

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Oregon Legislative Agenda &

Public Policy Priorities for 2017-2018

Preamble: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) is an association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners. Our public witness and advocacy activities are rooted in the moral teachings of the Bible and the diverse religious traditions of our members and interfaith partners. In collaboration with our faith partners, we advocate for the common good and for the well-being of all Oregonians.

We believe that a healthy society provides for the well-being of all, particularly the poor, the young, the old and those who are ill. We strive to live out the words of Jesus: "... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." The common good is dependent upon well-functioning democratic institutions, a strong, well-funded safety-net, and an ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, violence-reduction, and the advancement of peace, justice and human dignity. Our policy work is guided by a "Statement of Social Principles and Concerns," found online at:

www.emoregon.org/pdfs/Public_Policy/EMO_Statement_of_Social_Principles_rev2012.pdf

High Priority

Protect Family and Community Well-Being by Standing with Our Immigrant Neighbors

- **Inclusivity Ordinances:** Keep families together, maintain trust between local law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve and respect constitutionally defined powers by enacting local ordinances that ensure public money, personnel, and equipment are not used to enforce federal immigration law. Ensure that local governments provide services and benefits based on need, not one's federal immigration status, except as required by law.

Provide a Safe, Stable Place for Everyone to Call Home

- **Homelessness Prevention:** Prevent homelessness and discrimination by enacting a just-cause eviction standard, which would permit landlords to only evict tenants on reasonable grounds, such as nonpayment of rent or other violation of the lease. Adequately fund homeless shelters and rent assistance through the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Housing Assistance Program (SHAP).

Promote Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice by Combating Climate Change

- **Cap, Price and Invest; Transportation Options:** Put a price on climate pollution that takes into account equity issues, while reducing global warming levels consistent with scientific consensus. Invest in climate-wise transportation modes and planning.

Support

Protect Family and Community Well-Being by Standing with Our Immigrant Neighbors

- **U Visa Technical Fix:** Correct the process by which a victim of abuse qualifies for a U nonimmigrant visa after assisting in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity.

Provide a Safe, Stable Place for Everyone to Call Home

- **Rent Stabilization:** Prevent de facto evictions through extraordinarily high rent increases by allowing local governments to limit the frequency and amount of rent increases, in a manner that maintains free market incentives to build new housing supply.

- **Affordable Housing Supply:** Increase funding to create affordable housing opportunities.
- **Right to Rest:** Prohibit local jurisdictions from arresting, citing, or harassing people experiencing homelessness for engaging in basic activities necessary for survival, such as sharing food, sitting and sleeping.
- **Foreclosure Counseling:** Provide access to counseling and legal assistance.

Promote Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice by Combating Climate Change

- **Fossil Fuel Transports:** In state and federal policy, ensure that the environmental, climate and community impacts of these transports, particularly tribal concerns, are addressed.
- **Clean Air:** Toughen pollution standards for diesel engines and promote clean air policies.

Create an Equitable System of Taxation that Adequately Funds Core Public Functions

- **Corporate Tax Reform:** Enact taxes that raise substantial and needed revenue while minimizing the impact to Oregon's low-income residents and Oregon's small businesses.
- **Mortgage Interest Deduction Reform:** Modify Oregon's largest housing subsidy—which primarily benefits well-off homeowners—in order to boost housing opportunity statewide.

Increase Family and Community Well-Being

- **Cover All Kids:** Expand coverage to the 17,600 Oregon children without health insurance.
- **End Wage Theft:** Strengthen wage theft enforcement and remedies so that all Oregon workers are paid the wages they have earned and are legally entitled to.
- **TANF and ERDC:** Provide adequate funds for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and ERDC (Employment Related Day Care), so that individuals retain more of their earnings and are more stable, thus less likely to return to assistance in the future.
- **EITC:** Increase the amount and participation rates of the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- **211 Info Modernization:** Adequately fund 211info's statewide information and referral services, ensuring 24/7 access for children and families in need.
- **Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Abuse:** Adequately fund shelter services, without which victims and their children are forced to choose between danger on the streets and danger in an abusive home.
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** Increase access to fruits and vegetables for low-income families with young children up to five years old.
- **Farm-to-School and School Gardens:** Maintain or expand programs in Oregon schools to teach kids to grow, eat and love healthy local foods.

Reduce Violence, Halt Prison Growth and Improve Public Safety

- **Alternatives to Prison Expansion:** Reduce the need for costly prison growth by funding Justice Reinvestment to invest in victim services, community-based crime prevention programs, and mental health and addiction services.
- **Solitary Confinement and the Death Penalty:** Reduce the use of solitary confinement in Oregon prisons and abolish the use of the death penalty in Oregon.
- **Profiling:** Establish a structure to identify, record and correct profiling practices.
- **Gun Safety:** Prevent gun sales when background checks have not been completed, and prevent all domestic abusers from having a gun.
- **Extreme Risk Protective Orders:** Allow families and law enforcement to obtain a court order to temporarily suspend access to a gun while people are experiencing a mental health crisis that makes them a danger to themselves or others.