

Why Should Christians Care about Welfare and Poverty Legislation?

The common good includes both a commitment to private virtue and a commitment to social justice. We believe that individuals are responsible for their actions, for their commitment to any in their care, and for developing their own potential through productive effort. However, we maintain that focusing solely on individual virtue does not represent sound public policy; we must be attentive to the justice of social institutions, and consider how such institutions shape the lives of citizens.

Public policy must serve the common good. We define the common good as a social order shaped by basic human equality and justice. We depend on others and they depend on us. The common good of a community is greater insofar as all have access to it and all can serve it.

Through government, we have both an opportunity and a moral obligation to help the poor. Although churches and charitable organizations must assist the poor, they cannot and should not shoulder this work alone. A government obligation to the poor is grounded in the Biblical text, has been affirmed for centuries by the Christian tradition, and is prescribed by the common moral conscience of the human community.