

Justice through Advocacy

"Charity is no substitute for justice withheld." These words spoken by St. Augustine 1500 years ago remind us that we are not dealing with a transient problem but a perpetual force in the world that can only be counteracted with focused advocacy on behalf of those who suffer the effects of skewed public policies.

At LSS, this effort is coordinated by Bob Kay, the LSS director of public policy and advocacy. Bob works closely with the New England Synod's new director of public policy, Pr. Aaron Decker, who is also associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Holden, Mass. Pr. Decker is a recent graduate of the The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and recently moved to Massachusetts from Pennsylvania.

"Charity sees the need, not the cause" according to an old German proverb. At Lutheran Social Services, we see both the need and the cause. It is the cause that is the focus of our public policy and advocacy efforts. Works of charity are important, because the needs we address every day in our ministries are real and acute and must not be ignored, under the mandate of our mission.

Ultimately, only our focus on justice will engender the hope that these needs may be addressed in more systemic and enduring ways. We are fortunate to live in a democracy that gives us access to and influence on our elected government representatives. The men and women who shape public policy need to hear from those of us who are deeply concerned about and aware of the unjust structures in society that make it difficult or impossible for the people on the margins - abused children, people with disabilities, poor frail older adults, refugees - to live with basic dignity and adequate care.

LSS and the NE Synod are partners, bringing this message to our congregations, friends and supporters. By providing information via our jointly-published newsletter "Do Justice," we raise up issues of currency and importance and provide our constituencies with the information needed to make informed decisions and take appropriate action.

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To receive "Do Justice" newsletters, visit www.lssne.org and access the link to the Public Policy page appearing as an image of a gavel approximately mid-way on the home page of the web site. Click on the picture of the gavel, and the destination page sports a button entitled "Do Justice." Click there to access the sign-up page for the newsletters.