



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

April 13, 2011

Dear Governor Walker and Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature:

We wrote to you earlier this spring to share our prayers and our concerns over the budget process unfolding in our state government. Now with a better understanding of challenges facing our state, and the budget proposal being considered, we write again to ask that you show compassion for the poor in the work to shape a state budget.

As faith leaders representing 809 congregations within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and their 468,000 members, we serve a rich diversity of people in nearly every community in Wisconsin. We are called to join together and be a voice for the voiceless, the most vulnerable in our state.

Many of our congregations faithfully serve the needs of those in their towns and neighborhoods through food pantries, emergency shelters and educational programs. As we have witnessed, the needs of the poor greatly outweigh the ability of our congregations to provide. We know that the most effective means of lifting a family out of poverty is not through handouts, but through policies which provide hope for the future for everyone in our state who goes to bed hungry or worries about homelessness.

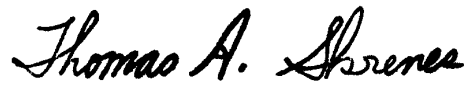
We pray that in our state government all people will be treated with dignity and the budget not place undue challenges on those who can least afford to bear those burdens. We ask that you act with compassion in your decisions allocating state funding for childhood nutrition programs, low-income housing, affordable health care, and tools that help the working poor finally gain self-sufficiency.

The proposed reductions to the Earned Income Tax Credit would dramatically impact low-income working families by cutting one of the most successful tools available to escape from poverty. We must also express our concerns over cuts to Medicaid that would reduce eligibility, cap enrollment and create waiting lists for programs like Family Care that serve vulnerable adults by providing access to critical health-care services and supports.

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Each week the Wisconsin congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pray for you as their elected leaders. We give thanks for your service to the people of Wisconsin and we pray that God may give you the wisdom and compassion to meet the pressing needs of our state.

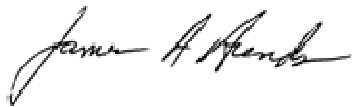
With respect,



Bishop Thomas Skrenes
Northern Great Lakes Synod



Bishop Duane Pederson
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin



Bishop Jim Arends
La Crosse Area Synod



Bishop Jeff Barrow
Greater Milwaukee Synod



Bishop Jim Justman
East Central Synod of Wisconsin



Bishop Bruce Burnside
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin