

THE GAMALIEL FOUNDATION'S FAITH AND DEMOCRACY PLATFORM

The Gamaliel Foundation is an organizing institute that brings together communities of people living out our faith and values to bring about justice and collectively transform our society. We hold that all people are part of a sacred community, intended by God to realize their own dignity, worth, power and voice.

We affirm equal opportunity for all and abhor all forms of injustice flowing from racism, poverty, and intolerance. As people with faith in a good and just God, we proclaim the values of shared abundance, sacred community, unrelenting hope, equal opportunity and justice.

Segregation and racism are primary and driving forces inside American politics, culture and society. Racism fuels the current injustice and the current political reality we experience every day. Racism is masked and concealed inside a system of spatial segregation. Racism ultimately says that not only am I not my brothers' and sisters' keeper, but that they are not my brothers and my sisters.

Confronting what divides us is deeply spiritual and requires humility and openness to transformation. This is also deeply political because civilizations and societies are structured around how they answer this question. Spiritual transformation and societal transformation are linked. As people of faith, we proclaim that all our fates are linked; we are connected and that love is at the center.

We have a vision for our country that is based on radical hope, inclusive community, and shared abundance for all. We believe that we are called to participate in the democratic process, in shaping a future that works for all of us. The transformation of the soul of our country, our democracy, is both a political project and a spiritual project. It requires a body of people willing to live, to act, and to project a new way of being. Our faith is a path to a new way of being: spiritually and politically.

Gamaliel exists to effect the systemic changes necessary to advance the values we have claimed, and to that end, to form organizations that empower ordinary people to effectively participate in the political, environmental, social and economic decisions affecting their lives.

The Gamaliel Foundation brings our faith and values to our collective work. We seek to educate and train ourselves and our community. We affirm sacred community, equal opportunity for all, shared abundance, and good stewardship. We commit to the following Faith and Democracy platform:

Healthcare Reform

Our current health care system reinforces social division in this nation between those who have and those who have not. The Gamaliel Foundation asserts its faith values of sacred community and equal opportunity for all. Each person has an equal right to quality health care. More than 47 million people in the United States have no health insurance, many millions more are inadequately insured, soaring costs threaten personal, corporate, and social economies, and uneven access to quality health care creates yet another harsh dividing line in our society. The Gamaliel Foundation will engage in strategic statewide and national campaigns to achieve universal access to affordable, quality health care for all residents of the United States.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Current immigration policies represent a force promoting division and fear. They leave millions of workers in the shadows, vulnerable to abuse because they lack legal documentation, and unable to fully participate in a country they have helped to build. We will work for a comprehensive approach that provides work permits and a path to citizenship for those here and contributing, expanded family and worker visas, and smart enforcement.

Opportunity Housing

We believe that every family deserves to live in an “opportunity community,” defined as a community that includes both good jobs and good schools. We will work for fair share housing: where all communities within a metropolitan area shall include their fair share of the region’s low income and affordable housing. Gamaliel opposes segregation of housing by class and race and policies by local governments to establish barriers to low income and affordable housing that create or exacerbate segregation.

Transportation

Transportation is at the very center of opportunity for jobs, maintaining our health and connecting our communities. When transportation serves as a barrier to employment opportunities or access to the services offered by the community, something is unacceptably wrong and it is imperative that people of faith respond. We will work for transportation systems that provide equal access for all members of the community, as well as sustain and support the whole creation.

Jobs and Economic Development

Work, at its best, is not a burden but a glad and collaborative response to the One who created us. It should reflect God’s creative and redemptive purposes by providing not only a means of subsistence but also a way to honor human dignity and allow all too equally participate in community life. Gamaliel will work to get thousands of living wage construction jobs for low-income people, minorities, women and ex-offenders through alliances with minority contractors, unions and training providers and securing workforce development agreements with state transportation departments and other public entities.

Health Care Reform

“Is there no balm in Gil’ad? Is there no physician there? Why then is the health of my people not restored?” (Jeremiah 8:22)

“Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” (Luke 9:1-2)

Strategic Campaigns

The Gamaliel Foundation, a network of 1,600 congregations, will engage in strategic statewide and national campaigns to achieve universal access to affordable, quality health care for all residents of the United States. We face a national crisis, in which more than 47 million people in this country have no health insurance, many millions more are inadequately insured, soaring costs threaten personal, corporate, and social economies, and uneven access to quality health care creates yet another harsh dividing line in our society. We bring our faith and values to the issue of health care reform. We affirm sacred community, equal opportunity for all, shared abundance, and good stewardship.

Health Care a God Given Right

Our current health care system reinforces social division in this nation between those who have and those who have not. The Gamaliel Foundation asserts its faith values of sacred community and equal opportunity for all. Each person has an equal right to quality health care. Healing and community are central themes in the scriptures of our faith traditions and a sign of the presence of God. To deny access to health care is to defy the will of God for all who struggle with any form of illness. To offer access to some and to deny it to others is to defy the will of God for a human community. Economic and racial disparities in access to health care must be eliminated. We will organize for health care reform that is faithful to our vision of the beloved community. Universal access to health care is a vision that flows from our faith and values.

The current health care system is all too rooted in false claims of scarcity, and it is no accident that people of color, undocumented workers and the poor are the ones who experience this “scarcity” at higher rates than others. The Gamaliel Foundation asserts its faith value of shared abundance. Shared abundance is an affirmation that God provides humanity with sufficient resources for affordable, quality health care for all. Shared abundance is not an excuse for waste, outlandish administrative costs, greed, or lack of personal responsibility for one’s health. Society and its individuals are responsible to be good stewards of all that God provides. We will organize for health care reform that controls costs and is financially sustainable for society and individuals. Our values of shared abundance and good stewardship impel us to seek affordable, quality health care for all.

Principles

The Gamaliel Foundation will engage in organizing efforts for health care reform at the national and state level around the following principles:

Health care coverage should be guaranteed to everyone living in the United States.

Health care should be affordable and accessible to all, with special consideration for low income individuals and families.

Health care should be cost-effective and sustainable for society.

Health care should be of high quality for everyone.

Health care coverage should be continuous, regardless of employment status or pre-existing condition.

Health care coverage should be comprehensive, covering all types of illnesses and health conditions, and include preventative care.

Victories

Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU), Gamaliel affiliate in St. Louis, MO working with allies won presumptive eligibility for children several years ago, which gave 90,000 additional children health care coverage for several years – this was later lost, but in 2007 MCU won coverage for 10,000 people this year in a very tough state legislative environment. They hope to win a far more inclusive program in the next few years.

United Action in Connecticut (UACT), a Gamaliel affiliate in Hartford, CT working with allies won \$460 million to increase Medicaid reimbursements from 35% to 70%, increasing the access to health care for those on Medicaid. They also plan to push for Universal Access to affordable, quality health care.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the stranger. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” --Leviticus 19:33-34

The Problem

Current policies fail on both counts. It is time to reform our laws so that these traditions are strengthened.

The status quo is broken

Current immigration policies leave millions of workers in the shadows, vulnerable to abuse because they lack legal documentation, and unable to fully participate in a country they have helped to build. The mismatch between outdated policies and the economic realities of our country has led to a ballooning, unauthorized immigrant population and thousands of deaths at the border. We need a new approach to managing migration. We can regulate immigration properly if we legalize hardworking, taxpaying immigrants, welcome workers and families in the future within limits, set those limits so that they are realistic and enforceable. We need a “smart border” strategy that screens and inspects people and cargo to keep out security threats, while admitting immigrants and goods that strengthen our nation. Such a strategy will make immigration safe, orderly, and legal instead of deadly, chaotic, and operating outside the bounds of the law.

The Solution

Comprehensive immigration reform that makes sense for America and its newcomers.

Work permits and a path to citizenship for those here and contributing

As part of a comprehensive reform, we should recognize and reward the hard work of immigrants living in the United States who are kept in legal limbo by restrictive immigration policies. Legalization of the current undocumented population would benefit both hardworking immigrants and their families and established workers and employers, by providing immigrant workers with the same labor protections as their native-born co-workers and stabilizing our labor force.

Expanded family and worker visas

Immigration reform will not be successful until we harmonize public policy with the factors that drive migration: family unity and economic opportunity. A comprehensive reform will create legal channels wide enough so that family members and workers opt for a legal alternative to entering the United States. We need to restructure our family preference system so that newcomers aren't forced to choose between long separations from their American families or seeking entry without authorization. We need a “break-the-mold” worker visa program that provides legal visas, family unity, full labor rights, labor mobility, and a path to permanent residence and citizenship over time.

Smart enforcement.

To better enforce immigration laws, we have to make them enforceable. By legalizing those here and legalizing much of the future flow, we will go a long way to restoring the rule of law. However, open borders is neither practical nor desirable. To augment wider legal channels, effective enforcement requires a smart borders regime that screens those who enter efficiently, cracks down on human traffickers, polices the border with professionalism and accountability, imposes penalties in a targeted fashion on unscrupulous employers who exploit workers and undermine law-abiding competitors. It's the federal government's responsibility to carry out enforcement and to that end we need to build a fully funded and well- resourced federal immigration infrastructure capable of carrying out the related duties of facilitating admissions and regulating the process in an even-handed and effective manner.

Integrate immigrants fully into American society.

Immigrants are more than workers. They are neighbors, fellow members of our society, and an essential part of America's future. Working with immigrant and ethnic communities, our country needs better strategies and policies to encourage immigrants to learn English, become citizens, participate in the civic life of communities as well as have equitable access to essential services.

Victories

MOSES won an anti-profiling ordinance in the City of Detroit in May by bringing together Muslim, Christian, Arab, Latino, African-American member institutions. The ordinance was the first of its kind in Michigan by not only protecting immigrants from police harassment of their documentation but also Muslims against being profiled because of how they dress and anyone from racial profiling.

WISDOM mobilized fifty leaders well as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation so that 150 undocumented people received driver's licenses, and at least 300 obtained state ID cards before the April 1, 2007 deadline when Wisconsin's version of the "REAL ID" law took effect.

ABLE leaders in the Atlanta area worked with the new mayor of Sandy Springs to address massive police "traffic" stops that targeted Latinos and involved a dozen police vehicles, half parked on church property. The mayor committed to establishing a Spanish speaking hotline for Spanish speakers to call the police without fear of being arrested.

Gamaliel of Metro Chicago trained 200 volunteers to help 1000 Legal Permanent Residents apply for Citizenship and delivered 10,000 petition letters for comprehensive reform to Sen. Durbin, Sen. Obama, Congressman Gutierrez, and Congressman Jackson, Jr.

ISAIAH, working in coalition, passed similar ICE/ City Separation ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul. These ordinances effectively separate the city functions from the federal immigration enforcement and prohibit city officials, including police officers, from inquiring about a person's immigration status unless required by state or Federal law. These ordinances allow immigrants to more fully participate in the community and feel safe to report crimes.

Opportunity Housing

“The poor shall always be among you.” This quotation from scripture is often misunderstood, to mean that poverty is an inevitable feature of any society and therefore efforts to eradicate it are doomed to failure. At a deeper level, this precept means that segregating the poor so that they are isolated from the rest of society is wrong. Any society that is based on dividing, segmenting, segregating whole communities of people, based on racial and economic stratification is profoundly immoral and unacceptable. It is wrong not only because it is the first step toward denying the humanity of whole communities, based on superficial differences of race, class, gender, ethnicity. It is wrong because isolating the poor exiles them from relationships and institutions that open the way to a good education, a good job, a stable family, a life of productivity and contribution. Instead the segregated poor are channeled in the direction of diminished expectations, despair, and mental, physical, and financial exhaustion.

The Shame of the Nation, in the words of Jonathan Kozol, is the near-total victory of school segregation in the half-century since Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP, and Dr King and SCLC breached the walls of school segregation in *Brown v Board*, and dismantled Jim Crow in public accommodations and elections. We know that school segregation is based on housing segregation. And in this last ½ century the United States has erected the most elaborate and complicated system of race and class segregation the nation, and perhaps the world, has ever seen. Metropolitan areas are economically stratified and racially segregated with ring after ring of suburbs, where income gradations of \$10,000 separate one community of houses from the next. And in those regions with the most elaborate system of finely graded economic enclaves and gated communities, exist the largest ghettos of concentrated poverty.*

In the 12th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus stops in Bethany on his way to Jerusalem where he is about to be crucified, and he encounters Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And Mary washes his feet, dries them with her hair, and puts Spikenard ointment on His feet. When Lazarus says, it would have been better to give that ointment to the poor, Jesus says, the poor will always be among you, meaning that we may have an opportunity to treat the poor with kindness. Clearly removing them from our midst by segregating them in communities of concentrated poverty is exactly the opposite of what Jesus had in mind for the poor.

Equitable & Inclusionary Housing Opportunities for All

It is so that we as people of God can relate to, and not separate from, the poor -- as we are called by our faith to do, that we must challenge the elaborate, entrenched system of separatism in America.

Gamaliel affirms the principle of fair share housing: namely that all communities within a metropolitan area shall include their fair share of the region's low income housing and affordable housing, and no communities shall be targeted for massive amounts of low income and affordable housing that exceed their fair share of low income housing.

The “opportunity principle” that lies behind fair share housing is that every family deserves to live in an “opportunity community,” defined as a community that includes both good jobs and good schools.

Gamaliel opposes segregation of housing by class and race. Gamaliel opposes policies by local governments to establish barriers to low income and affordable housing. [Barriers such as zoning restrictions and requirements for extra large lots, that drive up the cost of housing and make it difficult or impossible to develop low income and affordable housing in that municipality.]

Gamaliel therefore also opposes locating housing for low income people and low income people of color in poor communities and segregated communities of color.

Gamaliel opposes fiscal incentives from state and federal government—for example Low Income Housing Tax Credits—that are restricted to development of low income housing in poor communities and segregated communities of color.

Victories

Empower Hampton Roads (EHR) won non mandatory “opportunity housing” or “inclusionary housing” policy in Virginia Beach. They also won a state bill improving previous policy giving permission for local inclusionary housing ordinances. The new Bill, passed in 2007, protects and expands the right of communities to pass “opportunity housing” / workforce housing.

BRIDGE won a Baltimore City inclusionary housing ordinance that expands opportunity housing in more affluent areas of the city.

New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC) is leading the fight in the state of New Jersey to outlaw RCA's-- “Regional Cooperation Agreements” RCA's are a loophole in the state's fair share housing policy created by the legislature, in response to the State Supreme Court decision in the Mount Laurel case, which established that locating public housing in poor racially segregated communities was unconstitutional, and required that each community to accept its “fair share” of public housing. The RCA loophole has allowed wealthy communities to pay poor communities to take their fair share of low income housing. NJRC has waged a powerful campaign, and generated support from an alliance of mayors of stressed older, built out suburbs that already have their fair share of low income housing. NJRC is on the verge of winning the abolition of RCA's.

Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) has waged a successful multi year campaign to protect and strengthen the state of Missouri's policy which awards credits on the state income tax to families and developers who invest in renovation or construction of new housing in the city of St Louis. The result of this policy is the construction of thousands of housing units in St Louis, which has in turn resulted in the cities first population increase and tax base increase in four decades.

Transportation

Responsible Transportation Policies

The history of God's activity in the world is one in which God has reached out to those who suffer injustice and has defended those who are excluded from participation in the life of the community. Participation is a deeply theological concern. Life in community is meant to be shared equally and equitably by all. A community, in which full and fair participation is denied to anyone, is a community living outside God's intentions for the created order.

When transportation serves as a barrier to employment opportunities or access to the services offered by the community, something is unacceptably wrong and it is imperative that people of faith respond. In developing fair and responsible transportation policies we should endeavor to support systems that both provide equal access for all members of the community, as well as sustain and support the whole creation.

We can and should use both federal and state transportation policy to build and maintain a transportation system that meets both the current and future needs of all. Public officials and the citizenry are co-creators in building a common future. Americans must use our country's vast abundance to provide opportunity to ALL. Transportation is at the very center of opportunity for jobs, maintaining our health and our connecting communities.

Transportation Values

We must craft transportation policies that reflect the following values:

Fairness, Opportunity, Shared Abundance, Creating Community, Hope rather than Fear

Our transportation system must serve all, including those who are unable to drive due to income, disability, age or other reasons.

We believe in:

- Increasing resources for public transportation, especially to address the mobility and access needs of low- and moderate-income and vulnerable populations,

- Strengthening public involvement and accountability in the transportation and land use planning process,

- Enforcing and strengthening federal civil rights law and environmental justice guidance in transportation planning and project delivery,

- Promoting community development and job creation, especially for low-income and minority communities through transportation funds and smart growth strategies.

Every transportation decision we make should be consistent with Gamaliel so that all of our decisions reflect our shared values of community and opportunity for all.

History

On August 10, 2005, the President signed the Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the nation's new \$286 billion transportation law. Gamaliel and its project, the Transportation Equity Network (TEN) won several policy changes in the bill including:

- 1) Clearing the way for officials to craft workforce development agreements to create employment and training opportunities in construction jobs,
- 2) Improving the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program by making it a formula program with a guaranteeing \$700 million over six years,
- 3) Requiring public participation plans to be developed with the involvement of local residents in the metropolitan transportation planning process, and requiring greater financial transparency in the metropolitan transportation planning process, and
- 4) Setting aside \$1 million each year for transportation equity research demonstration programs.

Victories

Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) of Pittsburgh, PA got Governor Rendell to commit at their 800 person public meeting to take leadership in the campaign in the state legislature to dedicate \$649 million for PA mass transit systems. They ultimately won half that amount.

Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE) of Honolulu, HI is engaging in campaign on a \$4 billion light rail system and has already found funding for an organizer to coordinate the campaign.

ISAIAH, working in coalition, helped pass a constitutional amendment that will funnel a portion of the state's motor vehicle sales tax into funding for transit. The amount will be phased in and grow from \$24 million/yr to 120 million/yr. A bill pushed by ISAIAH and its allies, that would have added an additional \$165 million to transit funding was vetoed by the Governor.

Jobs and Economic Development

Work, Our Response to God

In creating a good world, God also created human beings to continue this good work. Work is an integral part of our response to God's call. By working with integrity and responsibility toward all our neighbors and all creation and by treating other workers and ourselves with respect, compassion, fairness, and gratitude we engage in work that is pleasing to God. Our work thereby becomes a service to our neighbors and their work a service to us.

Work Principles

Gamaliel is committed to work principles that grow out of our understanding of God's intentions for creation. Work, at its best, is not a burden but a glad and collaborative response to the One who created us. It should reflect God's creative and redemptive purposes by providing not only a means of subsistence but also a way to honor human dignity and allow all too equally participate in community life. We seek to support a work community which grows out of our faith values and which

- recognizes the gifts and the value of each individual;
- encourages individuals and groups to their best work;
- compensates fairly for work performed;
- seeks to correct the growing financial disparity between workers;
- recognizes the synergy and justice of diverse workforce; and
- supports individuals and families

In 2005, The Gamaliel Foundation and the Transportation Equity Network (TEN) created the JOBS NOW campaign. The campaign aims to get thousands of high paying jobs for low-income people, minorities, women and ex-offenders through alliances with minority contractors and unions to secure workforce development agreements and policies. The JOBS NOW campaign has the potential to move millions of low- income people, minorities, women and ex-offenders into living wage construction jobs. Several very significant victories have already been won in Missouri and Ohio.

Two Million Jobs

Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU), a \$286 billion dollar federal transportation appropriations bill was enacted in 2005. With the support of Representative Richard Costello (D-IL), Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), Gamaliel and TEN were able to get a workforce development amendment into SAFETEA-LU. The amendment states that on all highway projects, 30% of the jobs should be filled by local community members.

The JOBS NOW Campaign seeks to take this victory to the next level, using the amendment as well as a little-known federal USDOT regulation. The USDOT regulation recommends that states should use ½ of 1% of the federal highway funds that they receive to promote workforce development and job training. The campaign is working to pass local Workforce Development agreements, ordinances and policies at the state, local and national level. These policies will reserve a percentage of work hours on highway, public transit and other construction projects for low-income people, minorities, women, and ex-offenders.

Every one billion spent on highways creates almost 48,000 jobs. If just 15% of these jobs were filled by low-income minorities, women, and ex-offenders, then 7,050 construction jobs per \$1 billion spent could go directly to the disadvantaged. Two million jobs could be generated for low-income communities over the life of this \$286 billion SAFETEA-LU bill.

Victories

Two affiliates of the Gamaliel Foundation, Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) and United Congregations of the Metro East (UCM) won a ground-breaking workforce development agreement. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) agreed to include the MCU/UCM workforce development platform on the \$550 million I-64 highway project. MCU and UCM won ½ of 1% of the project budget, \$2.5 million, for job training and support. MODOT also agreed to the workforce development goals that MCU/UCM set out: low-income people, minorities and women, will complete 30% of the apprentice work hours. If 500 jobs are created, the targeted population will fulfill 150 job slots

MoDOT has enacted a very similar agreement with Gamaliel Kansas City affiliate, MORE2; reserving ½ of 1% of the kclCON budget for workforce development (\$1.25 million) and reserving 30% of work hours for low-income people, minorities and women. MORE2 has also worked with the Kansas City council to pass a pioneering workforce development ordinance that requires that companies doing construction work for Kansas City, MO must meet goals for minority and women construction workers on all their public and private jobs in the metro area.

AMOS, Gamaliel affiliate in Cincinnati, got two African-Americans appointed to the Banks Working Group after a series of media interviews and a public action of 300 people. The Banks Working Group adopted AMOS' platform - 22% of the work hours on the \$800 million dollar project will be done by minorities and women as well as 30% of the work will done by minority contractors.