

DALLAS AREA INTERFAITH CLERGY TO LEGISLATORS: EXPAND HEALTHCARE NOW!

Monday morning, May 6, Dallas Area Interfaith (DAI) held a press conference at Temple Emanu-El calling on Gov. Perry, Lt. Gov. Dewhurst and state legislators to pass House Bill 3791, written by John Zerwas (R-Singelton). This bill is a bi-partisan effort to expand healthcare to cover 1.5 million uninsured Texans. This was the latest in a campaign launched six months ago to expand healthcare coverage to these 1.5 million Texans.

Rabbi Asher Knight of Temple Emanu-El chaired the press conference. He was joined by Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, and Unitarian clergy, along with forty DAI leaders.

Rev. Owen Ross, pastor of Christ's Foundry United Methodist Church, read a letter signed by over sixty clergy, including Bishop Kevin Ferrell, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and Bishop Kevin Kanouse, leader of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana



synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. An excerpt from the letter reads:

As leaders of diverse faith communities, we have joined together to express a common value within each of our faith-traditions: the worth of every human life as created in the image of God. We believe humanity rises to our highest fulfillment as we treat each person with dignity, precisely as we ourselves would hope to be treated. We acknowledge our enduring responsibility to care for one another. As faith leaders, we believe expanding healthcare in Texas should be inclusive, affordable, accessible, and accountable and should strengthen the lives of the working poor and better enable Texans to take care of themselves and their families.

Mike Rosen, a member of Temple Emanu-El announced that DAI leaders *had collected 5,000 signatures* in support of healthcare expansion. *The majority of the signers live in the districts of Republicans Dan Branch, Van Taylor, Stephanie Carter, Jeff Leach, Linda Harper-Brown, Angie Chen Button, Bennett Ratiliff, Cindy Burkett, Jodie Laubenberg, Scott Sanford, and Scott Turner.*

Also speaking in support of healthcare expansion were were Bishop Doug Deshotel of the Diocese of Dallas, Rev. Cheryl Walenta Gorvie of Bethany Lutheran, Gwen Lloyd of East Dallas Community School, and Cynthia Salinas Dooley of Nueva Vida/Casa Emanu-El United Methodist Church.

On Tuesday May 7, DAI leaders and clergy will go to Austin to deliver the letter and petitions to Governor Perry, Lt. Governor Dewhurst, and House Speaker Straus. DAI sister organizations in Houston, San Antonio, and Austin will also be a part of these meetings.

Dallas Area Interfaith (DAI) is a multi-ethnic, multi-issue group of institutions, primarily congregations, in the Dallas metropolitan area. The purpose of DAI is to give ordinary citizens a structure through which they can negotiate effectively with the government and private institutions that affect their lives.