



The Armchair Advocate

Brought to you by the Coalition of Religious Communities 347 South 400 East
A Multi-Faith Response to Poverty Salt Lake City, UT 84111
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Update on the Progress of the Tax Reform Task Force

During the past several weeks, there has been a lot of movement around the tax issues at the capitol. New proposals have come up while others have died. Here is the latest update:

Income Tax Proposals

Option B: Begin with federal Adjusted Gross Income. Provide certain exemptions that phase out as income increases ([a] \$12,000 married filing jointly, head of household, qualifying widow(er), \$6,000 single and married filing jointly, and [b] \$4,000 per person exemption [no personal exemption limit]). Apply a 5% tax rate. Allow a charitable contribution and mortgage interest credit.

Option C: Retain existing tax structure and reduce tax rate in top bracket from 7% to 6.85%

Option D2: Multiply AGI by 4.6%. Allow a refundable sales and use tax credit that varies by AGI and

number of personal exemptions. Allow a charitable contribution and mortgage interest credit.

Sales Tax on Food Proposals

Option A: Provide a non-refundable income tax credit up to \$75 per person, depending on income level.

Option B: Eliminate the sales and use tax on purchases of unprepared food and increase state and local sales and use tax rates to offset a portion of the revenue impact.

Option C: Eliminate the sales and use tax on purchases of unprepared food.

The next meeting of the Task Force is Monday, November 28 at 8am. The Interim Revenue and Taxation Committee will hear any bills on Wednesday, November 30 at 9am to be passed out to the general session.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Second Annual People's Summit on Poverty

Saturday, December 3

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Jubilee Center

309 East 100 South

Featuring our own Rev. Daniel Webster as speaker, there will be a host of topics for discussion, including the rising bus fares, the minimum wage, sales tax on food, low income housing and Medicaid funding.

Free of charge with refreshments provided!

Next CORC Meeting:

Thursday, December 15th

Last one before the Legislative Session!

8:30 in Salt Lake City
Anderson Commons
734 East 200 South

No Ogden Meeting this month -
back to regular scheduling in March!

Issue Spotlight: Hate Crimes Legislation

It's another year at the legislature, which means that there's another fight to get Hate Crimes Legislation passed. This year there is a new version of the bill being run by Rep. David Litvack. This new bill would eliminate the so called "list," and would make it an aggravating factor if the victim is selected based on membership or perceived membership in a group.

In determining the weight to be given to the aggravating factor, the sentencing judge or the Board of Pardons and Parole would consider the public harm resulting from the selection of the victim from that group, including the degree to which the selection is likely to cause emotional or other harm to the victim or other members of the group; is likely to incite community unrest; the group is or has been the target of animus, discrimination, legal disabilities or

hate-based crimes; and whether the penalty is already increased by other provisions of the law.

The fight for legislation surrounding hate crimes has been a long fight in Utah. Rep. Litvack has run the bill for as long as he has occupied the seat, since 2001.

This year the bill is different, not only in that it eliminates specific classes of people, but it takes away the automatic harsher penalty. Both of these compromises are what Rep. Litvack is referring to as an "olive branch." Now, the judge or Board of Pardons and Parole will have the duty of determining the sentence, if the crime is concluded to be determined by hate.

Save the Date!

Coalition of Religious Communities' Legislative Orientation at the Capitol

Thursday, January 12th 9:00 - 10:30 am
OR 12:00 - 1:30 pm

Meet on the first floor of the West building

Flyers available in December