



Lutheran Legislative Agenda 2017

There are three synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in Texas. At their annual legislative conference, members from all of Texas' ELCA synods adopt a consensus legislative agenda reflecting their priority legislative concerns.

As Lutherans, we affirm the dedication of every member of the Texas Legislature. We thank you for your service to our state and we look forward to thanking you for your good work in the 85th Legislative Session. We particularly look forward to thanking you for your action on the following issues, which we believe are crucial to our state's wellbeing:

Caring for God's Creation

- We urge legislators to prioritize water infrastructure investments around the primary principle of fair access to clean water for all people in Texas.
- We urge legislators to prepare and protect Texas from adverse climate change impacts.
- We urge legislators to affirm the rights of local communities to local control, and refrain from pre-empting local decisions regarding environmental regulations, consumer protection, and other issues.

Showing Hospitality to All People

- We urge legislators to ensure access to basic services for immigrants and strong enforcement of laws on those who prey on immigrants.
- We urge legislators to reject legislation that co-opts local law enforcement agents into enforcement of federal immigration laws.
- We urge legislators to respect the humanity, family bonds, and societal contributions of undocumented people.
- Texas should welcome vulnerable sojourners and continue to work in partnership with nonprofit organizations to provide services without regard to country of origin or religion.

Safeguarding Child and Family Well-Being

- We urge legislators to reject proposals that would jeopardize Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- We urge legislators to establish meaningful regulation of the short-term lending market, including laws that encourage transparency, accountability, and good sense limits on effective interest rates.
- We urge legislators to fully fund adequate public education in Texas and reject any diversion of public funds into private schools.
- We urge legislators to adopt policies that support families, including breastfeeding accommodations and parental leave.

Ensuring Justice and Peace for All People

- We urge legislators to respect the religious diversity of our state and uphold the constitutional right of every person in Texas to religious expression or no religious expression.
- We urge legislators to reject attempts to legitimize discrimination of any kind on the basis of religion.
- We urge legislators to embrace policies that encourage the humane treatment of those incarcerated, facilitate effective reentry after incarceration, and recognize the special vulnerability of adolescents and those with mental illness caught up in the criminal justice system.
- We urge legislators to affirm the dignity of all people and resist divisive legislation that marginalizes people on the basis of gender identity.

For more information about Lutheran Legislative Event or this legislative agenda, contact Mary Lou Ralls-Newman at ralls-newman@sbcglobal.net