

# Fostering Reconciliation and Faith in the Public Policy Arena

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# Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

- ▶ *We join the words “Faith” and “Justice” into a single term to reflect our belief that faith and justice are intimately bound together. God calls us - as individuals and as communities - to act on behalf of the vulnerable, weak and oppressed. Through working together, we ask people of faith to revisit and renew their commitment to the Gospel and the common good.*

What public policy/advocacy ministries are you, your parish or diocese involved in?



# Episcopal Diocese of MD

## Bishop Sutton's Legislative Agenda 2019

- ▶ Clean Energy Jobs Act - SB 516/HB1158
- ▶ Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission - HB307
- ▶ Fight for \$15 - Minimum Wage - HB166/SB280
- ▶ Environment - Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products - Prohibitions - HB109
- ▶ Health - Prescription Drug Affordability Board - SB759/HB768

# Example of testifying before House Environmental Matters Committee

Clean Energy Jobs



HB 1158



# What does faith in action look like?

- ▶ Apply the words of our Baptismal Covenant, from the Book of Common Prayer, for our positions on legislation
- ▶ Coordinate with public policy coalitions to support in advocating mutual interest
- ▶ Utilize public policy initiatives from National Church and Diocesan Convention resolutions
- ▶ Develop strategies to address issue
- ▶ Use communication through Facebook, the diocese's web page and flyers representing talking points to be distributed to churches
- ▶ Coordinate legislative training workshops

# Suggested method for advocacy success

- 1) Identify issue
- 1) See what area of the Annotated Code may speak to the proposed/existing issue
- 2) Contact legislator from your district - make appointment
- 3) Take a written idea of what you want to change in the law/draft of proposed bill
- 4) Determine filing in the House or Senate or both
- 5) Assuming the bill gets filed, prepare to advocate and help the legislator with working the bill.

# What does faith in action look like?

- ▶ Call, write or visit your legislator
- ▶ Educate your faith communities - visit churches in your diocese and present issues through sermons and coffee hours
- ▶ Create advocacy groups within the churches. Perhaps they are interested in the environment, parole reform, human trafficking
- ▶ At St. Anne's we have a group with many gifts writing testimony, research, testifying before committees, visiting with members of the General Assembly
- ▶ Mobilize your community



# Practical tools

## ▶ Sample Action Alert

- 1) The organization (MEPPN)
- 2) Number and name of bill and a brief description of the legislation
- 3) Action steps for the reader to follow
- 4) Legislators contact information

# Sample Action Alert

## ▶ MARYLAND EPISCOPAL PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK

### ▶ HB 166 Fight for \$15

#### ▶ Labor and Employment - Payment of Wages - Minimum Wage

Thursday, the Maryland Senate voted on the Fight for \$15 bill, and it passed with a veto-proof majority.

The good news: both the Maryland Senate and House have now passed bills raising the minimum wage, and **hundreds of thousands of Marylanders are going to get a raise.**

The bad news: The Senate and House passed different versions of the bill, and both approved lots of weakening amendments. The House bill extended the phase-in of \$15/hour to 2025, eliminated raises for agriculture workers, tipped workers, youth workers under 17, and removed the automatic increases with inflation that would have kept wages going up after they reach \$15/hour. The Senate weakened the bill further by extending the timeline for businesses with fewer than 15 employees until 2028, almost a decade away.

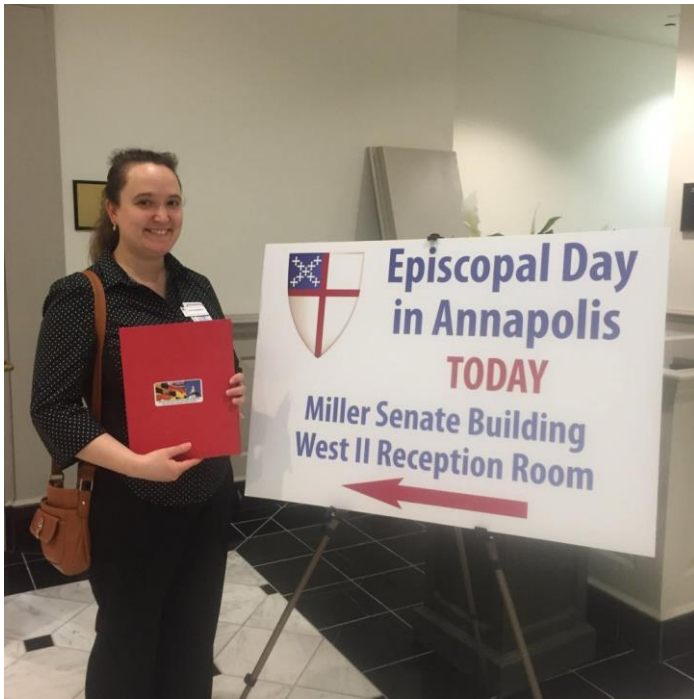
Back to good news: We have another chance this session to **make sure thousands of Maryland workers don't have to wait nearly ten more years for a fair and livable wage.**

When the two chambers pass different versions of the same bill, both versions go to a "conference committee

**We need to tell the conference committee to improve this bill.** The members of the committee are Senators Malcolm Augustine (D47) Brian Feldman (D15), and Delores Kelley (D10), and Delegates Dereck Davis (D25), Kathleen Dumais (D15), and C. T. Wilson (D28). If you live in one of the districts contact these members to support the House bill.

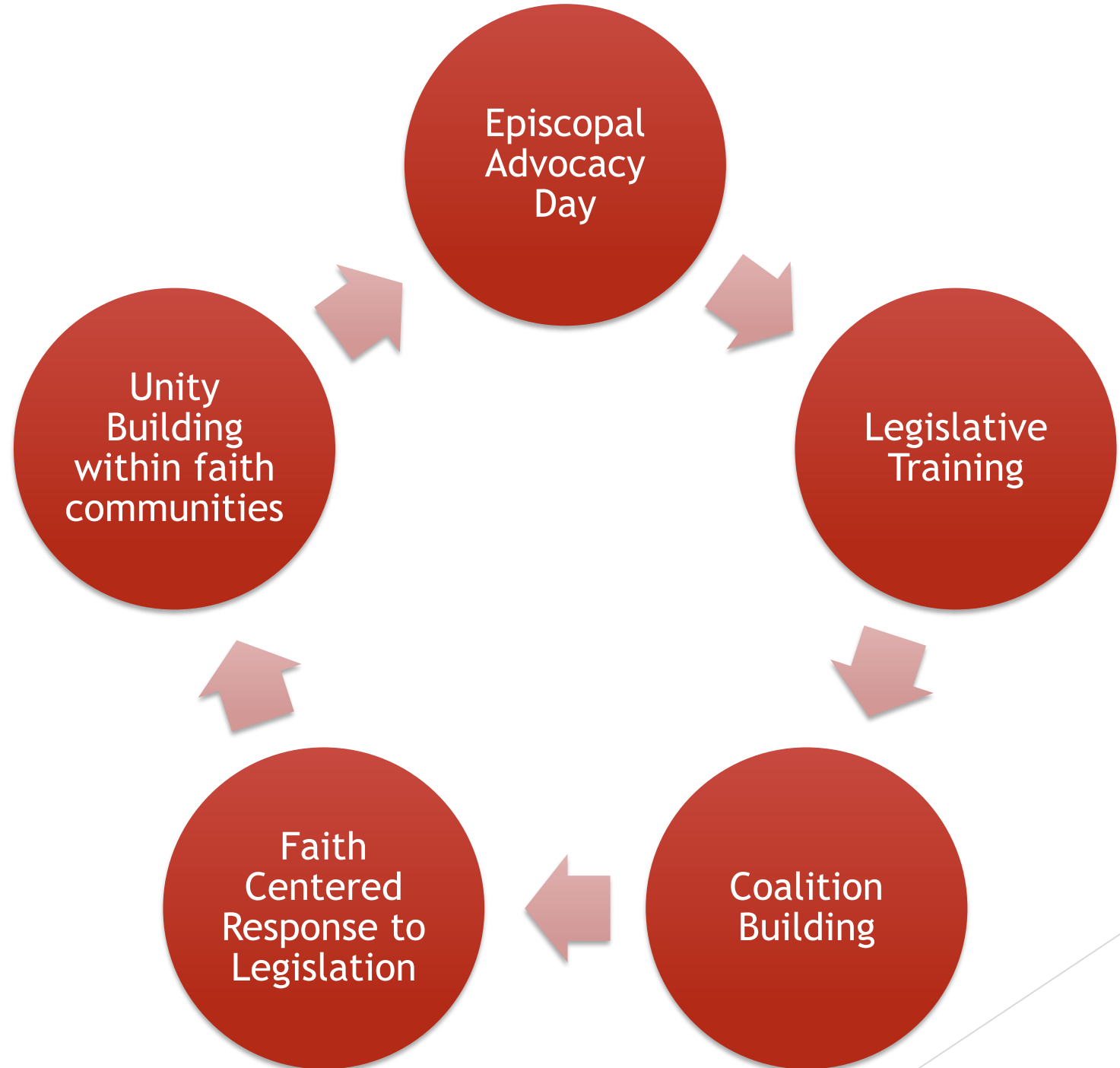
# Maryland Episcopal Advocacy Day

February 6, 2019



Bishop Sutton





How is my parish/church ministry valuable to the local/state/federal government?

Relationships with legislators?

Identifying importance of proposed legislation

Assisting with advancement of issue

Examples how do church wide polices differ from National Church policies?

# Eight tips for a successful lobby visit

- 1) Make the appointment - just don't show up. Fax or email the request to the scheduler. Send agenda and who will be joining you
- 2) Prepare for the visit. Read the bio of the legislator you are meeting. Schedule call with those attending and assign jobs: scribe, speaker
- 3) Be on time and cordial to the staff. You may only have a short amount of time
- 4) Focus the meeting - Introduce members of the group, the topic, address the concern (One topic) Stay on the issue
- 5) Ask for the legislator's view on issue - seek and "ask" for support
- 6) Remain polite and positive
- 7) Send a thank you letter
- 8) Follow up

# Advocacy Resources

*Episcopal Public Policy Network* <https://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org>

*Jews United for Justice* [www.jufj.org](http://www.jufj.org)

*Working Matters* [www.earned sick days md.org](http://www.earned sick days md.org)

*Interfaith Worker Justice* [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org)

*Job Opportunities Task Force* [www.jotf.org](http://www.jotf.org)

*Maryland Alliance for the Poor* [www.mapadvocacy.org](http://www.mapadvocacy.org)

*Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Facebook (MEPPN)*

# Resource partners for public policy information

Episcopal Public Policy Network - The Episcopal Church's vehicle of connecting advocates to federal level work.

What do they do?

For example - Immigration policy implementation is at the Federal Level  
Criminal justice at the state level



