

June Updates



Out of the Wisconsin State Budget - Out of sight and out of mind or not?

Raise the Age (returning 17-year-old youth to the juvenile justice system) and **Expanding Driver Licenses**, as mentioned earlier, were taken out of the budget, but there is bipartisan interest in re-introducing these items as separate bills.

Thank you to the Greater Milwaukee Synod for passing a resolution on Raise the Age!

..."RESOLVED, That this Assembly directs the Synod Bishop to produce a statement in support of the Raise the Age Wisconsin campaign and to distribute it to the Governor of Wisconsin, the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, the Assembly Majority and Minority Leaders, and all other members of the legislature, and to advocate with them on behalf of the campaign;

and RESOLVED, That this Assembly calls upon all congregations and worshipping communities within this Synod to encourage their ministers, members, and active participants to contact their elected officials in support of the Raise the Age Wisconsin campaign;... Full resolution: [Resolution-2-Final-Resolution-in-Support-of-the-Raise-the-Age-Wisconsin-Campaign](#).

Stay tuned and join us in lifting our voices!



Out of the Wisconsin State Budget - Out of sight and out of mind or not? Continued:

On our interfaith advocacy day and beyond, we asked lawmakers to keep the budget items related to **PFAS** in the budget, and if those were

taken out to please write separate bills to include them. There was already bipartisan support to address PFAS with strong advocacy from several other groups. We were enthusiastic about adding our voices. We are pleased that within the State Budget, \$125 million was put aside to combat pollution from so-called forever chemicals. The number exceeds what was in the budget. However, the Joint Finance Committee eliminated testing for PFAS, and new positions needed to work on the pollution.

Now, there is a separate bill - [Senate Bill 312](#) supported by some of the same legislators who wanted testing for PFAS out of the budget. The bill includes grants to municipalities for testing and requirements for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). If that sounds a bit convoluted, you're okay. The good news is that there is a continued bipartisan movement to take PFAS seriously and address the problem. However, parts of SB312 tie the hands of the DNR so we have not taken a position on the bill in its entirety yet. If after you read the bill, you decide to ask your legislators to support it with alterations to give more freedom to the DNR, that would indeed be worthy. We'll provide additional information later.

More on Water

Lead in Pipes: We will again be addressing the problem of lead in pipes although we did not include it in our packed agenda on our interfaith advocacy day. Disappointingly, the changes

made by the Joint Finance Committee would leave just one of the governor's lead poisoning prevention proposals left in the budget - maintaining the provision to provide \$100 million for low-interest and forgivable loans for low- to moderate-income households. We do not have information about separate legislation that might include dollars for responding to the increased number of lead investigations, funding to the DNR, funding to replace lead service lines through the state's Safe Drinking Water Loan Program, etc.

Climate Change

Disappointingly, the proposal on Focus on Energy and adding climate change language to municipal disaster plans did not remain in the budget, and we do not have any information on possible separate bills in the works.

Additional Legislative Efforts in Wisconsin



Shirley Paulson testifying as part of the Women of the ELCA. "This bill is important for all children."

Will Safe Harbor, a bill to decriminalize youth under 18 caught in what is perceived as prostitution, pass this time? Originally, it was the Wisconsin Assembly that was the main challenge; now, it appears to be the Senate. Why doesn't it pass? There is bipartisan support to direct youth to receive services rather than detain them as criminals. No police organizations registered or spoke against Safe Harbor during the last session. Two sheriff's organizations registered in favor. Only one organization, which promotes "Christian family values" registered against the bill. Does that group carry a lot of weight? What about a certain radio talk show host in Milwaukee? At the most recent hearing on what is now Assembly Bill 48 and Senate Bill 55, it did seem as though some of the concerns about the process of helping youth to receive the services they need when they are not detained by law enforcement were assuaged. Yet more education is needed. We'll continue to try to unearth the hurdles to passing the bill, to strategize, pray for those experiencing suffering beyond what most of us can imagine, and lift our voices.



Federal Action Opportunities



Federal Action Opportunities on the Farm Bill for Wisconsin & Michigan

Talking about the Farm Bill during a community meal at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Madison and lifting our voices via letters to Congress. Thank you to Rev. Lisa Nelson for the invitation.

You can join in our efforts too! Letters to access for ideas or to sign on to send to Congress:

Wisconsin U.S. Senators

[Sen. Baldwin Farm Bill](#)

[Sen. Johnson Farm Bill](#)

Michigan U.S. Senators
[Sen. Peters Farm Bill](#)
[Sen. Stabenow Farm Bill](#)

U.S. Representatives or Senators for any State
[Rep. or Sen. TBD Farm Bill](#)

Please send a letter to each of your U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative.
If not listed above, find your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative by plugging in your address at www.congress.gov

Resources

[ELCA Farm Bill Introduction](#)
[National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#)

From our Washington, DC Office:

1. Act now on the [Disaster Survivors Fairness Act!](#)

Simplify and Improve Disaster Response Policies. June 1 marked the start of hurricane and wildfire season in the United States. "The bipartisan "Disaster Survivors Fairness Act" would make several major improvements to our public policies aimed at addressing natural disasters, including simplification of access to FEMA benefits and strengthening of the resiliency of our neighborhoods to weather the intensity and frequency of disaster events and the costs associated with them." This effort was worked on in conjunction with Lutheran Disaster Response.

2. Lift your voices on the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act!](#)

Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a bi-partisan solution the decline of America's Wildlife. Call on your Senator to act now and support RAWA.



Pride Month!

"As too many states across the country join in introducing anti-trans legislation at the state level, we must remain allied, together, & vigilant," says John Johnson, ELCA Program Director for Domestic Policy, in new blog post, "Showing Up and Speaking Out Against Harmful LGBTQ Legislation". Find [John's blog here!](#)



[Learn more here!](#)



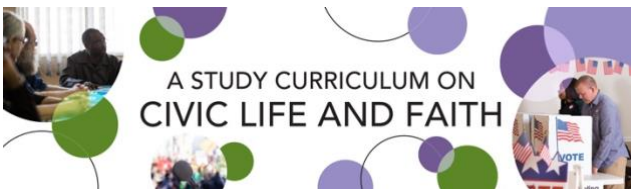
“I Love to Tell the Story.... But How?”

To learn how to tell your hunger and other ministry stories, record them, edit them, and share them! Pastors and Hunger and Justice leaders from the ELCA will teach you how to use your phone to make video content and tell your story. Organized by local ELCA World Hunger leaders.

Session 1: Wednesday June 28 7-8 pm

Session 2: Wednesday July 12. 7-8pm

[Get more details and register here!](#)



The ELCA task force developing a social statement on government, civic engagement, and the relationship of church and state is now offering a six-session study curriculum for use throughout our church. It provides a guide into the issues and invites participant feedback for the task force. [Please take a look and study together.](#) The study response period is open through Oct. 15.

Thank you for taking time with us!