

## Advocate for Change

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Faith-based policy advocacy involves a great deal of interpreting between policymaking language and the values inspired by our faith, between the voices of those in need and legislators tasked with improving our society. This all happens as we wrestle to find solutions to the challenges in our government and society. Deacons embody this type of exchange between the world and the Church. As such, their experience and position in the diaconate is critical to our Church's growth and success in advocacy and civic engagement.

The Office of Government Relations (OGR) is a resource for the Church on public policy and civic engagement. We are wanting to more intentionally engage deacons in this important ministry of advocating for change in our government's laws and policies. Many of you are already quite involved with this work, and are members of The Episcopal Public Policy Network, which OGR manages. For those of you less familiar, let me tell you a bit about what we do and how you can join us.

OGR serves as a witness of The Episcopal Church to Washington, DC, making sure that the values and policy positions of the Church are shared with Congress, the presidential administration, and U.S. government departments and agencies. We receive our direction from General Convention and Executive Council resolutions. The job of OGR, rather than advocating for the interests of the institution, is to advocate for our Church's values, for the common good. In doing this, we also aim to educate, equip, and engage Episcopalians to do this work alongside us.

We **educate** Episcopalians about public policy and legislative developments in the federal government. The Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) is our primary tool for communication. We're present on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and email, where we share outlets for individual and collective action.

We **equip** Episcopalians for advocacy through workshops and printed resources on civil discourse, faith and citizenship, election engagement, and more.

We **engage** Episcopalians by providing opportunities for them to directly advocate on issues about which they are passionate through. OGR staff support this behind the scenes by tracking legislation, building relationships with elected officials, signing on to letters and statements, finding bill co-sponsors, and providing expertise to legislators to help them make a difference for their constituents.

Our work is focused around five policy areas: [Creation Care](#), [Ending Poverty](#), [Racial Reconciliation](#), [Migration, Refugees & Immigration](#), and [Human Rights & Peacebuilding](#). We also track a host of other [ongoing issues](#) important to people in the pews.

We understand our work as **evangelism**, where through better policy we seek to build a better world, ensuring a safe future for a beloved community. **Reconciliation** is a core part of the ministry of public policy advocacy, seeking to repair the breach through justice and healing in the realms of international conflict, criminal justice, poverty, human rights, and a host of other issues. And we understand our work is integral to **creation care**, restoring our relationship between ourselves and God's creation.

The most important part of our work is that it extends beyond our office. OGR provides an outlet for all Episcopalians to become advocates. The first step to becoming an Episcopal advocate is to stay informed on what we're asking churchgoers to do by [signing up](#) for EPPN Action Alerts. The second step is

passing on the message to others to encourage them to take action and learn from the resources we develop and share.

We want to expand our reach into the Church's membership, to engage more Episcopalians in healthier conversations, and to unlock the political diversity and expertise that exists in our pews. Deacons can be a critical partner in this work, especially in amplifying our messaging at the local level.

Our hope is that you will join us as individual advocates building relationships with your elected officials. We also hope you can go a step farther by helping us spread the word about this work to get others involved. Be in touch and let us know how we can help you carry out our baptismal call to "strive for justice and peace" through the active ministry of public policy advocacy.

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