

'Faithful Filibuster' Exhorts Congress to Care About Government Shutdown Impacts

Under a cloudy and drizzly sky, across the street from the U.S. Capitol, David Beckmann read passages from the prophet Isaiah.

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God," read Beckmann, president of Bread for the World and one of several **Protestant** and Catholic leaders who gathered Wednesday to launch "Faithful Filibuster."

The effort is intended to remind members of Congress that the government shutdown is hurting poor and vulnerable people.

Volunteers planned to read more than 2,000 verses, possibly continuing into the night.

"In the midst of a crisis when we don't really know what to do, we thought, 'Let's read the **Bible** and hear what God has to say,'" Beckmann said.

There were no protesters, and few showed up to support the group, which huddled in front of the Capitol later to pray.

The reading of **Scripture** will continue at the beginning of each day's session of Congress, as long as Congress is in session. Religious leaders hope Congress will pass "a budget that cares for the poor and vulnerable."

The Circle of Protection, a coalition of denominational and nonprofit leaders that supports programs that assist the poor, organized the event.

"We all are here because we agree that protecting the poor has to be one of our highest national priorities," said Galen

Carey, vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Also speaking were Jim Wallis, president of Sojourners; Lisa Sharon Harper, director of mobilizing at Sojourners; and Kathy Saile, director of domestic social development for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.