



Catholic Charities

SOCIAL CONCERNS • PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

*Legislative Education Group (L.E.G.)*

~ CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ADVOCACY ~

April 2008

**2008 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP**

Dear L.E.G. Volunteer:

We're happy to report that your commitment to Maryland's most vulnerable citizens made a difference in the policies enacted by the 2008 Maryland General Assembly. Several measures that you encouraged your elected officials to support became law and will help those in need in our state. Of course, not all bills that L.E.G. supported passed, but in those cases you helped to lay the groundwork for next year and the years to come.

Here are the outcomes for issues of concern during this legislative session:

**Issue:**

Those of you who attended or learned of the discussion at our *Legislative Issue Briefing* on February 9<sup>th</sup> were asked to encourage your elected officials to support amendments to a bill to keep a program in the law that helps individuals and families who are either homeless or have an emergency housing need by providing rent subsidies. This program, the Rental Allowance Program, is a critical part of the safety net for people in need.

☺ **Outcome:**

We are delighted that the bill was amended and has been signed into law.

**Issue:**

We also asked you to write to legislators on the House Health and Government Operations Committee to support a bill to provide additional funding to help older, frail Marylanders to remain in the community by increasing funding for the Older Adults Waiver.

**Outcome:**

Given fiscal constraints, there was no additional funding provided.

**Issue:**

We asked that you write legislators on the House Environmental Matters Committee to support a bill to prohibit discrimination in housing based on the (legal) source of a person's income.

**Outcome:**

While the legislation did not pass, some members of the committee reconsidered their position on the issue, and it will have a better chance of passing next year.

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**Issue:**

Also in March we sent an email to ask you to contact legislators on the House Ways and Means Committee to support a bill to protect seniors in danger of losing their homes due to property tax arrearages.

☺ **Outcome:**

We are pleased that HB 722 passed.

**Issue:**

Near the end of the session, we asked you to contact members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee again – this time to support a bill to raise the workforce standards and require certification for people who provide daily, direct care to children in residential child care programs, or “group homes.”

☺ **Outcome:**

We are pleased that SB 783 passed. Legislators reported that they received MANY calls and letters supporting this bill!

Please know that your efforts continue to help to create fair and just policies in our state, so all have the opportunity to succeed and thrive. Thank you for your continued commitment to Catholic Charities L.E.G. and those for whom we advocate.

Sincerely,



Allison Stone  
L.E.G. Coordinator  
Parish Social Ministry

*As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34). According to Pope Benedict XVI, "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity'" (Encyclical Deus Caritas Est, no. 29).*

*-Faithful Citizenship, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

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