

## “For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

### APPROPRIATIONS FOR DOMESTIC HUMAN NEEDS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 13.5 percent of Americans live in poverty. To address the challenges of life in poverty, the U.S. Congress appropriates funds for critical domestic human needs programs, including anti-poverty initiatives, health care support and opportunities for citizens returning to society from prison. While churches and charities are essential allies in combating poverty in the U.S., private funds only account for roughly 5 percent of the total food assistance delivered in the United States. The remaining balance is covered by the federal government, and these nutrition and other federal programs are an important social safety net for low-income, at-risk or transitioning individuals and families.

The federal budget represents our collective values and priorities as a nation. We support and urge Congress to craft a fiscal plan that reflects ELCA social commitments by ensuring a “sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all.” To this end, as Lutherans, we can engage the federal budget appropriations process by urging policymakers to draw a circle of protection around domestic human needs programs.

#### **SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)**

WIC equips low-income mothers and their children with essential nutrition benefits. We call on the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee to allocate \$6.62 billion to WIC for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18).

#### **FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES**

These benefits support low-income people struggling to find viable employment, and we urge the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee to allocate \$849 million toward this program for FY18.

#### **LOW-INCOME HOUSING ASSISTANCE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

Appropriated by the Transportation-HUD, Agriculture-Rural Development, and Veterans Affairs appropriations subcommittees, these programs grant people struggling with homelessness and housing poverty the assistance they need to find better opportunities in a viable home. We ask that these agencies receive robust funding for FY18, including \$21.2 billion for Tenant Based Rental Assistance programs, \$3.06 billion for the Community Development Fund and \$2.67 billion for Homelessness Assistant Grants.

#### **THE SECOND CHANCE ACT**

This law empowers people returning from prison through grants that support education, job training, substance abuse and mental health services. For FY18, we request that the Justice, Science, Commerce appropriations subcommittees allocate \$100 million to support Second Chance Act grants and programmatic support.

#### **MANDATORY SPENDING**

We call on members of Congress to reject cuts or harmful structural changes to important social safety net programs such as Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), Social Security and Medicare, which are mandatorily funded by the federal budget.

#### **LEARN MORE ABOUT...**

The WIC program: [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

Federal unemployment benefits: [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

Housing assistance: [portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/homeless](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/homeless)

The Second Chance Act: [csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/second-chance-act/](http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/second-chance-act/)

Protecting basic safety net programs: [www.chn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SAVE-for-all-letter-11-17-16final.pdf](http://www.chn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SAVE-for-all-letter-11-17-16final.pdf)

