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Chicago Center for Cultural
Connections

Community Renewal Society



May 12, 2011

TO: Members of the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Quinn

FROM: Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago

RE: IMPACT OF BUDGET DECISIONS

Exactly one year ago – in May 2010 – this council of religious leaders, representing the widest and most diverse faith traditions in Illinois, wrote you:

In all of our religious traditions it is never the case that the poor, the young, and the vulnerable should bear the burdens of the non-poor and the rich, whether in good times or in bad.

It is, for all of our traditions, just the opposite. In all times, but especially in times of crisis, it is the moral and religious responsibility of those who have to help those who have not.

We commend you as our political leaders in Illinois for the difficult decisions you have made over the past year to lessen the financial crisis of our state.

But we are also aware that the challenge of bringing financial stability to the state continues for both the long term as well as the current and the coming fiscal year.

What alarms us is that strategies for meeting the current crisis appear to focus on budget cuts that will have the greatest negative impact on the poor, the young, and the vulnerable.

To quote again from the communication we sent you last year at this time:

We are troubled and dismayed when we witness the current efforts to address the severe economic crisis of the State of Illinois by cutting support for exactly those who need help the most.

Our plea to you again this year is that you not focus on only one or a few portions of the budget but employ multiple strategies that, taken together, will best serve all the residents of Illinois and avoid placing a morally indefensible *added burden* on the most vulnerable of our state: the poor, the young, and those who desperately need human services.

It is our understanding that there are fiscally responsible alternatives to the proposed additional budget cuts. It is our contention that it would be morally irresponsible to overlook these alternatives.

We thank you for your public service and we pray that you will continue to draw on the wisdom of your own moral and religious traditions in reaching budgetary decisions that will have an impact on so many in our state.

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The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago (CRLMC) was founded 25 years ago, at a time when racial tensions and social injustices were on the rise, and a group of religious leaders in Chicago recognized the growing need to understand cultural and religious differences and learn how to work together. By uniting the churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and other religious assemblies, CRLMC seeks to present a unified vision and voice on issues affecting the common good of the people of Chicago.

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