

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Council of Seattle
Legislative Agenda 2006-2007
Voice of the Poor Committee**

(Council Approved: 1/13/07)

Mission Statement of Voice of the Poor, Seattle Archdiocesan Council

Believing in the dignity of every person, Voice of the Poor supports Catholic social teaching. Under the direction of the Seattle Archdiocesan Council, we will advocate for justice on behalf of those in need, while educating St. Vincent de Paul members about economic and social issues impacting the poor.

Purpose of an Archdiocesan Council Legislative Agenda for St. Vincent de Paul:

- Provide a framework for Vincentian advocacy, locally.
- Focus advocacy on basic needs (housing, health care, income) based on
- Catholic social teaching, for those we serve.
- Serve as a guide to Voice of the Poor Committee when recommending legislation or issues to the Archdiocesan Council for consideration.
- The agenda will be reviewed annually and submitted to the Archdiocesan Council for approval prior to communication to our members.

For updates about the Seattle Archdiocesan Council Voice of the Poor, see the website:
www.svdpsea.org/archdiocese

Society Position Statements

To date the National Voice of the Poor Committee has produced five position papers, approved by the National President and Board. These statements are foundation documents for Vincentian advocacy and are posted on the national Voice of the Poor website: www.voiceofthepoor.org.

1. A Just Wage for Employees of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (April 2001)
2. Affordable Housing for the Poor (Feb. 2002)
3. Health Care for the Poor (Feb. 2004)
4. Position Statement on Immigration (Sept. 2004)
5. Position Statement on Fair Wages (Sept. 2005)

(Draft) position papers on Predatory Lending and Homelessness are being reviewed by the National Voice of the Poor Committee, at this time.

Catholic Social Teaching

Vincentians should become familiar with Catholic social teaching as the Church's guide to advocacy and Part Seven of the Society's Rule which addresses the role of Vincentians in civil society. Recommended resources for Conferences are the Society's [Serving in](#)

Hope videos and workbooks: Module IV: Our Vincentian Mission and Module V: The Rule. Find related information at the National VOP website: www.voiceofthepoor.org

Voice of the Poor Priority Areas for Advocacy – 2006-2007

The Seattle Archdiocesan Council Voice of the Poor Committee will continue to follow legislation and budgeting at the State level and work with local officials in areas affecting those we serve. The Council is on record in support of funding for social and human services for the needy in our state.

The following issues *have been approved* by the Archdiocesan Council for advocacy. During the session, the VOP Committee may come to the Council with new issues, if additional support for SVdeP/VOP core issues becomes necessary.

Housing and Homelessness

Believing that the dignity of the human person is the source of the right to affordable housing, the Council supports:

- Increasing funding for the Housing Trust Fund
- Granting taxing authority for local governments' 10 Year plans to end homelessness
- Increasing funding for temporary rental assistance for people in need
- Appropriating funding for housing and social services for low-income households

Income and Assistance

Recognizing that the state budget reflects a communal response to fundamentally moral questions, the Council supports:

- Preserving social services for poor and vulnerable persons
- Increasing the vendor rates for social service agencies
- Increasing funding for TANF grants, and for daycare and transportation for TANF recipients
- Establishing a 12-month exemption in the TANF program for new mothers
- Increasing funding for GA-U and adding mental health benefits
- Expanding anti-hunger programs
- Restricting and reforming payday loans
- Establishing a fair/living wage

Health Care

Recognizing that access to affordable health care affirms the human dignity of a person, the Council supports:

- Increasing access to health care coverage
- Increasing enrollment levels in the Basic Health Plan
- Ensuring health care coverage for every child by 2010
- Increasing funding for mental health services, especially for children