

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: July & August 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 are 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: TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS (TPS)

Content: DHS extended but did not redesignate, TPS for El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Nepal. While this was necessary to resolve the status of the current TPS holders, the letter calls boldly on the DHS and the administration to redesignate TPS for each of these countries. also urges them to make the findings necessary to designate or redesignate TPS for all other countries that qualify under the statute, including Guatemala and Venezuela.

Sent to: Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Sponsored by: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- Also, US Policy that effects Good Shepherd Mission worldwide

ISSUE: MIGRATION + REFUGEE FUNDING

Content: Two separate letters urging House and Senate SFOPs Appropriations leadership to safeguard and invest in critical funding for migration, peacebuilding, human rights, humanitarian aid, foreign climate aid, poverty-focused development assistance and related accounts. These letter was prompted by the dramatic cuts proposed in the House SFOPs subcommittee markup.

Sent to: The letter to the House letter is addressed to Chairman Coons and Vice Chair Graham, urging they reject the House proposal. The letter to the Senate while a slightly different version (is addressed to Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee urging they reconsider their proposals).

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: ASYLUM BAN

Content: Letter following asylum ban court decision, urging the Biden administration to end the asylum ban and redouble your focus on effective, humane, and legal solutions, including to: strengthen and provide equitable access to your administration's parole initiatives; fully restore asylum processing capacity at ports of entry including for people who do not have CBP One appointments; end the practice of subjecting individuals to fear screenings while in CBP custody; work with Congress to adequately fund immigration court and USCIS asylum adjudications as well as reception efforts in U.S. communities; and improve your asylum processing rule by eliminating counterproductive unworkable deadlines.

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Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

ISSUE: TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS (TSP) SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF (SSR) FOR PAKISTAN

Content: Request to the Biden Administration to promptly designate Pakistan for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Special Student Relief (SSR). Our request comes as recent terror threats have taken the lives of dozens of individuals. A designation is warranted in light of the unstable and insecure conditions in the country, including deteriorating infrastructure and growing security threats. These conditions are exacerbated due to the political instability and upcoming elections in the country. The call is to use the tools provided by Congress to protect human life by designating Pakistan for TPS and SSR.

Sent to: President Biden and Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Sponsored by: Church World Service Global

NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Economics

ISSUE: INSULIN POLICIES

Content: The letter calls on Senator Schumer to advance insulin legislation that will provide affordable and accessible insulin to everyone. Any proposed legislation needs to include those who do not have insurance in addition to those who are privately insured. It must lower the list price of insulin, and must stop anti-competitive abuses by drug corporations and middlemen that stifle potential savings from lower-priced insulins and put patients' lives at risk.

Sent to: Senator Schumer

Sponsored by: International USA and Public Citizen

ISSUE: CORPORATE TAX GIVEAWAYS

Content: Letter urging Congress to vote NO on the package of Republican tax proposals—H.R. 3936, H.R. 3937, H.R. 3938—when they are brought to the House floor for a vote. Like the original Trump-GOP tax cuts in 2017, the Ways and Means-reported package (tax cuts “2.0” version) is overwhelmingly tilted toward the ultra-wealthy, billion-dollar corporations, and foreign investors while providing little help for low- and middle-income Americans and rolling back progress on addressing climate change.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Americans for Tax Fairness

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NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Economics

ISSUE: FARM BILL

Content: This massive farm bill, up for consideration every 5 years, has significant consequences for many aspects of American life, including anti-hunger programs, conservation and environmental stewardship, support for farmers and producers, and investment in rural communities

Sent to: Hon. Debbie Stabenow Chairwoman and Hon. John Boozman, Ranking Member Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Hon. Glenn Thompson, Chairman and Hon. David Scott, Ranking Members House Committee on Agriculture

Sponsored by: MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

ISSUE: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Content: Along with colleagues in organizations dedicated to promoting gender justice and working to ensure all women, LGBTQI+ people, and their families can live their lives with dignity, we wrote to urge lawmakers to use the Farm Bill to strengthen and expand the), and to make investments that advance family economic security and health.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Women's Law Center

ISSUE: CALL TO CONGRESS TO AVOID A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Content: Letter urging Congress to fulfil its most basic duty: to keep the government running. Congress must pass a clean bipartisan, bicameral continuing resolution (CR) including emergency funding that supports current services and addresses urgent needs and is free of poison pill policy riders that are harmful and irrelevant to the functions of government.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Violence

ISSUE: VIOLENCE INTERRUPTER

Content: Letter of support of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriation of \$50 million toward the Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVI). We further support the dedication of \$20 million specifically to the violence interrupters in the committee's report language.

Our nation has unsuccessfully tried to incarcerate our way out of this problem. Looking at 2020 figures, Baltimore, MD spends the fourth highest on police per capita in the nation at \$798 per person. Nevertheless, on July 2, 2023, a Baltimore block party was the site of the 337th mass shooting this year. This demonstrates the need for additional and better solutions, reaching to the root of the problem and involving active engagement of the impacted communities. **Violence**

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Interrupters are the exact individuals who are able to perform this role. Violence interrupters work independent of police because they usually operate in neighborhoods that have a deep and decades-long mistrust of government.

Sent to: Senator Chris Van Hollen, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: HOUSE+SENATE APPROPRIATIONS LETTERS ON IRS (Two separate Letters)

Content: The letters oppose all harmful riders and especially the one that blocks IRS free simplified filing and also urges full funding for the IRS (including reversing the funding that was cut as part of the debt ceiling deal.)

Sent to: Separate letters to House and Senate

Sponsored by: Economic Security Project Action

ISSUE: SSI SAVINGS PENALTY ELIMINATION ACT

Content: The bill would raise the SSI asset limits (which have been stuck at \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 for a couple since 1989!) to \$10,000 per individual/\$20,000 per couple, and adjust the levels automatically with inflation each year. This proposal is critical for improving financial security for people with disabilities. It is a bi-partisan, bi- camera! The Senate leads are Senators Brown and Cassidy, and the House leads are Representatives Higgins and Fitzpatrick.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: The Arc: For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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

ISSUE: HUMAN RIGHTS RESPONSE TO KILLING OF PROTESTORS IN PERU (2 letters)

Content: Letter to the US ambassador to Peru in advance of a big protest there and at the request of Maryknoll missionaries in Peru. They are calling on respect for the human rights of protestors, given the tragic killing of some 50 of them, mostly Indigenous, at protests in Jan and Feb. Similar letter was address to Pres. Biden and Congress 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: Ambassador Lisa Kenna, President Biden and Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NOTE: Sr. Marlene, RGS of Peru was contacted to see if our signing on would harm the Sisters and Partners in Mission in Peru. She said it was important to proceed with these letters.

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ISSUE: FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Content: Letter urging congress to support the Senate provisions of the FY24 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that provide aid to support the consolidation of peace, the improvement of human rights, and the well-being of those who have suffered the cruel impact of war in Columbia. The letter also urges the conferees not to retain section 7045 (e) that could potentially bar Title III assistance to many countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and other parts of the world.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Latin American Working Group.

NAC FOCUS AREA: *Other Related Areas*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

ISSUE: THE RESTORE ACT

Content: The RESTORE Act would lift the lifetime ban on persons convicted of drug felony offenses from receiving aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It would also enable states to enroll people 30 days prior to their release from prison to help ease the process of returning to their community. Finally, it would enable access to the SNAP Education and Training program to provide vocational help to returning citizens.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Council of Churches

ISSUE: END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ACT (ESCA)

Content: The *End Solitary Confinement Act* (ESCA) prohibits the use of solitary confinement in federal prisons, jails and other detention settings with limited exceptions, including a 4-hour maximum for emergency de-escalation, and creates safe alternatives to a common U.S. practice understood across the world as a form of torture. It will be presented by Rep. Cori Bush (D) - Missouri

Sent to: Members of the House

Sponsored by: National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)

ENVIRONMENT

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCE

Content: Letter to House appropriators calling for them to restore the massive cuts made and to remove harmful provisions. The letter to House appropriators is in response to the House SFOPS bill released/marked up. The House SFOPS bill not only significantly cut the SFOPS topline (~30% below FY23, before rescissions are taken into account) but also included several provisions prohibiting funding for climate priorities (no funding to GCF or CTF, no counting other funding as having contributed to climate objectives).

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Sent to: House Appropriations Committee

Sponsored by: Climate Change & Sustainable Agriculture

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCE

Content: The letter urges appropriators to protect the overall SFOPS amount and specifically international climate finance. This letter makes reference to the House bill. The letter is also in advance of the Senate SFOPS mark-up expected to take place in mid-July..

Sent to: Senate Appropriations Committee

Sponsored by: Climate Change & Sustainable Agriculture

ACTION ALERTS (Invitation from NAC to Constituents (Sisters, Partners in Mission, GS Agencies, and Friends) to email their members of Congress or the Administration using pre-formatted letters through NAC's advocacy software. Occasionally NAC advocates are asked to issue a public comment to the Administration, sign a petition, or make phone calls to their legislators. Alternatively, advocates are provided information on a cogent social justice issue or event.

- **WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING ALERT**

On World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (July 30), human trafficking organizations raise awareness of trends and help combat trafficking by calling on governments, law enforcement, and society to strengthen efforts to prevent this evil, and to provide for and protect its victims.

The U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (NAC) are lead a months-long journey of listening, analysis, and action to address the dangerous nexus between human trafficking and forced migration.

Action Alert invited NAC network (Sister/Agencies/Friends) to urge Senators and Representative to consider the best ways to protect migrants vulnerable to the threat of human trafficking; and, to join the Tweetstorm on Twitter on Friday, July 28 at 1:00 pm EDT **Hashtag: #EndHumanTrafficking in #Migration

- **2023 FARM BILL AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

The 2023 Farm Bill offers a "last chance" legislative opportunity to lower emissions in the agriculture sector. It is imperative that the 2023 Farm Bill be a climate bill. The Farm Bill is reauthorized once every five years. It will not be considered again until 2028. Taking the right action now could result in the transformational change essential for a sustainable, equitable world. It also could help reduce the negative impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable in the United States. **Alert invited NAC network** to urge members of Congress to aggressively address climate change in the 2023 Farm Bill.

- **OUR CHILDREN DESERVE AN EXPANDED AND FULLY REFUNDABLE CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC)**

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The impact of child poverty is life-long and intergenerational. With all that our nation celebrates and lauds, it is inexcusable that a fully refundable and expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) is not on the list. The expanded and fully refundable CTC is a proven way to address some of our nation's most pressing challenges, including rising costs, childcare expenses, and child poverty. **Alert invited NAC network** to urge Congress to reinstate an expanded and fully refundable CTC.

- **MOM'S EQUAL PAY DAY**

August 15 is known as Moms' Equal Pay Day. It marks the fact that moms of all races and ethnicities must work until August 15 of 2023 to earn what dads made in 2022 alone. **Alert invited NAC network** to urge Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to modernize and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to better combat pay discrimination and close the wage gap, including by protecting workers from retaliation for discussing pay, banning the use of prior salary history, and codifying pay data collection. According to the National Partnership for Woman and Families, in the United States, mothers are breadwinners in 40% of families with kids under 18 each year – and 70% of them will be the primary earner at some point in their first 18 years of motherhood.

BLASTS TO CONGRESS

In blasts, NAC directly emails Congressional offices or committees, targeting those staff members responsible for the issue of note.

PEPFAR NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Interfaith Letter to members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee urging reauthorization of PEPFAR, the U.S. global health initiative dedicated to controlling HIV and AIDs; signed by 44 national and international faith-based organizations..

WE ALL WANT A MORAL BUDGET

Letter from NAC to Appropriations staff and Tax staff in the House and Senate urging them to tell Congressional leadership to reject any further efforts to cut assistance from people with low incomes; in particular, prioritize human needs investments in annual appropriations bills; focus on tax fairness by increasing revenues for wealthy and corporations and again expanding the Child Tax Credit.

INVITATION TO BRIEFING ON IMF Special Drawing Rights (NAC Co-Sponsor)

Invitation to Financial Services and Foreign Relations staff in House and Senate to a timely virtual briefing on Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), a vital resource established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that can help stabilize the global economy and protect U.S. jobs. The Sept. 7 briefing will address global economic risks and advocate for the Biden administration's support of a new SDR issuance. We also will present an opportunity for congressional leadership.

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AMICUS BRIEF

U.S. V RAHIM

Letter asking Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) to overturn the 5th circuit decision that 18 U.S.C. section 922 (G)(8) is unconstitutional. In *Rahimi*, the 5th circuit held that it was unconstitutional for an abuser with a qualifying restraining order (i.e. that order must include a specific finding that the defendant represents a credible threat to the physical safety of the victim **or** by its terms explicitly prohibit the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury) to be prohibited from accessing firearms. The questions presented in the case are: Whether it is unconstitutional to prohibit a domestic violence abuser who is subject to the qualifying restraining order to: 1) own, buy, sell or transfer a firearm or ammunition and 2) whether the abuser should automatically fail a federal background check when trying to purchase a firearm.

Sponsored by: Jewish Women International

STATEMENTS

RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.

The resolution **acknowledges that health care disparities have existed in America for centuries, and how those disparities are being magnified and exacerbated.** The downstream impacts of systemic racism continue to affect the health and wellness of communities of color, resulting in shorter life expectancy, worsened health outcomes, and enhanced exposure to harmful or dangerous environments. A public health crisis declaration helps to define racism as a pervasive health issue and alerts the nation that the status quo is unsustainable and government must act immediately to address the root causes of systemic racism.

OTHER ADVOCACY / LOBBYING ACTIVITIES:

Reports

Completed Biannual Lobbying Contributions Report

Completed Q2 Lobbying Report

Coalition Work:

NUNS AGAINST VIOLENCE (NEW COALITION)

Nuns Against Gun Violence is a coalition of Catholic Sisters and their allies that affirms the value of human life through prayer, education, and advocacy for common sense, evidence-based, gun violence prevention.

Regular coalition meetings: Coalition on Human Needs (weekly), DC Catholic Coalition Meeting (monthly), EAD Leadership Team (monthly), Faiths United Against Gun Violence (monthly), Farm Bill Meetings (monthly), Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual

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Violence (monthly), Interfaith Immigration Coalition (weekly), Jubilee USA meeting (monthly), Justice for Immigrants (monthly), Washington Interfaith Staff Community and Heads of Washington Office meeting (monthly)

Human Trafficking / Forced Migration Grant Work:

Work in policy development (phase 2) Weekly meetings; in addition, conducted interviews with policy experts on forced migration and/or human trafficking in anticipation of Sept. 8 Policy Meeting; interviewed 1) staff in Rep. Raskin's office, 2) staff for House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 3) Survivor Evelyn Chumbow, 4) NETWORK staff. Half-day strategy session. Initial prep for USCSAHT Conf presentation.

Attended:

- **Child Labor Coalition Strategy Session focused on uptick in child labor in the U.S.**
 - **Joined and met with policy subcommittee**
- **The Farm Bill and Children's Health Webinar**
- **CHN Hero Award Reception honoring Sr. Richelle Friedman (NAC was co-sponsor)**
- **March on Washington (60th Anniversary)**

Capitol Hill Visits:

Met with staff in Rep. Miller Meeks office re: tentative bill that would provide tax relief for pregnant moms.

GOOD SHEPHERD COMMUNITY BUILDING

NAMV Team: July Reflection

Picnic celebrating NAC Angers Pilgrimage Participants with former pilgrims from Good Shepherd Center and NAC.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NAC ACTIVITIES

Met with NAC Exec Committee to discuss filling Policy Advocate Position

- Updated Job Description, set up ZIP Recruiter account and began promoting open position