



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

February 14, 2014

Re: Projected Tax Surplus

Dear Senator ...,

As faith leaders representing 809 congregations with 468,000 members throughout the state of Wisconsin, we extend our gratitude to you for taking leadership to help all the citizens of Wisconsin to thrive. We trust that you are carefully discerning Special Session AB1 that proposes how Wisconsin should use the projected tax surplus. We are fortunate to be one of several states to project a surplus years after the national economic downfall that led to the cutting of funding for needed programs in the last several years.

The congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are committed to ending hunger and addressing the root causes of poverty in our Wisconsin communities. Our consciences demand that we earnestly defend the rights and the dignity of the weakest and poorest among us. In response, our churches provide critically important services to our neighbors in need of food, shelter, education, and rehabilitative care. At the same time, the needs of those in our communities exceed our capacity to serve. We are concerned that AB1 as it stands will create a structural deficit that would exacerbate the current struggles of many people in our communities.

We encourage you to advocate for using the projected revenue in ways that will create stability for the people of our state. We support reducing the large budget hole Wisconsin has incurred from borrowing funds to cover past expenditures, meeting the current obligations left with the large gap in the Medicaid budget, and moving us in a direction that will diminish hunger.

With the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin we thank you for your service. We want you to know that our prayers for your best efforts and personal well-being are on-going and heartfelt. We respectfully request that you to try to amend Special Session AB1 so that the projected revenue will build fiscal stability and savings and will assist programs to help address poverty in Wisconsin.

With respect,

Bishop Thomas Skrenes
Northern Great Lakes Synod

Gerald Mansholt
East Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Rick Hoyme
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Mary Froiland
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop James Arends
La Crosse Area Synod

Bishop Jeff Barrow
Greater Milwaukee Synod