



Luther's famous words, "Here I stand" reverberate through history. Luther talked about being captive to the Word of God and that he could not go against his conscience. What does your conscience tell you? What do you value? What can we say we value as the ELCA when speaking with a public voice?

The Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin is an advocacy ministry reflecting the values of the ELCA. Our priorities are based on our social statements and other Lutheran teachings, all of which are dynamic and ongoing interpretations of scripture. As faith-based advocates we begin, continue, and end with grace. God was at the center of Martin Luther's passion for justice when he went to the courts to advocate for people cheated in the market place, sought peace between princes who wanted to wage war against each other, and when he addressed systemic problems that kept people in poverty poor.

Thank you to Bishop Paul Erickson, the entire synod staff, and Greater Milwaukee Synod for supporting our public voice in the 21st century via the ELCA's advocacy arm in Wisconsin! We value our partnership with you.

Public Policies: LOPPW worked on several proposed pieces of legislation in the last year. Federally we supported our ELCA Advocacy Office's efforts on the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization. Thank you to everyone who responded to action alerts. The house bill that would have threatened school lunches, among other programs, did not pass. The reauthorization went on to the back burner and now will go into the Farm Bill. We will clearly counter future efforts to turn the federal funding into block grants.



LOPPW's staff and two advisory council members were present at the signing of a bill we supported. This legislation will make it easier for the state to investigate child abusers who are not caregivers, which is in part an effort to prevent sex trafficking.

We supported Safe Harbor to improve our state's ability to treat youth under 18 caught in prostitution (as a first offense) automatically as clients in need of services rather than risk their being treated as criminals and being re-victimized. This has not passed yet, but we are confident that as key legislators continue to diligently move forward, supported by our advocacy and the advocacy of other partners, and as more services for victims are available, Safe Harbor will eventually pass. It has passed in Minnesota and Illinois, in the latter under a different name.

Having more services available is key to helping victims of sex trafficking. Thank you to the six bishops with congregations in Wisconsin for signing on to a letter LOPPW sent to the governor while he was working on the 2017-2019 state budget draft in November. We asked for additional funding for victims of trafficking. We were pleased that \$2 million is budgeted again

for the first year and \$4 million in the second year in the draft. We will continue to advocate for this amount to remain in the budget until it is voted on. We were pleased to learn that Lutheran Social Services was the organization that received funding from the last budget to be the organization to provide housing and services for rural teenage victims of sex trafficking.

We spoke against streamlining corporations' ability to privatize public utilities and diminish our public voice in the process. We had concerns about costs, especially for people in poverty, and water safety. The fortunately bill died in the Senate.

We also addressed prison reform related to 17 year-old nonviolent offenders and legislation related to the impact of money on politics.

Events: LOPPW participates in synodical, WELCA and other events and organizes some events as well. With a WELCA grant we held one rally and two conferences on anti-human trafficking in different parts of the state. At our rally before going to the capitol to talk to legislators we held a panel with a survivor of sex trafficking from Milwaukee, an outreach worker for Homeless youth in south-central Wisconsin, a Republican assemblywoman and a Democratic assemblywoman.



Thank you to GMS's LOPPW advisory council member, Venice Williams for finding one of our panelists for the event. Thank you to GMS's advisory council member, Reverend Jay McDivitt for his service on our council and for helping to highlight advocacy efforts on your synod's hunger team.

Advisory Council Retreat and 2017 Priorities:

At our annual retreat, after receiving input from the bishops, we decided upon the following priorities for 2017:

1. Calling for an End to Childhood Hunger
2. Addressing the Scandal of Human Trafficking
3. Supporting Immigration Reform
4. Confronting the Impact of Money on Politics & Public Policies
5. Caring for God's Creation

Workshops & Resources: We added the workshop, Luther and Economic Justice (workshop at St. Matthew's Lutheran in Wauwatosa on right) to our other presentations, which include the following: Advocacy (starting advocacy ministries), Children in Poverty, Anti-human Trafficking, and Care for God's Creation. We will in the future offer workshops on immigration in partnership with other groups. Please check out our website for our new resources under Resources and Advocacy Tools!



Yours in Christ,

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Check us out at www.loppw.org for resources and to sign up for Action Alerts

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