

## Press Statement

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### **Faith Groups Applaud the U.S. Supreme Court for Upholding the Affordable Care Act**

When the people of the United States established a Constitution for its government, they identified a significant purpose of government as promoting the general welfare. In so doing, they identified a moral imperative of government: to seek the common good of the American people. The faith community understands and endorses the government's legitimate and necessary role in promoting the common good. The scriptures of the Abrahamic traditions of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in addition to the sacred teachings of other faiths, understand that addressing the general welfare of the nation includes giving particular attention to the poor and the sick.

Toward that end, people of faith have worked both individually and collectively to move our nation toward a more inclusive and just system of health care – with a particular focus on persons whose health conditions or low income have created barriers to receiving needed health care. Since 2008 we have been guided in our work by "A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care," an interfaith statement that envisions a U.S. health care system that offers health, wholeness, and human dignity for all because it is inclusive, affordable, accessible, and accountable.

In March 2010, we supported the passage of the Affordable Care Act and still believe that it is an important first step in moving us toward this moral vision. So we applaud the U.S. Supreme Court justices for upholding the law. In designing a health care system that was intended to include almost all of us and work better for everyone, we believed we were responding to a moral imperative to collectively care for one another. We saw the passage of health care reform as a statement about reclaiming the moral compass of our country. Now, as we look beyond the political ideologies that have framed this national conversation, we see the millions of people who already are experiencing the benefits of health care reform:

- Children with pre-existing conditions who can no longer be excluded from coverage on their parents' health insurance.
- Young adults who now have coverage on their parents' policies.
- Senior adults who have received rebates for prescription drugs that had to be purchased once they reached the coverage gap; and senior adults who are now receiving annual preventive care check-ups with no out-of-pocket expenses.
- Women who can no longer be charged higher premiums because of their gender, and who are receiving mammograms and pap smears with no out of pocket expenses.

And we see the faces of those who are waiting expectantly for 2014 when they will be among those who will finally benefit from our nation's abundant health care resources:

- Low-income working families living on up to 133% of the federal poverty level<sup>1</sup> who will have access to health care through the expansions of Medicaid.
- Persons with cancer and other serious medical conditions who will no longer be denied coverage by insurers; and persons who can no longer be dropped from coverage when they get sick.
- Middle-income families without employer-sponsored insurance who will have subsidies to help purchase affordable insurance in the new exchanges (marketplaces).

We commend the U.S. Supreme Court justices for deliberating this case, and we are grateful that the constitutionality of the law was upheld.

We believe this ruling should be an authoritative end to all constitutional challenges. As of this ruling, the Affordable Care Act has been politicked and checked and balanced in every branch of government. It has passed. Now it is time for Congress to allow the benefits to reach the people.

We call on Congress to refrain from further introduction of legislation that would derail full implementation by defunding, dismantling or eliminating programs that are included in the Affordable Care Act. We pray that our representatives will accept the decision of the highest court and facilitate the full implementation of this vital, life-giving law.

With the legal challenges behind us, we are eager to take part in continued educational efforts to inform our faith communities about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act, and to get uninsured persons connected to the health care they need.

From our nation's inception, the moral vision of American faith communities has been a proper and necessary consideration in legislative approaches to promoting the common good. The Affordable Care Act simply broadens our nation's understanding of the moral imperative that has long grounded our approach to providing health care. It brings us closer to the moral vision of our faith communities—a vision that recognizes the needs of all of those who cannot afford health care. We believed that it did so within the limits of, and as an expression of, the United States Constitution's declaration that promotion of the general welfare is an essential purpose of legislation. We will continue to work for a system of health care that serves the common good.

Respectfully signed by the following organizations:

**National**

Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
 American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
 American Muslim Health Professionals  
 Buddhist Peace Fellowship  
 Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
 Disciples Justice Action Network, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
 Faithful Reform in Health Care  
 Franciscan Action Network  
 Friends Committee on National Legislation  
 Islamic Society of North America  
 Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
 Mennonite Church USA  
 Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship  
 Metropolitan Community Churches  
 National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

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<sup>1</sup> The 2012 federal poverty level is \$23,050 for a family of four; 133% of the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$30,656.50.

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness  
Rabbinical Assembly  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Justice Team  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Church of Christ  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

**State**

Alabama Faith Council  
Arkansas Interfaith Alliance  
California Council of Churches  
Campaign for Better Health Care, Illinois  
Campaign for Better Health Care Faith Caucus, Illinois  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families  
Faith Action Network of Washington  
Florida Council of Churches  
Interfaith Worker Justice, New Mexico  
Maine Council of Churches  
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network  
Missouri Health Care for All  
Missouri Interfaith IMPACT  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
Ohio Council of Churches  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team  
Texas Impact  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry New Jersey  
Xaverian Brothers

**Local**

Progressive Action for the Common Good, Quad-Cities, Iowa and Illinois  
Circleville Quakers, Circleville, Ohio  
Greater Binghamton Labor-Religion Coalition (NY)  
Lawrence Coalition for Peace and Justice  
People of Faith for Health Care Reform of Greater Binghamton (NY)  
People of the Way of Jesus, Atlanta, Georgia  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Valencia, Pennsylvania  
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice and Interfaith Worker Justice Coalition, Ohio

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