

September 29, 2008

EMBRACING the COMMON GOOD

Dear Friends in Faith,

Concern for the common good, and particularly for those who are the most vulnerable in our society, is central to all of our faith traditions. We believe that moral principles and values held in common among faith leaders, and people of conscience and good will, can transform public policy and lead to the full realization of the common good. We believe faithful citizenship calls us to vote and participate in the electoral process.

We are writing to you today as partners in a faith-based coalition: “Embracing the Common Good,” collaborating to inform people of faith about three important issues on the upcoming ballot.

- ◆ **We oppose Amendment 46** which would eliminate equal opportunity programs in Colorado. Faith leaders throughout Colorado support equal opportunity as necessary to preserving human dignity and hope.

We believe Colorado’s current equal opportunity initiatives are cultivating a society where all people have access to income and resources that help us all meet our basic needs, and these initiatives should not be eliminated.

- ◆ **We support Amendment 51** which would provide funding for critical services needed by people with developmental disabilities. Funds would come from a phased-in increase in the state sales tax of two tenths of one percent (2¢ on a \$10 purchase).

We believe all people deserve services that enable them to meet their basic needs. Public policies should be evaluated by their impact on the common good, and particularly on our vulnerable and marginalized neighbors.

- **We support Amendment 59** which would ensure that the state saves in good economic times so our kids aren’t hurt in bad times. It creates a Savings Account for Education (S.A.F.E.) and invests state revenues above the TABOR limit in that savings account. While responsibly funding education, it also eliminates the requirement that spending on P-12 education increase at the rate of inflation each year after 2011.

We believe budgets are moral documents which must embody the common good and reflect our shared responsibility to each other. Just tax policies are investments in our future, ensuring that the benefits of society are broadly shared.

The enclosed fact sheets provide additional information about the specifics of each issue, why faith leaders care, and why we are asking for your help in getting the word out. As you know, the ballot will be very long and it will be hard for Coloradans to study all eighteen issues. It may be tempting for citizens **not to vote** on any of the ballot measures out of frustration. We are working to inform people of faith, so they feel prepared to vote on these critical issues.

We’re also encouraging folks to vote by mail in order to **avoid long lines on November 4th**, or, they could go to “Early Voting” polling locations from Monday, October 20th through Friday, October 31st.

(over)

We thank you for your consideration of this invitation to join countless people of many faiths across Colorado in this vitally important effort to speak up and embrace the common good in the upcoming election. We hope you will encourage someone to speak in your congregation about these issues, and we would be happy to provide a speaker for you.

Enclosures include:

- ❖ Three fact sheets, on Amendments 46, 51, and 59
- ❖ A bulletin insert (to be copied & cut into two half sheets).
- ❖ A poster (to be posted along with the fact sheets).
- ❖ A sample article for your congregation's newsletter.

These documents and sample talking points can be downloaded at the We Believe Colorado website: www.WeBelieveColorado.org.

While there, you may want to visit a link to the Pew Forum's *Politics and the Pulpit 2008, A Guide to the Internal Revenue Code Restrictions on the Political Activity of Religious Organizations*. It notes that churches can discuss, and even endorse ballot initiatives and referendums without being in violation of the Church & State separation.

In faith and friendship,

"Embracing the Common Good" coalition members:

Colorado Council of Churches
Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance
Hunger for Justice: Interfaith Voices Against Poverty
Jewish Community Relations Council
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado
Metropolitan Organization for People
Northeast Denver Islamic Center/ Greater Denver Interfaith Alliance
The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
We Believe Colorado: People of Faith for the Common Good

For questions or resources:

Becky Vanderslice, We Believe Colorado
303-517-7955 Web: www.webelievecolorado.org
email: info@webelievecolorado.org

To volunteer, or for speakers:

Brad Wood, Hunger for Justice
303-350-3699 Web: www.hungerforjustice.org
e-mail: brad@hungerforjustice.org