

The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil

**Led By Rabbi Jack Moline, Director of Public Policy, The Rabbinical Assembly
on Behalf of the Jewish Community
Wednesday, July 27th at 12:30 pm**

Leader: We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the U.S. and abroad from budget cuts.

In Deuteronomy it is declared, "There shall be no needy among you—since God will bless you in the land that God is giving you" (15:4). Our nation's resources are too abundant; our wealth is too great; we are too blessed to house a single needy person within our borders. Some things should not be on the table in these debt limit negotiations. The disadvantaged have already sacrificed much during a Great Recession and a stagnant recovery, and others have forgone nothing at all. Therefore, we call on Congress and the President to exempt all programs that serve the disadvantaged from spending cuts.

Reflections on the Call of Jeremiah

A Responsive Reading

Leader: We pray for compassion

ALL: We pray that our national leaders do not further imbalance the scales of economic justice in a contest of political brinksmanship.

Leader: We pray for healing.

ALL: We pray that our national leaders set aside political rancor and join hands to undo the damage wrought by months of recession and years of stagnant recovery.

Leader: We pray for justice.

ALL: We pray that our nation maintains its commitment to economic security for all so that we may continue to be a light unto the nations and a model of social justice to the world.

A Litany for a Faithful National Budget
(Prepared by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

All: Blessed be our God.

Leader: Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.

Leader: Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.

Leader: Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.

Leader: With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.

Leader: We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.

Leader: God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.

Left side: For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

All: Give us your vision.

Right side: For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

All: Give us your courage.

Leader: Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live.

ALL: Amen.