



Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness

Action Alert March 21, 2010

ACTION: Call your legislators and let them know – enough is enough!

Ask them to reject the proposal to eliminate state support for the disabled and ill poor.

The Issue: As the negotiations on GAMC wind down, the state's ailing budget moves to the forefront. Now the battle is not health care – but basic survival level income for very poor disabled and ill Minnesotans. The Governor has proposed eliminating General Assistance, taking away state welfare to work assistance from families with disabled parents and children, and eliminating the emergency program that helps keep the state's poorest adults from homelessness.

Whom to Contact: **Call/Email your State Legislators** to thank them for their work on trying to balance the state's budget and remind them that they must protect the social safety net in the process. They should not:

- eliminate General Assistance (the Governor's proposal does not eliminate payments to people in group homes)
- take MFIP (MN Family Investment Program, sometimes referred to as welfare to work) away from families with disabled parents or children;
- permanently eliminate the Emergency General Assistance Program.

To find your Legislators, call (651) 296-2146 or visit: www.gis.leg.mn/mapserver/districts/.
The governor's contact info. is: (651) 296-3391 or tim.pawlenty@state.mn.us

Talking Points:

- **How will the loss of these programs (listed above) impact the well-being of our neighbors?** Be personal and tell your story.
- **This is a moral issue.** Talk about how your faith/values inform your insistence that basic needs are met for our vulnerable neighbors.
- **The loss of these programs will have an impact on our congregations as more and more people come to our doors seeking financial assistance.**

More about the Issues:

General Assistance provides up to \$203 a month for very low income adults who are seriously ill or disabled and unable to work. Almost 33,000 Minnesotans turn to General Assistance in a year.

4,500 families with disabled parents or children on the state's welfare to work program, MFIP would lose all their state assistance. These families will be pushed into extreme poverty, living on federal disability support which is less than \$700 a month and are highly likely to join the ranks of the long-term homeless. Most of these families are families in which the parent has been determined severely disabled and unable to work by the federal government.

The Governor unallotted Emergency General Assistance last summer and proposes to eliminate it permanently. This small program offers once-a-year help to the poorest adults in Minnesota to help them pay overdue rent or utility bills or security deposits to prevent even more Minnesotans joining the ranks of the growing number of homeless. The EGA grants are usually paid directly to the vendor or landlord.