



# Our 2009 Legislative Priorities

## Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church



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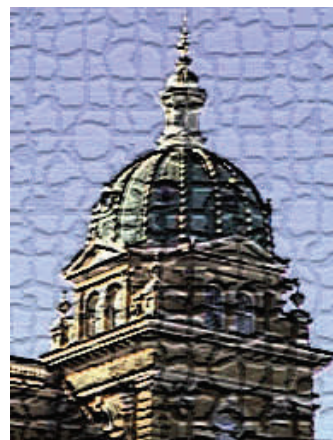
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**Join the Legislative Network**  
for email Action Alerts on the  
issues listed in this brochure:  
[www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org) (“Advocacy” page).



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## Following Our Wesleyan Tradition

At the urging of two United Methodist legislators — Beje Clark and Sue Mullins — some years ago at our Iowa Annual Conference, it was determined our collective voice should be heard loud and clear at the Capitol, in the marketplace and around the state in our local churches. Hence, the Legislative Advocacy Program was born. Since that time the positions of The United Methodist Church have been heard on the many issues that come before us in the course of our daily lives.

Guided by our *General Conference Book of Discipline*, *General Conference Book of Resolutions*, United Methodist Social Principles and our Iowa Conference Book of Resolutions, the Church speaks its heart and mind based on our mutual understanding of what it means to be a disciple. As our common United Methodist doctrinal heritage notes, “[b]y joining heart and hand, we assert that personal religion, evangelical witness, and Christian social action are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world” (2008 *General Conference Book of Discipline*, p. 47, ¶101. Section 1 — Our Doctrinal Heritage).



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In addition to communicating the positions of The United Methodist Church to the Iowa General Assembly and to the U.S. Congress (Iowa delegation), the Social Justice & Mission Ministry works to inform Iowa United Methodists about current happenings in the state legislature and what citizens can do to make a difference. We truly are active participants in the search for justice of all of God’s people.

## ...What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:6-8, RSV)



Listed here are six priority issues for the IAUMC. What's the reasoning for our beliefs? Check out our denominational doctrine, mentioned in [Following our Wesleyan Tradition](#).

### Immigration

We support federal comprehensive immigration reform that will uphold the civil and human rights of all migrants in the United States and provide an opportunity to attain legal status for all undocumented migrants – those currently in the United States and those continuing to arrive.

We support increased funding of K-12 public schools for multilingual education, as well as increased funding for English Language proficiency courses and better educational opportunities for ESOL students of all ages.

We oppose state-based initiatives and legislation seeking to regulate undocumented immigrants through labor, education, government, and worker and business classifications.

### Health Care

We support comprehensive health care coverage for low-income persons, recent immigrants, elderly and children, and adult minimum wage workers, as well as for persons with mental health issues and disabilities.

We support the availability of appropriate mental health treatment and rehabilitation for

drug-dependent persons.

We support sustainable and comprehensive health care for inmates in our state's prison system.

We support health care coverage under Medicaid and *hawk-i* for all income-eligible children as recommended by the Iowa Choice Health Care Coverage Advisory Council, and the expansion of coverage for Medicaid and *hawk-i* recipients. Adequate medical coverage should not be denied to children based on their immigration status or classification.

We support legislation working to lower and eliminate cases of elder abuse and neglect, and addresses other issues facing the aging population of Iowa.

### Economic Justice

We support campaign finance reform prohibiting transnational corporations and/or their subsidiaries from purchasing influence of and access to political power through Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions and "soft money" donations.

We support increased funding for welfare programs (at least at the minimum indexed to the rate of inflation) and other state-based initiatives that work to increase funding for programs in the areas of minimum wage, affordable housing, affordable child care, pay equity, access to health care and the economic value of care-giving in the home for all low-income Iowans.

We oppose gambling and any legislation to expand state gambling activities, utilize gambling as a form of fundraising or revenue intake, or support the use of gambling revenue for community/

organizational grants or community foundations.

We oppose predatory lending and support capping payday loan interest rates at 36% APR, as the disproportionate number of borrowers of these loans are low-income persons trapped in cycles of debt.

### Environment

We support fair environmental standards to hold industrial farming operations accountable and allowing local governments to pass common sense legislation.

We support responsible renewable energy research and development.

We support the reduction, of municipal waste; the appropriate recycling and disposal of municipal waste; and the cleanup of polluted air, water and soil. Additionally, we support the strengthening conservation and protection of our state's water, air, soil, mineral and plant resources.

We support the development of alternatives to chemicals used for growing, processing and preserving food.

We support and encourage a gradual transition to sustainable and organic agriculture.

We support environmental conservation and preservation measures that equally care for those living in poverty in Iowa.

### Criminal Justice

We support the appropriation of more funding for education, job training, restorative justice, mental health and substance abuse programming in the prisons and CBCs (Community Based Corrections).

We support strengthening re-entry programs and funding for CBC facilities, halfway houses and other measures diminishing alienation between prisoners and society.

We oppose enhancing criminal sentences/penalties and creating new crimes that add to the prison population.

We support alternatives to incarceration for children and youth who commit offenses, and oppose sentencing children and youth who commit crimes to life imprisonment.

### Equality/Human Rights

We support legislation affirming the importance of women in decision-making positions at all levels of our state, and urge governmental bodies to guarantee their presence through policies of employment and recruitment.

We support the elimination of stereotypical gender roles in voluntary and compensatory participation in our state and society.

We support the elimination of wage discrimination based on gender.

We support equal treatment and representation of women in all levels of society, and the prevention of discrimination of women in employment, responsibility, promotion and compensation in Iowa.

We oppose workplace discrimination and unfair employment practices that discriminate against an individual or group of people based on age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national origin, religion or disability.