

# NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: April 2023

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS and Fran Eskin Royer

*The NAC Focus Areas for 2023 are taken from the 2022 NAC Survey. Our primary constituents, Sisters and Lay Partners-in- Mission participated. The issues recommended are: Human Trafficking, Immigration, Poverty/Economics, Family including Mental Health and Violence and U.S. policies that affect the Good Shepherd mission worldwide. These issues also address root causes. They include but are not limited to: Covid-19, environmental degradation, and racism. These areas will be noted at the end of the issue description. We also address significant current issues which indirectly impact the other focus areas.*

## **SIGN-ONS:**

### ***NAC FOCUS AREA: Immigration***

#### **ISSUE: REDESIGNATION TPS FOR NICARAGUA**

Content: The letter highlights the ongoing social, political, and environmental challenges in Nicaragua and the critical need for extending and redesignating protections for Nicaraguans here in the U.S. Note: So as to not cause harm to persons living in Nicaragua, this letter is not public and goes only to the White House. The names of sign on organizations will not be made known elsewhere.

Sent to: Biden Administration

Sponsored by: Church World Service

### ***NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Economics***

#### **ISSUE: NEW APPROACH TO THE BUDGET DEBATE**

Content: Letter to Congress urging a new approach to the budget debate: raise taxes on the rich and corporations; do not cut funding on programs and services benefiting working people. The letter explains that President Biden's budget shows how this can be done: it proposes Congress raise taxes on the rich and corporations and use the money to make major investments benefiting working families while also reducing the deficit. This letter is a tool to help shift the GOP narrative that many in the media unfortunately parrot: that Congress must cut spending to reduce deficits. Instead, Congress should raise taxes and expand services.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Americans for Tax Fairness

#### **ISSUE: FAMILY STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY VOUCHERS ACT**

Content: The Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act would create 250,000 vouchers for low-income, high-need families with young children under the age of 6. These households would also be provided mobility-related services, including counseling and case management, to help them move to neighborhoods with access to good-performing schools, childcare, or early education programs. It is a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senators Van Hollen and Young.

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Sent to: National Organizations for Endorsement prior to sending to Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Low Income Housing Coalition

Also Family/Mental Health and Violence

## **ISSUE: OMITTING FOOD FROM IN-KIND SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE**

Content: Response to the NPRM on omitting food from the in-kind support and maintenance calculations for the SSI program. The proposed rule would ease access to food for SSI (Social Security Income) recipients and make the program less administratively complex by removing the requirement that SSI recipients provide information about their food expenses for consideration in the in-kind support and maintenance calculations. This sign on letter focuses on how the rule would promote food security for SSI recipients.

Sent to: Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi, SSI

Sponsored by: CLASP (Center for Law and Social Policy)

## **ISSUE: WALL STREET SPECULATION ACT**

Content: Letter urging representatives and senators to co-sponsor and actively support the Tax on Wall Street Speculation Act of 2023. As Americans continue recovering from the devastating COVID – 19 pandemic, it's impossible to overlook Wall Street's record profit levels as tens of millions of Americans suffered and 1.1 million died. The Forbes list of U.S. billionaires includes 186 individuals who've acquired their massive fortunes through the financial industry. By enacting a very small tax on the sales of Wall Street trades, the U.S. could begin to address income inequality and ensure Wall Street and the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

## **ISSUE: MEDICAID CUTS**

Content: Letter supports the critically important Medicaid program and to express our united opposition to any proposals to cut Medicaid funding as part of upcoming negotiations over the federal budget, debt limit, or any other legislative priorities.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Families USA

## **ISSUE: RESPONSIBLE BUDGET AND DEBT POLICIES**

Content: Letter urging members of Congress to support investments in our people and a responsible approach to the federal budget, including a clean increase in or suspension of the debt ceiling.

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Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Needs

## **ISSUE: SCHOOL MEAL NUTRITION STANDARDS**

Content: Letter in support of USDA's recently published proposed new improved nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The new rules will strengthen school meals while improving children's health and learning by reducing hunger and enhancing child development and school readiness.

Sent to: Sec. Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary U.S. Department of Agriculture

Sponsored by: Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

## **ISSUE: FAIR HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY**

Content: Everyone deserves fair access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing. Where we live impacts every aspect of our lives—access to good jobs, quality schools, child care, health, and more. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, disability, and religion. But Congress knew that banning discrimination would address deeply entrenched residential segregation that our federal and local governments created or address other barriers to fair housing for members of protected classes under the FHA. So, Congress added a duty to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) in the FHA that requires all recipients of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to proactively address residential segregation and other fair housing barriers. This letter is in support of strengthening Fair Housing Accountability.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Women's Law Center

Also Racism

## **ISSUE: ENDORSE FAIR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT**

Content: Organizational endorsement of The Fair Housing Act, re-introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA). The Fair Housing Improvement Act prohibits housing discrimination based on "source of income," "military status," and "veteran status." Rental assistance can improve health and educational outcomes, increase children's chances of long-term success, and increase racial equity. Too often, however, landlords discriminate against households receiving rental assistance, leaving them with few options for affordable places to live. By expanding protections to renters nationwide, the bill will make it easier for households receiving federal housing assistance to live in communities of their choice.

Requested By: Offices of Senators Kaine (D-VA) and Peters (D-CA)

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## *NAC FOCUS AREA: Family including Mental Health and Violence*

### **ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE**

Content: Letter to Congress requesting full and robust appropriations for critical grant programs that fund vital victim services and system responses. letter in support of state, national, International and Tribal Organizations and related programs in FY 24 Appropriations.

Sent to: Senators and Representatives on Appropriations Sub-Committees

Sponsored by: National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence

## *NAC FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION*

### **ISSUE: STOP LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS AT G7**

Content: Letter urging the Biden Administration NOT to endorse the expansion of global Liquefied Fossil Gas (LNG) supplies at the G7 meetings, and to lead the way for fossil free diplomacy.

Sent to: Deputy National Security Advisor Pyle, cc: other key members of the Biden Administration

Sponsored by: Friends of the Earth

### **ISSUE: PRINCIPLES OF A “FAITH”FUL FAIRM BILL**

Content: Letter to Congress urging support for policies in the Farm Bill that will safeguard Creation and mitigate climate change; address the impacts of climate change on farmers, farm workers, and our neighbors; and fulfill our moral obligation to leave a habitable world for future generations. In particular:

- FRONTLINE, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), elderly, youth, and/or disabled communities must be centered in policy work.
- ACCELERATE the transition to a sustainable agricultural and food system that supports small- and medium-holder farmers and local food economies.
- INVEST in climate resiliency and diversify crop insurance.
- TRANSFORM farm subsidies from supporting majority commodity crops to more specialty crops.
- HONOR creation through the protection of land, the elimination of food waste, and the reduction of harmful farm practices that result in high greenhouse gas emissions.

Sent to: Congress

Sponsored by: Washington Inter-religious Staff Community Energy & Ecology Working Group (WISC EEWG)

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## *NAC FOCUS AREA: U.S. Policies That Affect Good Shepherd Mission Worldwide*

### **ISSUE: INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK**

Content: Letter to the U.S. Trade Representative about centering labor rights and the environment in a new, huge trade deal called the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Now is the time for profound change in global trade rules that prioritize the planet, human rights, and dignity over profit.

Sent to: Ambassador Tai

Sponsored by: Network

- Also Environment Focus

## *NAC FOCUS AREA: Other Related Areas/Current Events*

### **ISSUE: DEPORTATION OF RUSSIAN WAR OBJECTORS**

Content: Letter urging President Biden to halt deportations of Russian conscientious objectors and war resisters seeking asylum in the US.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Center on Conscience & War

## **ACTION ALERTS**

### [Education Related Alerts](#)

Ecological Way of the Cross 2023 and EAD 2023 Invitations (Turn Swords into Plowshares theme – Militarization and Food Security Focus)

Hunger Museum, Farm Bill & EAD 2023

## **STATEMENTS**

### **SOLIDARITY STATEMENT CALLING FOR NEW BRUNSWICK GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT THE RIGHT TO FREE, PRIOR, INFORMED CONSENT FOR FRACKING IN NB**

New Brunswick's Premier is pressuring Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaw leaders in NB to allow fracking by threatening to withhold funding and promising future, speculative funding derived from fracking in the province. People championing shale or fracked gas in NB are tying new gas supply to pipelines, gas power plants, and as possible gas supply for an LNG project in the region, the Goldsboro LNG project in Nova Scotia.

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The letter shows organizations that are standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities who have long opposed fracking in NB, and against this violation of the principle of free, prior, informed consent, and any moves to open up fracking in NB.

## **OPEN STATEMENT TO THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION: DO NOT PLACE MORE ASYLUM SEEKERS BEHIND BARS AS TITLE 42 LIFT**

NAC signed on with like-minded organizations who are calling on the Biden administration to live up to its promise of creating a more humane immigration system by ensuring asylum seekers and other migrants are not placed behind bars in immigration detention as Title 42 is lifted.

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT NAC ACTIVITIES:**

NAC cosponsored with Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns a virtual Good Friday Way of the Cross for Economic and Ecological Justice

NAC was a cosponsor and among the organizers of the 2023 Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 25-27. This year's theme, *Swords into Plowshares, Achieving Enough for All & Pursuing Peace*, focused on two areas of concern to NAC: hunger and nonviolence. The conference invites participants to learn about these issues through a variety of workshops and plenary sessions. This education culminates with attendees taking action together on April 27 in virtual meetings with their legislators. Fran Eskin-Royer helped organize and shepherd the 35+ educational conference workshops, offered the formal welcome to EAD participants with Church World Service ED Rick Santos and was a part of the MD advocacy delegation. Leslye Colvin proclaimed the gospel at the ecumenical worship.

Ongoing, weekly planning for the June 14 briefing on Human Trafficking and Forced Migration (phase 1 of grant work). *Please note: Grantor does not wish to be acknowledged publicly.*

Engaged in Coalition Meetings, including Coalition on Human Needs (CHN), Domestic Human Needs (DHN), Faiths United Against Gun Violence, Heads of Washington Offices (HOWO), Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC), Justice for Immigrants (JFI), Washington Interfaith Staff Committee (WISC),

Completed 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Lobbying Report

Attended a virtual hearing on the Farm Bill

Virtually attended CSW67 Outcomes: A Call to Action for Gender Equality in Tech and Digital Innovation