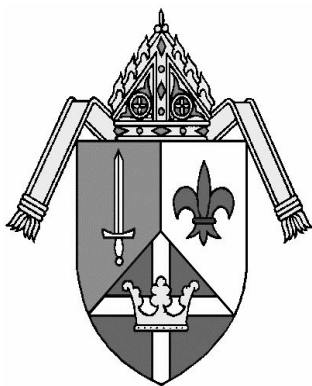
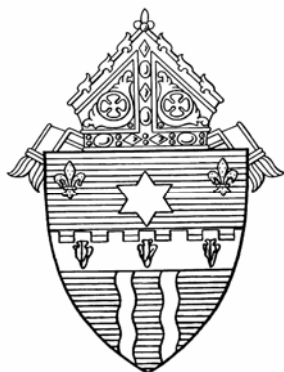




Just Work

A pastoral letter about work and justice



September 2007

The permanent principles of the church's social doctrine constitute the very heart of Catholic social teaching. These are the principles of: the dignity of the human person, ... which is the foundation of all the other principles and content of the Church's social doctrine; the common good; subsidiarity; and solidarity.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2004) No. 160.

1. We have much to celebrate

We celebrate the work of the men and women of Kentucky. We honor workers and the importance of their work.

Labor is how we provide for the livelihood of individuals and families. Labor is how we exercise stewardship and participate in God's creation in order to build up the common good of our Commonwealth.

We honor employers who provide an opportunity for meaningful work and who provide safe, humane working conditions, just wages, and benefits, including retirement benefits, health insurance, and liability insurance.¹

Human work is “a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question....”² Morally, we understand that work is not a way to selfishly advance oneself. Rather it is a way of self-realization and a way to sustain life and contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Work is for “one's family, for the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family.”³

Over the years, our state has grown through the labor of human hands, minds, and spirits. We especially celebrate our participation in God's creation by the work we do in caring for our neighbor individually through our acts of charity and in caring for the human family collectively as a state through our acts of justice.



2. The Good Samaritan is a model of how we respond to people in need

In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI explains the significance of the biblical teaching of the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-37). The limit of the neighbor as only the “closely-knit community of a single country or people” is abolished. “Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbour.”⁴ The parable teaches us about the “...love which God lavishes upon us and which we in turn must share with others....”⁵ “Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation, and it is ready and even willing, for sacrifice.”⁶



¹ *On Human Work*, Pope John Paul II, 1981, (No. 19).

² *On Human Work*, Pope John Paul II, 1981, (No. 3).

³ *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986, (No. 97).

⁴ *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, (No. 16)

⁵ *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, (No. 1)

⁶ *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, (No. 6)

3. We are helping our neighbors with the love of the Good Samaritan

Through the Church's many ministries, we are working to provide for our neighbors, both Catholic and non-Catholic, rather than passing them by.

We serve many Kentucky neighbors through our four diocesan Catholic social service agencies, our 24-hour pregnancy hot line managed by Opportunities for Life, and our 296 Catholic parishes. We provide food, clothing, and shelter. We assist pregnant women, counsel those suffering from substance abuse and mental illness, and visit persons who are imprisoned. We resettle refugees, reach out to the homeless, assist with adoptions, and provide parenting skills education. We assist parishes, neighborhoods, and communities in discerning and meeting the needs of their residents for economic opportunity and for just social conditions. We provide not only food, clothing, and shelter to the people who are poor and homeless but also emotional and spiritual support. We help to strengthen marriages and families in all their diversity, life stages, and transitions.

Each year Catholic schools in Kentucky educate more than 50,000 students in 98 elementary schools, 25 secondary schools, and 5 post-secondary schools.

Catholic health care in Kentucky ministers to people who are ill in 16 acute care hospitals and 30 nursing facilities. Other Catholic-sponsored service organizations provide hospice care, home health services, assisted living, and senior housing.

We are grateful to the 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth who support these ministries with their unfailing generosity.



4. Many generously help their neighbors with selfless charity

Generous concern and care for those in need is not limited to the Catholic community. Many of those in need are fed, sheltered, clothed, healed, visited when sick or in prison, and educated by the humble, gracious work of citizens of many faiths and beliefs throughout Kentucky. In this way, many individuals, groups, faith communities, and political leaders participate in God's creation.



5. Many generously help their neighbors by building a just social order

The pursuit of justice where "each person receives what is his or her due" is a demand of the Gospel. The fundamental obligation of the state is to pursue "a just social order" that insures "each person his share of the community's goods."⁷ The authentic development of people is advanced by the work of Kentuckians and the political leadership that is directed toward greater justice.

We especially note the enactment of legislation that is bringing about a more just social order in our Commonwealth, including the

⁷ *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, (Nos. 26, 28).

- Raise in the state minimum wage, which helps so many people who are poor and working, especially working parents, struggling to survive.
- Removal of more than 500,000 low-income earners from the income tax rolls through changes in Kentucky's income tax structure.
- Provision of a dedicated stream of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which helps many low-income persons have safe, affordable homes.
- Prohibition of human trafficking to protect our citizens from modern day slavery.
- Addition of a comprehensive smoking cessation benefit to the Medicaid program that reduces tobacco related illnesses and injury to the unborn and that decreases Medicaid expenditures.

In addition, Kentucky workers have benefited from the rejection of a right to work law and from the maintenance of prevailing wage laws. Our laws should protect “*the right of association*, that is, the right to form associations for the purpose of defending the vital interests of those employed in the various professions.” Catholic social doctrine teaches that unions are an “indispensable *element of social life*, especially in modern industrialized societies.”⁸



6. Our challenges are significant

While there is much to celebrate in our acts of charity and the public policy advancements that are bringing about more just structures, we are mindful of the many struggles and needs of the people of Kentucky and our nation.

We focus on structural injustices that are of importance in Kentucky in these times:

- A) Poverty
- B) Health care
- C) Immigration
- D) Revenue to meet human needs

A. Poverty and economic insecurity are plagues that reduce human dignity.

We know that poverty is a “plague against which humanity must fight without cease.”⁹

Kentucky has many strengths but it also suffers from realities that are ignoble. Poverty ranks as one of Kentucky's most compelling problems. Persistent poverty weakens human dignity and endangers the future of our Commonwealth. According to the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, Kentucky's poverty rate (the measure of the portion of the population with incomes below the poverty line) of 16.8% in 2006, 14.8% in 2005, and 17.8% in 2004 is 32% higher than the national poverty rate of 12.5% when looking at 3 year averages of Census data. Few in our nation are poorer than us.

Poverty is highest in Kentucky for children and for female heads of households with children. For the last forty years, Kentucky's Appalachian counties have seen very little change in poverty rates, with 20% or more of its residents remaining poor. Between 2003

⁸ *On Human Work*, Pope John Paul II, 1981 (No. 20).

⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, Public Audience, October 16, 2005.

and 2006, Kentucky went from being the 10th poorest state in the nation to the fifth poorest state.

Our Commonwealth fares poorly on several key indicators of child well-being as indicated by the data from The Annie E. Casey Foundation *2007 Kids Count Data Book*, which ranks Kentucky as 40th in key indicators of child well-being.

Kentucky has

- 8.8% low birthweight babies compared to 8.1% nationally.
- 24 child deaths per 100,000 vs. 20 per 100,000 nationally.
- 95 teen deaths per 100,000 vs. 66 per 100,000 nationally.
- 49 teen (15-19 years) births per 1,000 vs. 41 nationally.
- 9% teen high school drop outs vs. 7% nationally.
- 38% of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year round employment vs. 34% nationally.
- 22% of children in poverty vs. 19% nationally.

Our poverty rate is particularly troublesome because it runs counter to the large national gains made against poverty in the late 1990s.

In one of the nation's poorest states, the economic uncertainty and the ever-widening income inequality and volatility of so many of our neighbors rise to the top of our list of concerns. Catholic social teaching does not require "absolute equality in the distribution of income and wealth" but there is a strong "presumption against extreme inequality of income and wealth as long as there are poor, hungry, and homeless people in our midst."¹⁰

The rate of growth in inequality, and the fact that income growth is concentrated in the top 5% of the overall income distribution is profoundly disturbing. This gap suggests that the economic growth experienced over the past 5 years is not widely distributed among the population. The disparity thwarts long-term growth and inhibits rising living standards for the typical family. Inequality is especially apparent within the ranks of the most vulnerable family units – single mothers with children. Recent research demonstrates that from 1979 to 1996 the rate of income inequality between single mothers and others remained constant, but that this rate has increased by more than 70% since passage of federal welfare reform legislation in 1996. Like inequality overall, the inequity within this group is being driven by gains by those who are in the top 5% of income distribution.

We also are witnessing the devastating results of income volatility. This instability occurs in earnings or other income sources due to job loss, illness, and other macroeconomic and personal factors. This volatility negatively affects not only a family's ability to pay bills today, but also its ability to engage in long-term economic planning.

Income instability is linked to food insecurity. This year is the 30th anniversary of the modern Food Stamp Program, yet 12% of Americans, about the same percentage as those who are poor, worry about whether they have the income to put food on the table. This unpredictability obviously leads to a great deal of personal anxiety.

¹⁰ *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986, (No. 185).

Important studies by labor economists have identified the persistent challenges facing the low-income population in Kentucky and call for concerted efforts to improve the skills of our children and displaced adults and for the provision of adequate income supports. Such income supports include the need for focused improvements in early childhood care and education, unemployment insurance, food stamp assistance, workers compensation, disability insurance, job training, and wages.

Poverty is not limited to our Commonwealth. Church social teaching also challenges us to look beyond our borders to the nation and world. Catholic Charities USA's Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America is a national effort to systematically cut the U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020. We endorse this campaign of hope. Globally, we continue to advocate for U.S. policies that foster economic and social development for people living in poverty throughout the world with a focus on issues of trade, aid, and debt.

B. Healthcare is a moral right.

Many children and working adults in Kentucky lack the insurance that would allow them to improve their health. We reiterate the moral imperative for health care for all:

All persons have a moral right to basic physical and behavioral health care. Access to basic health care is a fundamental human right, necessary for the development and maintenance of life and for the ability of human beings to realize the fullness of their dignity. A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for the poor and vulnerable. It is not acceptable that millions of people in our country and hundreds of thousands in Kentucky do not have access to affordable health care. We need a new commitment in our nation and our Commonwealth to insure access to affordable health care for all in a way that reflects a priority concern for the poor.¹¹

We understand the challenges of providing healthcare, as we ourselves struggle to offer it to our diocesan employees and their families. Yet, some states have begun to provide broad healthcare coverage approaching universal coverage, leaving other states like Kentucky behind. The time for focused action in achieving universal healthcare is now.

C. Comprehensive immigration reform is needed

The divisive rhetoric about immigration should not keep us from achieving comprehensive reform that leads to “welcoming the stranger” to our land. With so much of our state’s and nation’s labor provided by hard working immigrants, we must reiterate our concerns about them:

We understand that many Catholics and people of good will are deeply troubled by the current state of immigration in our country. We call on Catholics and people of good will to a conversion of mind and heart and a hospitable and welcoming attitude toward migrants.... Our immigration system is in serious need of repair. There is an unwelcome response to immigrants. Responsible, comprehensive reform of the immigration system is possible. As a matter of justice, it should include the following elements: 1) a broad-based earned legalization of undocumented persons; 2) a temporary worker program with appropriate protections for both U.S. and foreign workers; 3) changes to the family-based immigration system to reduce waiting times for family reunification; and 4) restoration of due process for immigrants.¹²

¹¹ *Health Care is a Moral Right, a Safeguard of Human Life*, Catholic Conference of KY, (2005).

¹² *Every Man and Woman is the Image of God*, Catholic Conference of KY, (2006).

D. Progressively raising revenue for human needs

Catholic social teaching holds that taxation should be based on one's ability to pay. Our contribution to the common good should proportionately reflect the amount of our blessings. "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." (Lk 12:48).

Kentucky has many areas in which to improve its commitment to human dignity and the common good. This cannot be achieved without additional revenue and without adjustments to the methods by which funds are raised by our government. In an earlier statement, *Principles of Taxation, Allocation of Revenue, Contributing to the Common Good* (2004), we identified principles to use in judging the justice of particular tax proposals:

1. Spending by the State of Kentucky should first assure that the basic needs of all people – especially those who are poor and vulnerable - are addressed as a priority before other appropriations are made.
2. All citizens and corporations have the right and responsibility to contribute to the common good through the payment of taxes.
3. The State of Kentucky should seek and maintain revenues sufficient to meet the basic needs of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
4. Taxation in any form should be based on one's ability to pay.
5. All forms of taxation should be fair and just in their treatment of the poor.

Pius XI addressed the responsibility of those who possess more than they need: "Furthermore, a person's superfluous income, that is, income which he does not need to sustain life fittingly and with dignity, is not left wholly to his own free determination. Rather the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church constantly declare in the most explicit language that the rich are bound by a very grave precept to practice almsgiving, beneficence, and munificence."¹³ More revenue must be raised for the human needs of Kentuckians, primarily from those who have more and are more able to help. We emphasize that in a "system of taxation based on justice and equity, it is fundamental that the burdens be proportioned to the capacity of the people contributing."¹⁴

The economic well-being of a state is not assessed "exclusively by the quantity of goods it produces but also by taking into account the manner in which they are produced and the level of equity in the distribution of income, which should allow everyone access to what is necessary for their personal development and perfection."¹⁵ "Authentic economic well-being is pursued also by means of suitable *social policies for the redistribution of income* which...look at the merit as well as at the need of each citizen."¹⁶ Many of Kentucky's working poor do not have enough for their families. We have opportunities in Kentucky to implement policies to insure that the needs of citizens are better met. A refundable state earned income tax credit is a progressive taxation strategy that assists our poorest workers in a targeted way. It has proven effective in other states at elevating children and parents out of poverty. Likewise, the expansion of individual development accounts would provide incentives that encourage persons with low incomes to build wealth through saving.



¹³ *Quadragesimo Anno* Pope Pius XI, 1931, (No. 50).

¹⁴ *Mater Et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII, 1961, (No. 132).

¹⁵ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, (No. 303).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

7. Our concern for our neighbor is longstanding

We have a rich tradition of social justice teaching that expresses our abiding responsibility to others. We celebrate it.

Work and the condition of workers is the original focus of papal social justice teaching. In 1891, Leo XIII issued the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the *Magna Charta* of social and economic reconstruction. This was followed in 1931 by Pius XI's Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. In 1961 John XXIII published the Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*. Paul VI issued the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and an Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971). John Paul II issued a series of three social Encyclicals, *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991).

Our Catholic social teaching is so extensive that it has recently been comprehensively summarized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), which we recommend as a resource for every Catholic.

Our “long and complex” journey is not characterized by “a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”¹⁷

We participate in God’s creation by caring for others, by being neighbor to those in need, and by seeking a more just social order. Our hope is realistic because we have seen the good will of the people of Kentucky and of our nation. Recent public opinion research indicates that the majority of people in the United States believe that addressing poverty is the single most important priority facing our country.



8. Our gratitude for the work you do with respect and esteem for others

We especially appreciate those who are dedicated to insuring that every worker in our state has a safe workplace, adequate wages, and employment benefits, which allow workers to provide for themselves and their families. We appreciate Kentucky’s support for the right of workers to organize and for labor laws that protect workers’ rights.

Catholic social doctrine provides sound principles to guide us in being neighbor to those in need and in building a more just social order. We understand that “[d]ifferences of opinion in the application of principles can sometimes arise even among sincere Catholics. When this happens, they should be careful not to lose their respect and esteem for each other. Instead, they should strive to find points of agreement for effective and suitable action, and not wear themselves out in interminable arguments, and, under pretext of the better or the best, omit to do the good that is possible and therefore obligatory.”¹⁸

It is fitting to recall the pastoral principle that the “whole concern of doctrine must be directed toward the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope, or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all

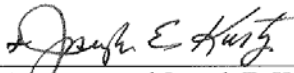
¹⁷ *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II, 1991, (No. 38).

¹⁸ *Mater Et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII, 1961, (No. 238).

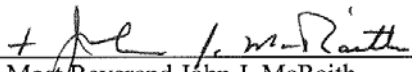
the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love.”¹⁹


We express our deep gratitude to the working men and women of Kentucky for your productive work throughout the year. We appreciate how your work contributes to the quality of life and common good of our Commonwealth. As we celebrate your labor, we call upon all Kentuckians to join with us in the important work of justice. Together, we can accomplish much.

Adopted: September 2007


+ Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz
Archbishop of Louisville


+ Most Reverend Roger J. Foy
Bishop of Covington


+ Most Reverend John J. McRaith
Bishop of Owensboro


+ Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Lexington

¹⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition English Translation, 1997, (No. 25).

Reflection, Questions for Study and Discussion, Prayer

Reflection: Luke 10:25-37

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Questions for Study and Discussion

1. Whom do you identify with in the Parable of the Good Samaritan?
2. What do I find meaningful about the work I do?
3. Many in our society see the work of a person as the means for profit. How does the Church's view of work differ?
4. Why are so many people poor in Kentucky?
5. Why is a more just society a demand of our love of neighbor?
6. What public policies will best help people in Kentucky who are poor?
7. How should our tax system be constructed to both protect people with the least among us but respect the earnings of those who have worked hard.
8. How can I work to bring about a more just social order?
9. Why does the Church have such extensive social justice doctrine?
10. How do I respect someone with whom I have significant differences?
11. How do I work with someone with whom I disagree?
12. How does my work build up the common good?
13. Why does Jesus tell me in the Parable of the Good Samaritan to treat others with mercy?
14. Why am I told in the Second Commandment to love my neighbor as myself?

Prayer

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin, and your will is to gather them as one family in yourself. Fill the hearts of all with the fire of your love, and the desire to ensure justice for all their brothers and sisters. By sharing the good things you give us, may we secure justice and equality for every human being, an end to all division and a human society built on love and peace.

Collect of the Mass "For the Development of Peoples": *Missale Romanum*, ed. typ. altera, 1975, p. 820, and quoted in *On Social Concern* John Paul II (1987) No. 49.

Resources

Websites for those wishing to study the Church's social justice teachings

- Vatican <http://www.vatican.va/>
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org
 - Labor Day Statements: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/labday.shtml>
- Catholic Conference of KY (CCK): www.ccky.org

Encyclicals, Apostolic Letter, Compendium, Catechism

- Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891)
- Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931)
- John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, (1961)
- Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971)
- John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991).
- *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004)
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2d ed 1997) (The Social Doctrine of the Church, Economic Activity and Social Justice, Justice and Solidarity Among Nations, Love for the Poor, Nos. 2419 - 2449). <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Economic Justice for All: *Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (1986)

http://www.osjspm.org/economic_justice_for_all.aspx

The six moral principles presented in the pastoral letter:

- 1) Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.
- 2) Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community. In our teaching, the human person is not only sacred but social.
- 3) All people have a right to participate in the economic life of society. Basic justice demands that people be assured a minimum level of participation in the economy.
- 4) All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable. From the Scriptures and church teaching, we learn that the justice of a society is tested by the treatment of the poor.
- 5) Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community. In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights but also economic rights.
- 6) Society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights.

Poverty statistics and information

Catholic Charities USA's Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/>

Poverty in America is a moral and social crisis. It threatens the health and economic well-being of our families and our nation as a whole. In response to this crisis, Catholic Charities USA has launched the Campaign to Reduce Poverty nationally; public policy initiatives to combat poverty *systematically* in America are set out in *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good* (Catholic Charities 2006 Policy Paper). The goal of the Campaign is to cut the U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020. Specific policy areas of focus for Congressional action as part of the national Campaign to Reduce Poverty include:

HEALTH CARE

- Provide adequate funding for health care for our nation's most vulnerable citizens.
- Maintain the integrity and strength of the Medicaid program.
- Remove new restrictions to Medicaid that create barriers for low-income families.
- Provide adequate funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) program to expand coverage for all eligible children.
- Reform child health insurance program to make it easier for eligible children to apply.

- Support policies that provide integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment.

HOUSING

- Provide adequate funding for federally subsidized housing programs.
- Support and strengthen programs aimed at increasing homeownership.
- Establish a National Housing Trust Fund.
- Support comprehensive reform of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program.

HUNGER AND NUTRITION

- Strengthen the Food Stamp Program to better assist the working poor and the elderly.
- Protect funding for critical food programs that serve low-income families, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Community Food and Nutrition Program.
- Ensure that federal nutrition programs meet the unique needs of rural families.

FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Increase the minimum wage and ensure that it is automatically increased to keep pace with inflation.
- Improve the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to benefit more families.
- Promote policies that support and strengthen families, including low-income fathers.
- Expand employment and training opportunities for low-income workers.
- Improve the protection and care of abused, neglected, and abandoned children and youth.
- Provide adequate funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
- Ensure access to quality early education for all children.
- Improve the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to be more inclusive for more workers.
- Preserve funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).
- Support comprehensive immigration reform that protects vulnerable families.

University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research

Established in 2002 as one of four federally funded poverty research centers in the U.S
<http://www.ukcpr.org/>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Campaign for Human Development

<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/index.htm>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services, The Catholic Campaign against Global Poverty

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/index.shtml>

The 2006 Health and Human Services Poverty Rate Guidelines and the US Census Bureau's Poverty Thresholds:

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml>

For instance, for a four-person family the Poverty Threshold in 2006 is \$20,794.

http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/povfacts_region.shtml

KIDS COUNT Data Book

Provides information and statistical trends on the conditions of America's children and families. Data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2007 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is available at
<http://www.kidscount.org/sld/profile.jsp>

The High Price of Being Poor in Kentucky, Matt Fellowes and Dr. Terry I. Brooks (June 2007)

http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20070618_kentucky.htm

Kentucky's working families frequently pay a premium for daily necessities. Lower-income workers in Kentucky are more likely to pay double-digit interest rates for auto loans; more likely to pay hundreds of

dollars more for car insurance; and more likely to pay a higher sticker price for their car compared to their higher income counterparts. Additionally, lower-income workers are twice as likely to have purchased a high-cost mortgage compared to their higher income neighbors and are more likely to use alternative financial service providers, costing untold extra dollars for basic financial transactions and the purchase of home goods. However, new innovative and practical initiatives are being implemented and improving the prices of key necessities for lower-income families around the country. Public and private leaders in Kentucky can follow suit and also reduce these higher costs of living, and do so in ways that defy the substantial budgetary, economic, and partisan pressures that limit so many efforts to grow the middle class. Through a combination of initiatives that bring down business costs, curb unscrupulous behavior, and boost consumer knowledge, public and private leaders can bring down these prices, creating up to thousands of dollars in extra family spending power.

Poverty Polling data

Zogby Poll: Majority Call Fighting Poverty a "Top Priority," June 4, 2007, <http://www.zogby.com/search/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1320>

This poll indicates the following: 80% agreed that most people are poor because their jobs do not pay enough, they lack good health care and education, and things cost too much for them to save and move ahead. "More than four in five voters also showed a willingness to embrace solutions oriented at combating problems experienced by many impoverished families, including a lack of financial knowledge and the predatory lending institutions that frequently target low-income families. Three-quarters of voters, meanwhile, backed guaranteed health care coverage for Americans and increasing the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. Notably, three in four American voters (76%) also believe that steps to help the poor could also be helpful for middle class families—with providing guaranteed health coverage for every American seen as the step most beneficial to the middle class."

"Social Policy and Income Inequality" University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research. Bollinger, Christopher, and James P. Ziliak. 2007.

Research demonstrating that from 1979-1996 inequality among single mothers remained constant, but has increased by more than 70% since passage of federal welfare reform legislation in 1996.

"The Evolution of Household Income Volatility" Dynan, Karen, Douglas Elmendorf, and Daniel Sichel. 2007.

Brookings Institution. URL: <http://www3.brookings.edu/views/papers/elmendorf200706.pdf> - research on the devastation of income instability.

Resources from the Catholic Conference of Kentucky

The text of these documents is available at the Catholic Conference of Kentucky website, www.ccky.org.

Ecumenism:

- *A People Made One*
- *Ecumenical Handbook*

Economic Justice:

- *Economic Justice in 21st Century Kentucky: Holding Ourselves Accountable*
- *Principles of Taxation, Allocation of Revenue, Contributing to the Common Good*

Respect Life:

- *Choose Life: Reflections on the Death Penalty*
- *Reverence for Life: The Pursuit of Justice*
- *Kentucky's Advance Health Care Directives and Organ Donation: A Catholic Perspective*
- *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transition*

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1968. CCK speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. There are 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth. The Bishops of the four dioceses of Kentucky constitute CCK's Board of Directors. Committees of the Conference are: Ecumenical, Education, Finance, Health Care, Hispanic, Pro-Life and Social Concerns.