

**NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
BOARD OF GOVERNORS RESOLUTION
UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED MARCH 17, 2005**

We are the representatives of denominations, religious organizations and congregations serving on the Board of Governors of the Network of Religious Communities. We are well aware of the financial crisis of the Erie County Government and the impact it is having upon the citizens, employees and services provided by the county.

The member organizations of the Network of Religious Communities are committed to certain common values. They include: the obligation to help and seek the welfare of the most vulnerable in our community: the poor, the hungry, the disabled, the elderly and children; the importance of good communication and understanding among our various constituencies; and the need for cooperation and collaboration in areas of common concern.

Our common values lead us to express the following concerns about the current Erie County financial crisis.

- We are concerned about the impact the Erie County budget cuts will have upon the most vulnerable of our community: the poor, the hungry, the disabled, the elderly and children.
- We are concerned about the hundreds of Erie County workers who have lost their jobs.
- We are concerned about the suggestion that religious organizations and the private charities should and can meet the needs of all those effected by the Erie County Budget cuts.
- We are concerned that medicaid is being singled out as the cause of the financial problems and, implicit within the charge, that it is the most vulnerable who are really to blame for the present crisis.
- We are concerned about the impact the budget cuts will have upon public safety and the criminal justice system.
- We are concerned that the financial crisis facing Erie County and the City of Buffalo might lead to the further fragmentation of our region.
- We are concerned about the lack of reliable financial information provided to the public regarding the financial condition of Erie County.

We, therefore, call upon our elected public official at the federal, state, and county levels work together to:

1. insure the continuation of the safety net for the most vulnerable in our community; the poor, the hungry, the disabled, the elderly and children.
2. insure that efforts to reform medicaid are focused upon preserving and improving health related services to the poor and disabled while fairly distributing the costs between the federal, state and county governments.
3. provide transitional assistance and support for public employees laid off due to the financial crisis of Erie County.
4. work as a team, with input from a wide spectrum of the community, to develop a comprehensive plan for the long term financial health of our region, counties, cities and towns.

We call upon our state and county officials to:

1. provide for an independent audit and analysis of Erie County finances and make the findings public.
2. work together to ensure the health and welfare of our region.
3. provide for an informed public discussion of the Greater Buffalo Commission's City/County Merger Plan as a means to developing and passing comprehensive legislation enabling a voter referendum on the merger of the City of Buffalo and Erie County and or a metropolitan government.

We call upon the citizens of Erie County and our region to:

1. think beyond their private interests and focus upon the welfare of "our" region.
2. remain vigilant and hold our public officials accountable for their actions and or inaction.

We call upon the religious communities of the region to:

1. provide assistance to the most vulnerable and others who have been harmed by the Erie County budget cuts while continuing to impress upon our public officials the responsibility government has to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable, the poor, the hungry, the disabled, the elderly and children.
2. seek together the welfare of our region.

**Organizations officially represented at the Network of Religious Communities
Board of Governors Meeting March 17, 2005, Temple Sinai, Amherst, NY**

Denominations:

Diocese of Buffalo, Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Hindu Cultural Society, Islamic Society of the Niagara Frontier, Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo, Mennonite Board of Mission, Niagara Frontier District of the United Methodist Church, Presbytery of Western New York, Religious Society of Friends, Sikh Society of the Niagara Frontier, Unitarian Universalists Congregations of WNY and the Western NY Churches in Covenant (Disciples of Christ/United Church of Christ)

Religious Organizations:

American Jewish Committee, Bible Society WNY, Buffalo Board of Rabbis, Church Women United, Lockport Clergy Association, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Francis, and the Lewiston/Youngstown Clergy Association.

Congregations:

Calvary Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Ephesus Ministries, Masjid Nu'Man, New Hope Baptist Church, Pilgrim St. Luke United Church of Christ, St Philip's Episcopal Church, Temple Sinai and Unity Church of Practical Christianity.

Officers of the Network of Religious Communities:

President, Imam Fajri Ansari, Masjid Nu'Man

Vice President for Program. Rev. John Powell, Mennonite Board of Mission

Vice President for Administration: Ms. Marlene Glickman, American Jewish Committee

Treasurer: Ms. Eula Hooker, Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church

Secretary: Rev. Frances Manly, Unitarian Universalist Churches WNY.