

# LEGISLATIVE HOT LINE



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Sponsored by the Five Catholic Commissions and Catholic Campaign for Human Development of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities Health and Human Services

May 20, 2009

*“As Catholics we must come together with a common conviction that we can no longer tolerate the moral scandal of poverty in our land and so much hunger and deprivation in our world. “*

*A Place at the Table USCCB 2002*

## **STATE BUDGET HB 1 – CONTACT YOUR SENATOR NOW TO PROTECT NEEDS OF THE POOR**

**BACKGROUND:** The Budget Bill is now in the Senate, and the state budget outlook is very bleak. Senate leaders are facing a shortfall that could reach \$3 billion, and they **expect to slash \$1 billion** from the two-year, \$54 billion budget bill passed by the House. At the same time, Ohio is facing unemployment levels higher than we have seen in three decades and Ohioans from children to seniors and every age in between are experiencing the impacts of a stagnant economy.

**NEXT STEPS IN BUDGET PROCESS:** The Senate has virtually had to start from scratch because of faulty projections to date regarding status of the current budget. Among some of the changes being talked about are: postponing the expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, which would save about \$14 million over two years; eliminating the Children’s Buy-in Program for those who fail to qualify for SCHIP but have a pre-existing or chronic disease; cutting or eliminating the Help Me Grow program that serves 96,000 at risk children and eliminating Medicaid services for disabled Ohioans, such as dental and podiatry care, prescription drugs, hospice care and community-based drug and alcohol treatment.

Upon passage by the Senate, H.B. 1 will go to a six member conference committee that will make the final determinations. There is some speculation that the State may end up having to pass a continuing resolution to maintain vital services in the event that both Houses and the Governor cannot agree on final figures.

**ACTION:** Call or email your State Senator NOW! Urge him/her to prioritize the needs of the poor and most vulnerable in Sub HB 1 – the State Budget. Cutting safety net programs is not the answer to balancing the budget; rather they result in more families falling between the cracks, creating even more need and more strain on the budget.

- 1) Support Basic Human Needs  
~~Provide adequate funding for hunger, housing, and protective services programs.
- 2) Support fair, affordable, and accessible health care  
~~ Provide parental health coverage for the poor; simplify eligibility paper work; address hospitals and charitable nursing home concerns regarding reimbursement and franchise and bed fees;
- 3) Support fair treatment of chartered non public school students and teachers  
~~Maintain full access to all allocated funds; fully restore funding to the Administrative Cost Reimbursement and Auxiliary Services line items (511 & 532); continued support for the EdChoice, Cleveland Scholarship, and Autism Scholarship programs.
- 4) Support Elder Care  
~~Support the PASSPORT and Assisted Living programs; restore full funding for the National Senior Services Corp Program (506).
- 5) Support life, abstinence education and cord blood research  
~~Promote adult stem cell and blood cord funding; reapply for abstinence-based programs.

We must continue the pressure and contact our State Senators! Final budget will need to be approved by July 1, 2009. ACT NOW.....OHIO SENATE

Statehouse, Columbus, OH 43215-4276

(800) 282-0253

For information on contacting your Senator link to: <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us>

### **URGE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

**BACKGROUND:** A peaceful and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict depends on a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders. The ongoing conflict deepens Palestinian poverty and endangers Israeli security, harming both peoples. The opportunity for a "two-state" solution is in jeopardy, requiring immediate and sustained U.S. leadership. In the land that is considered holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslims terrible violence has left both Israelis and Palestinians suffering. Recent armed conflict between Hamas, the Palestinian party controlling Gaza, and Israel has caused hundreds of deaths and massive destruction in Gaza and suffering among Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING:** Our Catholic faith teaches us to be peacemakers. The U.S. Bishops wrote in [The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response](#), "*Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus.*" Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has called on the international community to help Israelis and Palestinians to discard the "dead end" of violence and pursue instead "*the path of dialogue and negotiations.*"

Together, US Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services are encouraging Catholics to advocate for stronger U.S. leadership to hold both parties to the conflict accountable in building a just peace through the [Catholics Confront Global Poverty](#) initiative. We also support U.S. funding for the Palestinian Authority to increase its ability to govern and build its capacity for a future state as well as for urgently needed humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people.

**ACTION:** A peaceful and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict depends on a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders. The ongoing conflict deepens Palestinian poverty and endangers Israeli security, harming both peoples. The opportunity for a "two-state" solution is in jeopardy, requiring immediate and sustained U.S. leadership.

**Urge your Representative to sign a bipartisan letter to President Obama supporting his efforts to provide strong U.S. leadership to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.** This letter shares the President's "*conviction that a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an essential cornerstone of Middle East stability,*" "*an end to the conflict is critical to Israel's long-term security,*" "*America best serves our historic friendship with Israel when it is actively working to de-escalate conflict and advance peace,*" and "*our relationships throughout the Arab and Muslim world will be strengthened through a negotiated agreement that ends the conflict.*"

### **UPCOMING EXECUTION – CLEMENCY URGED**

**BACKGROUND:** Lorain County native, **Daniel Wilson**, is scheduled for execution Wednesday, June 3, 2009. In March of 1992, Mr. Wilson was convicted and sentenced to death for the May 4, 1991 murder of Carol Lutz.

Several factors in Mr. Wilson's case history merit executive clemency, principally that the trial court's explanation of the case's sole death sentence specification to the trial jury was ruled to be constitutionally erroneous and invalid by the United States Sixth District Court of Appeals. The erroneous trial court instruction allowed the jury to consider the death sentence while being improperly instructed how to consider and weigh the evidence in mitigation when considering the death penalty specification. Wilson is the only person on Ohio's Death Row that has not had a jury weigh a valid death sentence specification.

Other mitigating factors include Daniel's remarkably abusive childhood, his expression of deep regret for and acceptance of responsibility for the pain he caused, and his successful efforts to become a "positive and productive" member of the Ohio prison population as demonstrated by his serving as legal typist and librarian in the death row library as well as a GED tutor.

**ACTION: CALL OR E MAIL Governor Strickland's office. Urge him to grant clemency and commute Daniel Wilson's sentence to life imprisonment, especially in light of the circumstances of his trial. This governor has shown his willingness to grant clemency in recent cases. ACT NOW!**

Phone: 614 466 3555

E mail: <http://governor.ohio.gov/Assistance/ContacttheGovernor/tabid/150/Default.aspx>

## EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Contact your Congressional representatives by FAX letter, e-mail, or phone.  
Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202.224.3121; or call Members' local offices.  
Full contact info can be found on Members of Congress's web sites, at: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

For contact information on your Ohio Legislators, go to:

<http://www.ohiocathconf.org/L/legisbydiocese.htm>

<http://www.legislature.state.oh.us>

Call the White House comment line at 202-456-1111 or send an e-mail to

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/>

*For more information on the above, please call the Diocesan Social Action Office at 216-939-3851 or 888-620-5280. You can also visit our web page at [www.catholic-action.org](http://www.catholic-action.org) for more information. Thank you.*