

Christian Action Council Statement on Budget and Taxes

Budgets are moral documents. The development of a budget requires diligent consideration of both revenues and expenses.

Establishing systems for raising revenues and prioritizing expenses reveals the timber of the moral character of individuals, organizations, and governments.

Our political leaders claim there is “no alternative” to further cuts to critical state services. We believe there is an immediate and fair alternative to be found in tax reforms.

A growing coalition of religious, community and business organizations are calling on the politicians to fund our values by reforming the state’s antiquated tax structure.

Sales and service tax exemptions left nearly \$4 billion out of the state budget last year.

40% of South Carolinians paid no state income tax last year.

Facing an \$800 million shortfall to maintain bare-bones state services, increasing tax revenue is a moral imperative.

Likewise, our state budget is a moral document—through which we choose to meet or not the needs of all South Carolinians.

As faithful citizens we are called to come together through budgets and the taxes that fund them to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9, New International Version).”

The principles we hold forth for elected officials at all levels of government are:

We believe we must provide all CHILDREN access to high quality education.

We believe we must provide ADULTS opportunities for productive employment and continuing education enabling them to provide for their families and contribute to their communities.

We believe we must provide SENIORS safe environments and access to transportation.

We believe we must provide ALL PEOPLE—children, adults, seniors—access to affordable quality health care.

We believe SMALL BUSINESSES are essential to our communities and must be given opportunities to excel and grow.

We ask people of faith across our state to:

1. Pray for our elected officials at all levels of government;
2. Search our hearts for compassion and our sacred texts for teachings supporting the principles of responsible citizenry;
3. Join this discussion and seek discernment on this issue;
4. Individually and collectively engage in conversation with elected representatives and officials at all levels of government, asking them to create budgets which reflect these principles; and
5. Endorse this statement in congregations and in regional and state-wide organizations.

We ask our state government to:

Make no more cuts to state programs for social services, Medicaid and education—such cuts are not the only option;

Raise taxes fairly to meet the needs of all South Carolinians, rather than do what is wrong for us all for the good of the well-resourced and for votes in the next election; and

Enact legislation to create a moral tax code that does not unreasonably burden the most vulnerable among us and that does ask more by raising taxes from those among us who have the most.

Adopted by the SCCAC Board_January 20, 2011

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Seventh Episcopal District • The Alliance of Baptists • Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention • Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) • Christian Methodist Episcopal Church • Church of the Nazarene • Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina • Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina • Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, SC Synod • Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) • Reformed Episcopal, Synod of the Southeast • Religious Society of Friends (Quakers: Columbia, Greenville, Sumter Meetings) • Roman Catholic, Diocese of Charleston • Salvation Army of the SC Midlands • United Church of Christ (SC Congregations)