

# ARKANSAS VOICE OF THE POOR

**Society of St. Vincent DePaul**

**District Council of Arkansas**

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## From the desk of Sr. Joan Pytlik

Today I am inspired to launch this newsletter. You may wonder why as Regional Spiritual Advisor I would do so. Those who know me, know that advocacy is in my blood, having served in the Diocesan Social Action Office for nine years. A better reason is that the *Rule* of the Society tells us that advocacy is an essential part of our vocation as Vincentians. I would urge you to re-read Part I, Section 7 (p.16-17) of the Rule. The section begins, "The Society is concerned not only with alleviating need but also with identifying the unjust structures that cause it. It is, therefore, committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and to contributing to their elimination."

The Arkansas 87<sup>th</sup> General Assembly begins Monday January 12<sup>th</sup>. I plan to keep up with the issues that affect people who live in poverty, and to keep you abreast of the issues and how and when to get involved with your Representative and Senator. **I will e-mail the newsletters to the Conference Presidents, and ask them to promptly send them on to their members. If anyone wants to receive the newsletters directly from me, please e-mail me your e-mail address. Let's work together to be a voice for the voice-less in Arkansas, and to make SVDP a force for justice in the state.**

## Who are my Legislators?

To find who your Representative and Senator are, go to the official website [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us). Click on *Legislators*, then check *House* or *Senate* and click on *Search*. Match the *District* to the number on your Voter Registration card. Notice the icon to click in the E-mail column.

## Where to Begin?

It is good to introduce yourself to your legislators even before an issue comes up. Let them know that you work with the St. Vincent DePaul Society in your church to take care of the people in poverty. Meet them in person; phone them at home on the weekend; or e-mail them at the Capitol. E-mailing is the quickest way of communicating.

## What if I want to know all the Bills filed?

Go to the official website, click on *Search Bills* in the left hand column. You can click on *House*, *Senate* or *All*, then click on *Search*. The titles of all bills filed to date will come up, and you can click on any one to see the bill. It isn't necessary to put in bill numbers at this time.

**Two Bills to be filed that I will watch:**  
Housing Trust Fund & Earned Income Tax Credit,