



Sowers of Justice

Catholic Legislative Network

**Action
Alert**

**Call your state representative:
No Cuts to General Assistance
or MFIP**

May 3, 2010

Background:

Minnesota has lost record numbers of jobs in this recession. Jobseekers outnumber available jobs by more than 9 to 1. And even before the recession, Minnesota has watched the number of children in deep poverty grown.

Every member of the Minnesota House of Representatives needs to hear from her or his own constituents that there should be no cuts to General Assistance or the Minnesota Family Investment Program. General Assistance and MFIP are the core of what is left of the safety net: bare-bones income assistance to very low income Minnesotans unable to find work or unable to work because of serious illness or disability. (General Assistance provides \$203 a month to adults who are seriously ill, disabled and unemployable. MFIP provides income assistance to families with children; a family of three receives \$532 a month. Almost 50,000 of the poorest children in the state rely on MFIP and its related programs.)

The Governor proposed eliminating General Assistance and ending MFIP and child care assistance to more than 7000 families on MFIP with disabled parents or children. The House has proposed cutting the deep poverty level assistance for families on MFIP, cutting the funding for creating short-term skill building jobs and cutting services to families on MFIP.

Contact your representative: Let her or him know that there should be NO cuts to MFIP or General Assistance. This is especially important because there are going to be attempts to amend the bill on the floor of the House, and your Representative needs to vote NO to cuts to GA and MFIP.

Talking points:

- General Assistance and MFIP are not budget-busters: Minnesota has not increased the amount of assistance it offers in those two programs since 1986. Together they account for only one half of 1% of state general fund spending.
- Unemployment rates among low wage workers are at depression-levels: But only half the unemployed workers in Minnesota qualify for unemployment insurance coverage. State data shows that most parents who enroll on cash assistance have recently lost jobs.
- Making sure people survive is the key function of the safety net. The meager assistance available through GA and MFIP are how people pay medical co-pays, contribute to rent, buy clothing, bus tickets, etc.

Suggested Action:

Contact your state representative today. Ask them to VOTE NO to amendments that cut GA or MFIP from the House Health and Human Services budget bill.

If you do not know who that is or his or her contact information, it takes less than 30 seconds to find out at <http://www.gis.leg.mn/mapserver/districts/>.

For further information, contact Adam Robinson at 651-291-4536 or robinsona@archspm.org.