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31 Faith Organizations Call for “Moral Roadmap” in Federal Funding Allocations

Invest in Community Wholeness; Divest From Border Militarization, Immigrant Jails, Deportations, Other Attacks On Children, Workers, & Families

Washington, DC - As Washington heads into appropriations season, thirty-one national, faith-based organizations are calling on Congress to recognize the moral side of their duty to allocate federal funds in a manner that prioritizes human needs, rather than funding and expanding immigration enforcement measures that attack children, families, and workers. In a [letter to Congress](#), these organizations are united in their belief--inherent in diverse faith traditions--that the individual humanity of all people, including immigrants and asylum seekers, must be recognized and valued.

“We believe that our nation’s budget and the decisions made by Congress in the coming weeks should be treated as a moral roadmap toward a world where every child of God is clothed, fed, safe, loved, and free,” the letter [states](#). “As people of faith, our various traditions command us to love our neighbors and welcome guests as we would welcome God.”

For years, Congress has been steadily increasing funding for immigration enforcement, used to further militarize the border, expand the number of jails to hold migrants, and hire thousands of deportation agents to go into local communities and separate families. As the administration doubles down on enforcement-only policies and immorally mismanages our taxpayer dollars, faith leaders and organizations are saying it is past time for Congress to chart a new direction on federal funding allocations.

Read the entire letter [here](#). Quotes from religious leaders are featured below.

Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation: “We have long championed the rights and safety of all immigrants, migrants, and refugees in our country. That is a foundational belief based on the call to love thy neighbor. Instead of spending billions of dollars to prop up the deportation machine, Congress can recognize the strengths that immigrants bring to our country and invest in programs that serve our communities through education, workforce development, nutrition, housing assistance, and more.”

Rev. John L. McCullough, President and CEO, Church World Service: “Congress should cut funding for deportation, detention, and border militarization, and instead invest in humanitarian assistance, welcoming people seeking protection, and community wholeness. Congress must listen to faith communities across our country who want to see the government respect the dignity and humanity of all our immigrant neighbors.”

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Ph.D, Executive Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness: “Too many of our resources, especially financial, go to greed and not need, to fear and not hope. It is

especially disturbing to see more and more resources go to both the detention of our immigrant sisters and brothers and the completely uncaring tearing apart of their families. As people of faith and conscience--as moral human beings--we must prophetically protest against such policies and, with vision and conviction, call for a new way forward.”

Rev. Amy Reumann, Director of Advocacy for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “‘Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.’ Proverbs 31:9 reminds us our responsibility to advocate for a federal budget that should reflect a government that provides hope, opportunity, and a place at the table for all, especially for those who are struggling at the margins of society. ELCA urges Congress to invest resources in development and humanitarian assistance to help countries in the Northern Triangle and elsewhere respond to an address hunger, extreme poverty, climate change and violence that causes forced migration. Furthermore, we encourage Congress to fund community-based alternatives to detention, which are more effective, cost efficient, and humane than expanded detention and militarization of the border.”

Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network: “Franciscan Action Network advocates to meet the human needs of vulnerable people, including immigrants and refugees as well as people living in poverty in our country. The way in which a country prioritizes its budget is a reflection of the country's values and moral fiber. We believe that continued funding for enforcement measures rather than for human needs is not only contrary to the values we profess, but is also ineffective in addressing the flow of migrants to our borders.”

Lawrence Couch, Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd: “As Catholics, we are called to welcome the stranger and to help people in need. Locking people up who come to us for assistance is simply wrong. We should have less money for enforcement and more money for refugee assistance. It's the right thing to do.”

Nancy K. Kaufman, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women: “For 125 years, the National Council of Jewish Women has worked to improve the lives of women, children, and families by supporting programs that meet basic human needs. We believe that no child should go hungry or homeless in a nation with as many resources as the United States. The funding that supports programs that separate families and lock children in jails should instead go toward education, food assistance, housing, and childcare—all of which aligns with both our Jewish values and the moral values upon which this country was founded.”

Sister Patricia McDermott, President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas: “We, as Sisters of Mercy, have dedicated our lives to serving the most vulnerable among us, and we are particularly disturbed by the sharp cuts to domestic programs such as education, food assistance and environmental protection funding in the president's budget proposal. Increasing already inflated military spending, funding a border wall and further militarizing the border while making deep cuts to mandatory safety net programs like Medicare and Medicaid is not only wrong-minded, it is morally corrupt and unjust. This insufferable cruelty, deliberate impoverishment and trampling of human dignity must stop! We call on the Trump Administration to regain its responsibility to the people of this nation, and reframe our country's priorities and serve the common good by presenting a budget that is fair, just and reflective of our values.”

Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, deputy director, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights: “Jewish tradition requires that we protect immigrants and other vulnerable members of our society. The way to do this is not to treat migrants as criminals -- especially when many are legally seeking asylum -- but treat them with compassion. We need to reverse the trend of increasingly punitive, militaristic approaches and instead invest our tax dollars in humanitarian assistance and support.”

Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary, The General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church: “The United Methodist Church urges the U.S. Congress to divest from reliance upon detention, deportation and militarization within immigration policy and practice. The church calls on officials to create a U.S. immigration system that upholds the welfare of migrants, affirms their

human dignity and guarantees their human rights. Funding should shift to reflect these priorities and support the health and wholeness of all communities.”

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is made up of 52 national, faith-based organizations brought together across many theological traditions with a common call to seek just policies that lift up the God-given dignity of every individual. In partnership, we work to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of all refugees and migrants.

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