

Voice of the Poor Phoenix Activities Overview¹

VOP was initiated in Phoenix at the request of our National Board. The mission of the Voice of the Poor is to educate our members about political issues impacting the needy at the local, state and national levels. Occasionally, Voice of the Poor will recommend that the Diocesan Board take on official position on legislation.

In the past two years, the Diocesan Board has approved the following:

- Removal of KidCap (children born while the mother receives welfare are ineligible for cash assistance)
- A position paper on child support distributed to all conferences
- A pilot program for welfare recipients
- Adoption of Proposition 303 (raised in tobacco tax for health care for the poor)
- Support for continuing general assistance (GA) for disabled persons waiting for approval for disability through the Social Security Administration
- Support for S.B. 1009 raising unemployment benefits (Arizona is now 50th in level of support).
- Opposition to cuts proposed in the budgets of the Department of Economic Security, Department of Health Services and AHCCCS (Arizona's version of Medicaid).

Voice of the Poor has a monthly newsletter written by Walt Gray of District 8. For Vincentians with email, there is a VOPNET operated by Board liaison, Lucy Howell. SVdP staff liaison is Jerry Castro. Just under 100 Vincentian members have indicated interest in advocating for those we serve.

¹ Placed on www.voiceofthepoor.org 8/29/03