



## General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church

100 Maryland Avenue, N.E. , Washington, D.C. 20002 • (202) 488-5600  
Fax: (202) 488-5619 • Email: [gbcgs@umc-gbcgs.org](mailto:gbcgs@umc-gbcgs.org) • Website: [www.umc-gbcgs.org](http://www.umc-gbcgs.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Nov. 11, 2009)

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENCY APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF 'AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT'**

*United Methodist official policies stand in opposition to some of bill's provisions.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) of The United Methodist Church applauds the U.S. House of Representatives for passage of the "Affordable Health Care for America Act" (H.R. 3962). GBCS believes the House action, if adopted by the Senate, will bring access to affordable health care to U.S. citizens currently without health insurance or who face spiraling costs for ever fewer benefits.

The United Methodist Church's official positions on abortion and immigration stand in opposition, however, to restrictions placed in the bill that limit coverage for all of God's children living in the United States. H.R. 3962 excludes immigrants and women whose circumstances indicate need for an abortion. These restrictions even include persons who now have such insurance.

The bill establishes a two-tiered system of health delivery. It essentially penalizes women and immigrants with fewer economic resources.

As people of faith, The United Methodist Church believes health care is a basic human right. General Conference, our denomination's highest policy-making body, has stated:

"We affirm the worth, dignity and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status ... any immigration or economic system which calls for a perpetual class of second class workers cannot be supported by people of faith. Undocumented immigrants are ... shut out of access to the social services of which they support through their difficult labor. Any reform ... must also allow for the full protections of all workers. (2008 United Methodist Book of Resolutions, #3281)

"The United Methodist Church recognizes tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures." (Social Principle ¶161J, 2008 United Methodist Book of Discipline)

The United Methodist Church also calls for abortion to be "available to women without regard to economic standards of sound medical practice and make abortions available to women without regard to economic status." (2008 Book of Resolutions, #2026).



The General Board of Church & Society urges the U.S. Senate to act quickly to provide health-care coverage for all people in the United States, but without restrictions such as those in H.R. 3962.

The General Board of Church & Society is one of four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church, which has more than 11 million members worldwide. The board's primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education and Leadership Formation, United Nations & International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the nearly 42,000 local churches of the denomination. It has offices on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and at the Church Center at the United Nations.

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Contact: Wayne Rhodes, Director of Communications

(202) 488-5630 / [wrhodes@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:wrhodes@umc-gbcs.org)

or

The Rev. Cynthia Abrams, Director of Alcohol, Other Addictions & Health Care

(202) 488-5636 / [cabrams@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:cabrams@umc-gbcs.org)