



Public Witness 101

raising your voice for the common good

Four Questions

1. **How** do people of faith think about public policy?
2. **How** does public policy get made?
3. **How** can people of faith advocate for just public policies?
4. **How** can Texas Impact support your work?

Question One

Why should people of faith participate in developing public policies?

What does our faith tell us about our role in community?





From Judaism:

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary.”



From Islam:

“No one is a believer until he loves for his neighbor, and for his brother, what he loves for himself.”

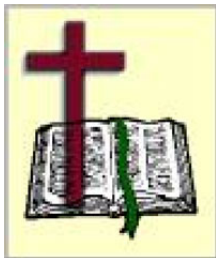
From Taoism:

“Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain; and regard your neighbor’s loss as your own loss, even as though you were in their place.”



From Hinduism:

“A man obtains a proper rule of action by looking on his neighbor as himself.”



From Christianity:

“A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another even as I have loved you...
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, for this is the law and the prophets.”

Who is our neighbor?



There are many neighbors that we never see.



In the United States, participating in democracy is one important way we 'love our neighbors,' especially those we never see.



In a democracy we all share responsibility for the **public policies** that structure our lives.



*Let's go
upstream
and stop
whoever is
throwing
the
babies
in the
river.*

Charity is a matter of personal attributes;
justice, a matter of public policy.

Charity seeks to eliminate the **effects** of injustice;
justice seeks to eliminate the **causes** of it.

Charity in no way affects the status quo,
while justice leads inevitably to political confrontation.

—The Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

Question Two

What does the public policy process look like in a democracy?

public policy

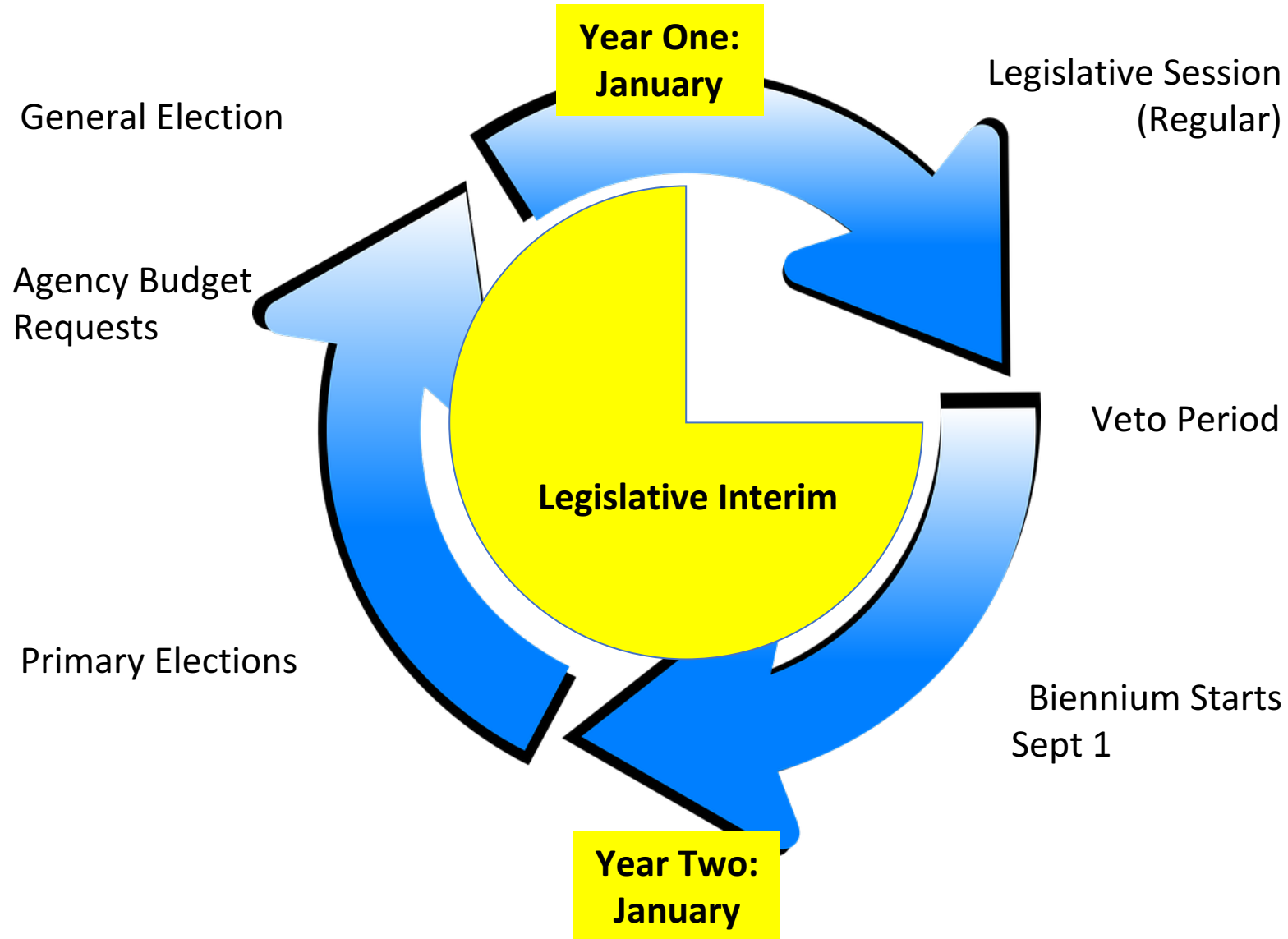
1: the governing policy within a community, as embodied in its legislative and judicial enactments, which serves as a **basis for determining what acts are to be regarded as contrary to the public good**

2. a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to **guide and determine present and future decisions**

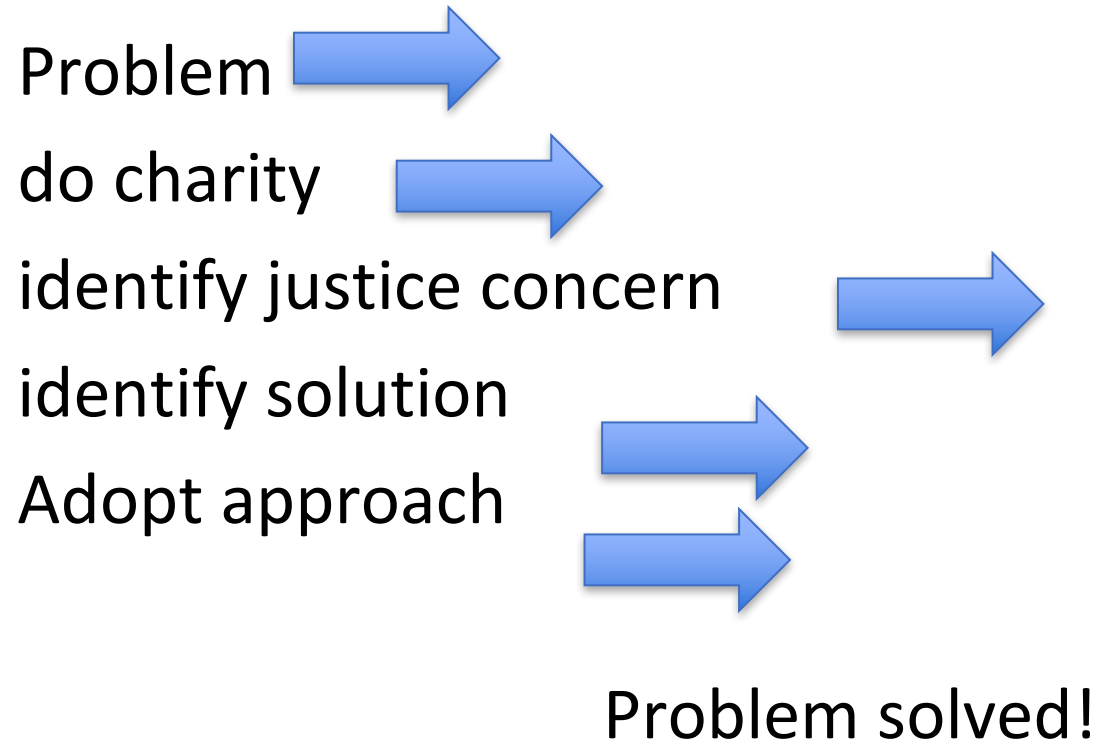
The Branches and Levels of Government



The Texas Legislative Cycle



HOW WE WISH POLICY WORKED

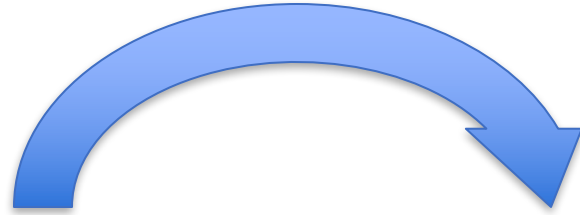


HOW POLICY ACTUALLY WORKS

Refine or
restructure
approach

Evaluate
approach

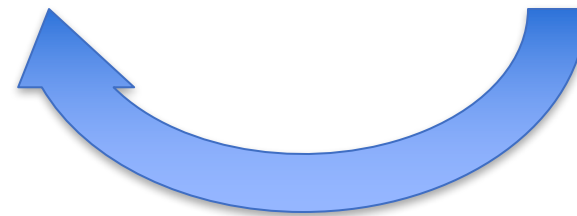
Implement
approach



Problem

Identify
solution

Adopt
approach



Question Three

How can people of faith advocate most effectively for just public policies?



Stories: foundations for policy

Storytelling and Advocacy

A photograph of a meeting in a wood-paneled room. A man in a dark pinstriped suit and tie is seated at a table, looking towards a woman who is also seated. The woman has short grey hair and is wearing a patterned jacket. A flag is visible in the background. The text 'Storytelling and Advocacy' is overlaid on the top right of the image.

vocare: to summon help

Know Your Community Treasure Hunt



Bobbie Sanders testimony
<https://youtu.be/C6r121QdFaU>

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

11.03.15





PROCESSING YOUR STORY

Storytelling for Social Change

Your Turn!

Prompts to Get You Started

Try starting a conversation about an issue you care about using one of these phrases:

I want to tell you about

Let me introduce you to _____. S/he is _____.

I can't stop thinking about ...

Everything changed when

But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.

("Facing the Challenge of a New Age," 1956)



"The Prophetic Faith of Martin Luther King, Jr."
EnglewoodReview.org



solving tough problems

An Open Way of
Talking, Listening,
and Creating
New Realities

ADAM KAHANE

Foreword by Peter Senge

Beloved Community is about **how** we resolve conflicts, not **whether** we will have them.

Books on Community, Civility and Public Life

- *Habits of the Heart* (Robert Bellah)
- *Bowling Alone; American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us; Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (Robert Putnam)
- *The True and Only Heaven* (Christopher Lasch)
- *Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships* (Arnett and Arneson)
- *Solving Tough Problems* (Adam Kahane)

Question Four

How can Texas Impact support your work?

About Texas Impact video
<https://youtu.be/n7ArhrP-gAk>



TEXAS IMPACT

people of faith working for justice



Scott Atnip
mobile

Message

Slide to answer

Texas Impact Engagement Opportunities

- Events
 - Conferences
 - Classes and workshops
 - Courts & Ports
- Media
 - Weekly Witness
 - YouTube
 - Social Media
- Website
 - Actionable information
 - Resources and curricula
- Teams
 - Rapid Response
 - Legislative Engagement Groups
 - Election Mobilization

HOMework ASSIGNMENT

1. How do your congregation's outward-facing programs touch on public policy issues?
2. What needs are present in the local neighborhood where your house of worship is located, and how do those needs relate to public policy?
3. Who are the policymakers representing the area where your house of worship is located, at the local, state, and federal levels?

BONUS: Introduce one of your programs to the neighborhood and/or a lawmaker!



PASS the
FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE

PASS the
FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE

STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE
www.StandingontheSideOfLove.com
North Texas Christian University

No 'Proud Boys' watching me in the voting booth!

PASS the
LEWIS

Thanks!

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