



Many members...  
One call to peacemaking

# Lutheran Peace Blog

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## New Opportunities . . . Dangerous Politics

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Just when citizen input might do some good, the political process seems consumed by all the partisan drama in Washington, DC. And indeed, there are a remarkable number of new opportunities for peacemaking and justice seeking. We should not stop encouraging our elected officials to:

\*Support international efforts to remove Syria's chemical weapons, end the fighting, and provide aid for civilians impacted by this war – especially refugees.

\*Find ways to address the role of Syria's worst drought in 70 years in aggravating the humanitarian impact of the war; these problems aren't separate.

\*Pursue new openings for diplomacy with Iran.

\*Pass a U.S. budget with significant and long-overdue cuts in defense spending.

\*Push through sensible gun control legislation in the wake of the horrific Navy Yard mass shooting.

Now is the time to encourage our friends and congregation members to join us in advocating for movement on whichever of these issues they feel strongly about . . .

And, of course, we and our nation are confronted by another problem with huge peace and justice impact:

Our voice is also needed urging Congress to act now to end the government shutdown that has cut so many vital services, and threatens an even more damaging default. And Congress needs know we strongly oppose ending

the shutdown at the expense of key service programs, especially for the most vulnerable. As the default deadline approaches, careful reflection on America's needs can be undercut by last minute – and often back-room – negotiations. The House voted to defund Obamacare without such open discussion. And it has voted for a \$40 billion cut to SNAP (food stamps), one of the most effective – and efficient – programs serving those in need.

While we should trim spending where we can (and the Pentagon is one place!), many program cuts being considered would seriously hurt many Americans, especially the most vulnerable, and actually endanger the economic recovery. The focus should be on jobs, not cuts to programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and vital safety net programs.

The U.S. is at a critical moment. Our friends and members of our congregations probably need encouragement to set aside all the inducements to just “zone out” on these issues. We can support and inspire one another as we each contact our elected officials and share our sense of where their focus might be, e.g.:

new opportunities for  
peacemaking... justice  
for the poor... jobs....

[download this advocacy update as a pdf](#)

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"At heaven's door, St. Peter is probably not going to ask you much about what you did about keeping government small. But he is going to ask you what you did for the poor." E.J. Dionne quoting John Kasich, Republican Gov. of Ohio, and a top lieutenant in Newt Gingrich's revolution in the 1990s.

### **A few especially helpful sources:**

“Why the Government Shutdown Is Unbiblical”  
by Jim Wallis, Sojourners,  
<http://sojo.net/blogs/2013/10/03/why-government-shutdown-unbiblical>

“8 Reasons Democrats Should Refuse a Shutdown ‘Grand Bargain’ ”  
by Richard Eskow, Campaign for America's Future blog, Oct. 4, 2013  
<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/10/04-3>

"Lasting Damage From the Budget Fight,"  
editorial, *NY Times*, 9-26-13  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/26/opinion/lasting-damage-from-the-budget-fight.html?src=recg>

"A Federal Budget Crisis Months in the Planning"

by Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Mike McIntire, *NY Times*, 10-6-13

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/06/us/a-federal-budget-crisis-months-in-the-planning.html>

"Obamacare's strange bedfellows"

by E.J. Dionne, Jr., *Washington Post*, 9-22-13

[http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-22/opinions/42299449\\_1\\_medicaid-expansion-bill-john-kasich-medicaid-issue](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-22/opinions/42299449_1_medicaid-expansion-bill-john-kasich-medicaid-issue)

"Free to Be Hungry"

by Paul Krugman, *NY Times*, 9-23-13

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/23/opinion/krugman-free-to-be-hungry.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/23/opinion/krugman-free-to-be-hungry.html?_r=0)

"US-Iran: Breakthrough After Decades of Silence,"

ABC News, 9-28-13 <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/us-iran-leaders-talk-time-1979-20401912>

"The UN Needs a Larger 'War on Poverty'"

by Ralph Nader, 9-27-13

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ralph-nader/united-nations-poverty\\_b\\_4005364.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ralph-nader/united-nations-poverty_b_4005364.html)

Other useful links: [www.billmoyers.com](http://www.billmoyers.com) - <http://robertreich.org/> - [www.yesmagazine.org](http://www.yesmagazine.org)  
- [www.truth-out.org](http://www.truth-out.org) - [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org) - [www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com)

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