Charity seeks to alleviate the effects of injustice, justice seeks to eliminate the causes of it. Charity in no way affects the status quo, while justice leads inevitably to political confrontation.*  
*The Reverend William Sloane Coffin*