

For almost forty years, tens of thousands of NETWORK activists have lobbied, educated and organized for economic justice and peace.



Affirming the *Platform for the Common Good* at the Convention for the Common Good in Philadelphia

## We the People—Strengthen our Impact in Washington

After the presidential election, NETWORK staff met regularly with members of President Obama's transition team and incoming administration members. We also established relationships with new Members of Congress. These powerful contacts will strengthen our ability to act for justice.



Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ speaking at the Democratic National Convention

The impact of our work was evident in the summer of 2008, when 800 justice activists gathered at a national convention in Philadelphia to endorse the *Platform for the Common Good* ([www.networklobby.org/PlatformfortheCommonGood.pdf](http://www.networklobby.org/PlatformfortheCommonGood.pdf)). First envisioned by NETWORK, the **Convention for the Common Good** was convened with the help of our faith partners and drew the attention of then-Senator Barack Obama, who sent a representative and a personal welcome video. Presenters included Dr. M. Shawn Copeland, Sister Helen Prejean, Bishop Walter Sullivan, E.J. Dionne and John Podesta. More than just a learning experience, the convention inspired those present and fueled their passion for justice.

# NETWORK

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# NETWORK

A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

## Year End Report



# 2008

## We the People—Lobby

NETWORK's members, lobbyists and activists lobbied the 110th Congress on: a federal budget that invests in human needs; international cooperation and economic development; global trade; comprehensive immigration reform; healthcare; and other safety net issues.

Significant successes included: the Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act, which included extension of unemployment benefits and aid to state Medicaid programs; increased funding for human needs programs in the June Supplemental Appropriations Act; The National Affordable Housing Trust Fund; inclusion of parity in coverage for mental health services in the Medicare Improvements Act; and funding for capacity-building programs, refugee resettlement, return of property and regional reconstruction in Iraq.

In January, NETWORK Executive Director Simone Campbell participated in a delegation to the Middle East to assess the humanitarian crisis facing Iraqi refugees. NETWORK then sponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill and encouraged our members and activists to lobby on this important issue.

As a result, the U.S. exceeded its modest goal of welcoming 12,000 Iraqi refugees in 2008, and increased our national goal for 2009 to that of 17,000 refugees.



Marge Clark gives Sen. Durbin his 100% voting record certificate

## We the People—Educate

NETWORK and our partner, the NETWORK Education Program, experienced a dramatic increase in education activities in 2008. Nearly 3,000 faithful citizens from across the nation participated in the writing and ratification of the *Platform for the Common Good*, a document rooted in our nation's founding ideals and the Catholic social justice tradition. After the Platform's ratification at the Convention for the Common Good, tens of thousands of the platform were distributed to Members of Congress, members of the Bush and incoming Obama administrations, and faith and justice organizations across the country.



Simone Campbell, SSS giving a lecture

Just prior to the 2008 presidential election, we also distributed tens of thousands of our candidate charts, which helped inform voters about the positions of candidates Barack Obama and John McCain through the lens of Catholic social teachings.

Staff members led more than 70 workshops on such topics as faithful citizenship, lobbying techniques, Catholic social justice teachings and practice, and theological and political foundations for specific goals articulated in the *Platform for the Common Good*. We increased our outreach to parishes, universities and religious congregations across the country.

## We the People—Organize

Throughout 2008, NETWORK members engaged with our staff in lobbying the U.S. Congress on issues addressing the common good. Informed by weekly communications from our field office, our Web site, and our magazine (the award-winning *Connection*), a record number of NETWORK members used our online Legislative Action Center to communicate with their legislators.

NETWORK's approach to member engagement was significantly shaped by the nationwide discussion groups that contributed to the *Platform for the Common Good*.

One significant result of this process was a strong sense of personal empowerment and growing regional identification with other NETWORK activists. We had numerous conference calls with members and shared information about our lobbying efforts.



One of the 2008 workshop groups.

NETWORK's online Legislative Action Center ([www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)) continued to strengthen our lobbying impact on Capitol Hill by helping our members and other activists communicate easily and regularly with their elected officials.