



Texas United Methodist Women's Legislative Event 2009

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

"The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

United Methodist Women are united in our belief that God calls us to be active participants in shaping the present and future of our state. We believe, as John Wesley taught, that there is no holiness but social holiness. In Texas in 2009, social holiness must include voicing our concerns and proposing solutions for systemic injustices that afflict our community.

We are committed to pursuing justice in Texas through education and advocacy on our priorities. We are convinced that the thoughtful, peaceful and persistent influence of people of faith can and will increase righteousness in the community of Texas as we discern together God's loving vision for us and for the whole world.

THE HEALTH OF GOD'S CHILDREN

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

Health is a condition of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, and we view it as a responsibility—public and private. Health care is a basic human right. Psalm 146 speaks of the God "who executes justice for the oppressed;/ who gives food to the hungry./ The LORD sets the prisoners free;/ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind." The right to health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.

A priority of United Methodist Women is health and wellness for all Texans. Achieving this priority will require public and private action on many fronts. The Texas United Methodist Women's Legislative Committee supports legislative action to:

- Expand and improve Texas' CHIP and Medicaid programs and ensure that all eligible children are covered. Legislators should expend the state funds necessary to draw Texas' share of federal funds for CHIP and Medicaid.
- Make quality health insurance more affordable for all Texans.
- Increase availability of mental health and substance abuse services.
- Increase the availability of wellness and preventive health programs such as programs to address obesity.

THE CREATION

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation.

We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and nonrenewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies. This continued course of action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations.

A priority of United Methodist Women is the renewal of our natural environment. There are many aspects of the natural world, and Texas today is particularly called to offer leadership to the global community in areas of energy production and use. The Texas United Methodist Women's Legislative Committee supports legislative action to:

- Increase the share of Texas' electricity that comes from clean, safe, renewable sources such as the sun and the wind. Legislators also should ensure that Texans are trained and equipped for jobs in new clean energy fields.
- Clear Texas' air of pollution for the sake of human health and the health of all living things.
- Improve energy efficiency at all levels from households to the largest institutions in our state.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons. We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status.

A priority of United Methodist Women is the compassionate treatment of strangers within our borders. The Holy Scriptures call us as the community of God to give shelter, protection and help to sojourners living amongst us, reminding us that we, too, were foreigners in other times. Comprehensive immigration reform is under the purview of Congress, but states can take important steps. The Texas United Methodist Women's Legislative Committee supports legislative action to:

- Safeguard for all persons within Texas borders both human rights and the availability of essential services.
- Stop human trafficking within Texas and ensure moral and physical support for individuals leaving circumstances of enslavement.

The United Methodist Church is the second-largest Protestant denomination in the United States, with more than 8 million lay members nationally and more than 800,000 lay members in Texas. The United Methodist Women is a group within the United Methodist Church committed to social action and advocacy. There are an estimated 100,000 members of United Methodist Women in Texas.

For more information about United Methodist Women in Texas, visit www.texasimpact.org/umw or contact the following UMW member:

Name _____ Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____ Home Church _____