

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: February 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 that indirectly impact our focus areas.

SIGN-ONS:

NAC FOCUS AREA: Immigration

ISSUE: 2023 IMMIGRATION PRIORITIES: A BLUEPRINT FOR THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMIN

Content: In 2021, the Biden administration started with an ambitious immigration plan and an experienced team, and although there was some modest success in reversing or terminating certain immigration policies, there is deep disappointment in the speed and substance of the planning for, and investing in, the restoration and expansion of access to asylum and other protections at the border, to deliver lasting protections for immigrant families in the United States, and to take decisive action to reimagine and reform our immigration and militarized enforcement systems. In 2023, the administration must double down on efforts to pass a reconciliation bill with immigration provisions, designate all countries eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), increase current programs that respond to regional development and humanitarian challenges, introduce new safe pathways to the United States, restore asylum access at the border, and more aggressively shift the immigration system toward a model that prioritizes safe and humane migration. The 2023 priorities follow the same pattern.

Sent to: President Biden for inclusion in State of the Union Address

Sponsored by: Immigration Hub

NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Economics

ISSUE: REPEALING THE DRUG FELONY SNAP/TANF BAN

Content: The latter calls on Congress to fully repeal the lifetime ban on individuals convicted of a drug felony from being eligible to receive SNAP and TANF assistance.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Drug Policy Alliance

ISSUE: THE PEOPLE OVER THE PENTAGON ACT

Content: The People Over Pentagon Act (H.R. 8040), led by U.S. House Representatives Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.) would cut \$100 billion from the three-quarters-of-a-trillion-dollar Pentagon budget, reducing waste and encouraging lawmakers to spend this funding on the true needs of their constituents instead.

Researchers at the National Priorities Project have noted that \$100 billion used elsewhere could pay for:

- Powering every household in the United States with solar energy

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

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS and Fran Eskin Royer

- Hiring one million elementary school teachers amid a worsening teacher shortage
- Free tuition for 2 out of 3 public college students in the U.S.
- Sending every household in the U.S. a \$700 check to help offset effects of inflation

Sent to: Letter of Endorsement went to House of Representatives

Sponsored by: U.S. House Representatives Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.)

ISSUE: PENTAGON BUDGET

Content: Letter urging President Biden to present a budget request to Congress for Fiscal Year 2024 that diverts some of our super-sized Pentagon budget to better meet the needs of the American people.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

ISSUE: CUT MILITARY SPENDING

Content: Letter urging members of Congress to dramatically cut militarized spending in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget — both to facilitate reinvestment in the wellbeing of our communities, and to curtail the harms of our militarized foreign policy.

People and organizations on both sides of the political aisle have argued that cuts to bloated and unaccountable Pentagon spending are possible and desirable — to cut waste, to fight corruption, to reinvest in human wellbeing, and to challenge our militarized foreign policy.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: American Friends Select Committee

ISSUE: CLEAN DEBT CEILING BILL

Content: Letter strongly Congress to pass a clean bill to raise the debt limit without hesitation, to protect American families and our economy from a catastrophe that is both wholly manufactured and devastatingly real in its consequences.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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

ISSUE: HUMAN RIGHTS IN PERU

Content: The situation of repression in Peru has spiraled over the past weeks with over 55 dead and thousands injured mostly at the hands of government security forces of President Dina Boluarte. The letter asks Congress and Pres. Biden asking for the suspension of U.S. security assistance to Peru until the violent repression against protesters ends and human rights violations are addressed.

Sent to: President Biden and Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Note: Peru Province Leader contacted for approval to submit.

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

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS and Fran Eskin Royer

ISSUE: LIFT SANCTIONS ON SYRIA TO ASSIST FACILITATING EARTHQUAKE RESPONE

Content: Letter urging the United States lift sanctions on Syria and expedite humanitarian assistance to facilitate earthquake response.

Early on the morning of February 6, the region surrounding Gaziantep in Southern Türkiye was hit with a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, followed by a second earthquake nine hours later with a magnitude of 7.5. Since then, there have been well over a hundred aftershocks, with many more expected in the coming weeks and months. As of February 17, over 40,000 Syrians, Turks, and Kurds are known to have perished and around 26 million persons have been affected by the earthquakes. The Türkiye-Syrian border has been home to many displaced Syrians since the beginning of the Syrian war on March 15, 2011. Sanctions and their collateral effects have already caused Syrians dire harm. The recent earthquakes will surely compound humanitarian needs in [Syria](#), and U.S. sanctions will continue to inhibit our work with our Syrian counterparts. Therefore, we as a community ask you to act immediately to:

- **Lift sanctions** in order to expedite aid delivery, open commercial access, and expand relief services to civilians in need.
- **Remove the 180-day sunset** on the new General License for Syria.
- **Extend applicability** for the newly adopted [Global General License](#) for material support in *all* of Syria.
- **Continue to communicate** with Syrian and UN counterparts during the earthquake response, and **work** to open new border crossings for personnel to access Northern Syria.
- **Issue letters of comfort** to financial institutions and aid organizations to help facilitate emergency assistance in Syria.
- **Coordinate** the opening of banking channels to help NGOs and INGOs get aid to where it is needed; *including* family remittances.

Appropriate additional funds to USAID and UN programs to support Türkiye and Syria through the earthquake response and recovery.

Sent to: The Biden Administration

Sponsored by: Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

BLASTS TO CONGRESS

Please take a stand for human rights in Peru: NAC shared a faith sign on letter with all members of Congress asking them to urge President Biden to immediately suspend U.S. security assistance to Peru until the violent repression there ends and human rights violations are addressed.

NAC sent a **welcome letter** to members of the 118th Congress, **introducing the organization**, sharing the NAC video, and calling their attention to the Superbowl and its connection to human trafficking and domestic violence.

NAC shared an **invitation with Congress to an online briefing: “The War in Ukraine: Impact of Nonviolent Resistance and U.S. Policy Implications”** organized by a WISC working group.

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

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS and Fran Eskin Royer

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY REFLECTION

- What We Accomplished in 2022 – TOGETHER
- The Work of NAC: Black History Month and Black Maternal Morbidity

PRESS RELEASE

- Remembering Survivors and Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence All Year Round

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES IN WHICH NAC PARTICIPATED:

- Brought RGS sisters working on the ground with immigrants and / or trafficked persons into conversation with those of us organizing the FADICA Grant (focused on bringing the expert voices of women religious to policy makers about the intersection between immigration and human trafficking); met with Good Shepherd sisters and lay partners about their work in Latin America, Nepal and India, and Africa.
- Participation in interfaith rally at the White House speaking out against the asylum ban