

VOICE OF THE POOR MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2011

St Francis Xavier Parish Center

4715 North Central Ave.

3:30 PM

Attending:

Ron Myer, Julie Douglas, Kathy Jorgensen, Frank Barrios, Inge Casey, John Winters, Ray Maldoon, John Feit, Fr. Fitzgerald, Francisco Alatorre, Mary Helen Sotelo and her elderly mother Rosa & Lucy Howell

Opening:

Ron chaired the meeting, and Fr. Fitzgerald led us in an opening prayer.

KBI Dinner Results:

Ron Meyer and Lucy Howell along with other VOP members completed a successful Dinner/Fund Raiser on March 12, 2011 at St. Pauls Catholic Church in Phoenix. Ron prepared 60 delicious dinners and we raised almost \$15,600 for the KBI. In attendance were many prominent individuals including Bishop Nevares of Phoenix and Consul General of Mexico Trevino.

Legislative Update:

Our Legislative liason Tom Finnerty was not at the meeting, but Kathy Jorgensen updated us on AHCCCS and that the governor had met with Hospital Representatives and was considering their proposal to help mitigate the Governors proposed cuts to AHCCCS.

Immigration Bills Update:

Five immigration bills had passed out of Rules and were to be considered by committees. Local Catholic Bishops had sent out a letter in opposition to these bills and had even sent out an advisory asking all Catholics to write their Legislators to ask them not to vote for these bills.

Budget/Budget Letter Update:

VOP had drafted a letter to the Governor opposing the Budget cuts to the poor and those in need. The letter was to be signed by SVDP President Joe Riley. After his review was completed a shorter version of the letter was returned to us. Copies of the original and the revised letter were handed out at the meeting. We agreed to send Joe's letter out by the end of the week. Indications are that the Senate Budget will cut even more that the Governor's Budget.

Kathy said that any notices to VOP members would say what the impacts to the poor would be and if they did not want that to happen they should contact their Political Representatives and tell them of their concern.

Overview of Washington D.C. Trip:

The meeting was attended by five members of VOP, Terry Wilson, and 3-Individuals from the Phoenix Diocese. On Tuesday we divided into three teams and visited our elected officials in both the House and the Senate. We addressed several specific issues but in general requested that the

Congressmen not balance the budget on the backs of the poor and disadvantaged. We were encouraged by our visit to Kyle and McCain's office and their indications that they may be willing to tackle immigration reform. If they did we all agreed to send them letters of encouragement.

Western Regional Meeting/VOP:

The regional meeting is scheduled for May 11 thru 15, 2011, to be held at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix. Lucy is planning on giving two workshops (Both the same) and Ron will take part in a panel discussion on Systemic Changes for St. Vincent De Paul. There were several questions on how much the Regional meeting will cost.

VOP Communications Protocol:

Kathy stated that she would communicate with our members using the following three protocols:

- 1) Monthly Newsletters
- 2) Legislative Reports
- 3) Action Alerts

We all agreed that some updates could be information on issues where we leave it up to the reader to make a decision on the action to take. For instance "If you feel that this legislation will affect those you serve...call your legislator and state your opposition to this bill." We will call Ron Meyer if in doubt or need guidance on correct wording of messages.

TABOR Bills:

Tabor bills refers to Budget limitations as referenced to legislation passed in Colorado. It was stated that the Colorado "Tabor bills" were not successful and many changes have been implemented since its passage. We referenced a "Robb Editorial" that was in the Arizona Republic that morning that did a good job of explaining what these budget limitations were about. We all agreed to oppose any budget limitations that were based on formulas. All budgets should be based on the amount of money available and on the State needs. They should not be relegated to a simple formula.

Next Meeting:

Meetings are now being held on the last Monday of the month at 3:30PM at the current meeting location. This will better allow us to present issues to the board (or the executive committee) prior to the board meeting. Our next meeting will be on March 28, 2011 at 3:30 PM to be held at St. Francis Xavier Parish Center at 4715 North Central Ave.

Closing Prayer:

Fr. Fitz led us in our closing prayer

