



ECONOMIC JUSTICE
Briefing Paper
Catholic Advocacy Day 2010

Welfare policy should reduce poverty and dependency, strengthen family life, and help families leave poverty through work, training, and assistance with child care, health care, housing, and transportation. It should also provide a safety net for those who cannot work.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB 2007

GAU: General Assistance Unemployable (GAU) is truly a safety net for some of the most needy residents of our state. It assists disabled and elderly Washington residents in meeting their basic needs for shelter, food and medical care. GAU is a state funded program that currently provides \$339 monthly cash grants and medical care to very low-income people who are physically or mentally incapacitated and unemployable for 90 days. At any one time, 25% of eligible people are homeless.

To balance the budget, in December the Governor released her 2010 proposed supplemental budget that entirely eliminated the GAU program. However, in January she released a second budget that with some limitations partially restored the program.

ACTION: Please ask your Senator and Representatives to retain the GAU program and to fund it.

VOLUNTEER CHORE SERVICES (VCS): Volunteer Chore Services is committed to helping elders and adults with disabilities remain independent in their own homes through enlisting a network of volunteers. Catholic Community Services of Western Washington administers the chore services program in coordination with Catholic Charities agencies throughout the state. The services are provided at no charge and serve as a safety net for those individuals who cannot afford to pay for assistance.

In this time when social services are being cut in the budget, the VCS program could be expanded to provide assistance for more low income persons. Some of these services include: assisting veterans to access federal programs, services, and resources to which they are entitled; providing legal and financial assistance to senior citizens; tutoring refugees and monolingual families; and assisting with paperwork to enable eligible people to receive SSI. The program could be renamed the Volunteer Services program.

ACTION: Please ask your Senator and Representatives to expand the Volunteer Chore Services program and to fund it.

HOME CARE: Agencies that provide care enabling seniors and people with disabilities to be cared for in their homes was cut by 25% last year. The Governor's proposed budget contains an additional cut that could result in fewer people being served. Home care agencies have alternative solutions to this cut that will save as much or more money without harming this valuable state program.

ACTION: Please ask your Senator and Representatives to support alternative solutions, rather than cutting funding for home care provided by agencies.