Taking the Christian Message to Capitol Hill
Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31: 8-9
How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

1 John 3:16-17
The order of society is based on two virtues: justice and charity.

Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveler who has been attacked.

It is justice's role to prevent the attack.

- Blessed Frédéric Ozanam
Charity and Justice

• Faith-based people are known for their great charity – taking in and caring for relatives, neighbors and even strangers.....

• However, there are still hungry people, there are still those who need more than a family can give, they need **political charity**

• **Political Charity=Advocacy**
What is the farm bill?

- Defines our food system

- 2008 farm bill
  - $288 billion
  - 15 titles

- Rewritten and reauthorized once every five to six years
Legislative Update

• Expired on October 1, 2012

• Extension passed in January 2013, expires September 30, 2013
  – Extension didn’t affect all programs

• Multiyear reauthorization of the farm bill
Alleviate hunger & malnutrition

Support vibrant farms & strong communities

Protect God’s creation

FARM BILL
Alleviate hunger & malnutrition

Support vibrant farms & strong communities

Protect God’s creation

FARM BILL
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Formerly “food stamps”
- 48.8 million Americans at risk of hunger
  - One in six adults; one in five kids
- Largest federal nutrition program
- Majority of recipients are either children, elderly, or persons with a disability
- “Mandatory” program
International Food Aid

- *Food for Peace; McGovern-Dole*
- Amounts to less than 0.6% of total farm bill
- High food prices, natural disasters, humanitarian crises
- Reducing maternal and child malnutrition
- Leaving the farm bill?

Protect SNAP

Sustain International food aid

Alleviate hunger & malnutrition
Support vibrant farms & strong communities

- Alleviate hunger & malnutrition
- Protect God’s creation
Support for new & diverse farmers

- Difficult for farmers to get started
- Small farms operated by younger, more diverse farmers are increasing due to assistance
  - *Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program*
  - *Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers program*
Local and Regional Food Systems... in the U.S.

- Farmers markets = win-win-win
  - Farmers Market Promotion Program
  - Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer Program and Senior Farmers Market Program

Build local & regional food systems

Help beginning & socially disadvantaged farmers

Support vibrant farms & strong communities
Local and Regional Food Systems...

around the world

• Support long-term, flexible solutions to global hunger
• Shipping is expensive; delay in food arrival
• Local and Regional Procurement Program
  – More efficient with U.S. tax dollars
  – Helps local farmers grow and sell

Support vibrant farms & strong communities

Help beginning & socially disadvantaged farmers

Build local & regional food systems
FARM BILL

- Alleviate hunger & malnutrition
- Support vibrant farms & strong communities
- Protect God’s creation
Promote conservation

- Helps reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies & quality, increase wildlife habitat and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters

- Conservation Stewardship Program

- Not a piggy bank!

Protect God’s creation

Prioritize funding for programs that promote conservation & protect from degradation
FARM BILL

Multiyear reauthorization

Alleviate hunger & malnutrition
- Protect SNAP
- Sustain International food aid

Support vibrant farms & strong communities
- Help beginning & socially disadvantaged farmers
- Build local & regional food systems

Protect God’s creation
- Prioritize funding for programs that promote conservation and protect from degradation
Support vibrant farms & strong communities

Alleviate hunger & malnutrition

Protect God’s creation
Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2013
Visiting Your Member of Congress

The “ASK” for the EAD Lobby Day:
Congress should enact a farm bill this year that alleviates hunger and malnutrition, supports vibrant farms and healthy communities, and protects God’s creation. We urge Congress to support a full, multi-year reauthorization of the farm bill that: (see your backgrounder, talking points and leave behind sheets for the six specifics)

Prepare for the Visit

☐ Know something about your Congressperson’s position on issues; your Congressperson’s web site is a good source of information
☐ Review background on the issue – in your packet
☐ Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Member– done for you, in your packet.
☐ Make a plan for the visit:
  ○ Choose a spokesperson to start. Decide who will say what – in the Sunday 5:15 session
  ○ Determine who will complete the Lobby Report Form, and leave it at the Church
  ○ Think of questions and counterpoints that may come up and plan a response
☐ Practice the visit – on Monday morning before your visit.

Make the Visit

☐ Be on time, meet in the hall about 5 minutes before the meeting is scheduled, be organized
☐ Explain who you are and why you are there
☐ Connect with the Congressperson by thanking her/him for something they have done
☐ Explain the needs - nationally and internationally - addressed in a fair Farm Bill
☐ Be clear, concise, compelling and credible
☐ Be polite and firm in explaining your position; avoid criticism
Lobby visit
Lobby visit

Basics

• Be on time

• Realize you won’t always meet with a member

• Engage in a conversation
Lobby visit

Don’t be insulted...

• by meeting space
• if you’re not meeting with the member.
• by the staffer’s age
• if you don’t have the full block of time you anticipated.
Lobby visit

Be focused.

• Chit-chat only briefly—get to the point.

• Personalize your message based on regional knowledge and the official’s interests or voting records.
Questions?