

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: May 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: OPPOSE BORDER WALL AND REMEDIATE HARMS IN FINAL FY24 APPROPRIATIONS

Content: The letter asks appropriators to:

1. Rescind all remaining funding for border wall and reject any proposals for new funding;
2. Include language transferring at least \$225 M from the Department of Homeland Security to the land management agencies for mitigation from damage by wall construction as requested by the president; and
3. Ensure development of a robust remediation plan.

Sent to: Chair and Ranking Members of the Appropriation and Homeland Security committees of the Senate and House.

Sponsored by: Defenders of Wildlife,

ISSUE: OPPOSING H.R. 2 SECURE THE BORDER ACT OF 2023

Content: Catholic organizations that serve immigrants and asylum seekers, sent a letter to Congressman Garcia asking him to VOTE NO on H.R. 2 Secure the Border Act of 2023. The opposition to the bill is because it will criminalize immigrant children and their families, and it will harm faith-based organizations and our ability to serve their communities. The letter calls on him to oppose racist, xenophobic, unconstructive proposals that add fuel to hate and present no constructive and moral solutions.

Sent to: Congressman Robert Garcia (Democrat – California 16th District)

Sponsored by: Catholic Organizations include NAC, Network, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Maryknoll, etc.

Also: Racism and Xenophobia

ISSUE: OPPOSE PUBLIC CHARGE - CONGRESSIONAL RULE ACT (CRA) VOTE

Content: Public charge was used by the Trump administration to make immigrants afraid of going to the doctor or getting food aid. Its effects as a de-facto wealth test for those seeking to adjust

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their immigration status or apply for a green card were particularly disastrous leading up to the pandemic. NAC participated in opposing the Trump rule is again opposing this attempt to overturn President Biden's rule.

Sent to: House Minority Leader Jeffries and Senate Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Jeffries

Sponsored by: National Immigration Law Center

ISSUE: ENACT LIFT THE BAR ACT

Content: Asking Congress to eliminate eligibility restrictions and barriers to safety net access based on immigration status. As an important first step, we call on Congress to repeal the so-called "5-year bar" by quickly enacting the Lifting Immigrant Families Through Benefits Access Restoration (LIFT the BAR) Act and reject any efforts to impose new restrictions on immigrant access to benefits.

Sent to: House Minority Leader Jeffries and Senate Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Jeffries

Sponsored by: National Immigration Law Center

NAC FOCUS AREA: Poverty/Economics

ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC PROGRAMS

Content: The letter has a simple message: No cuts to domestic programs. It calls for a range of support from affordable housing to job training to childcare to WIC to meals for older people to mental health/substance use disorder treatment to education to protections for workers and for people with disabilities and against discrimination to public health to medical research, etc.

Sent to: Speaker McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Needs (authored by NDD United)

NAC FOCUS AREA: Family including Mental Health and Violence

ISSUE: INCREASED FUNDING TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE

Content: Letter urging Congress to increase funding for federal programs that address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Domestic and sexual violence are life-threatening, pervasive crimes that affect millions of people every day. We implore you to build upon our nation's progress in addressing these crimes by providing incredibly needed investments in the FY 2024 funding.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)

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

ISSUE: HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Content: Letter in support of our call for peace and justice in the Philippines, and to urge President Biden to end U.S. military aid to the Philippines by passing the Philippine Human Rights Act.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Pax Christi USA

ISSUE: GLOBAL VOICES FREEDOM ACT

Content: This legislation would require the U.S. government and its embassies to take a more strategic, all-of-government approach to protecting human rights defenders at risk. The goal is to ensure that protection of human rights defenders becomes a priority for U.S. embassies and is integrated into a wider range of U.S. foreign policy decisions involving security assistance, economic diplomacy, and development.

NAC FOCUS AREA: Other Related Areas/Current Events

RACISM

ISSUE: REPARATION PROPOSALS

Content: The letter endorses the historic work of the *CA Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-American Who Are Descendants of those Enslaved in the United States*.

The California State Legislature and the California governor formed the nine-member Task Force in 2020 after the brutal murder of George Floyd (Assembly Bill 3121). The Task Force - *the first in the nation* – was commissioned to pursue a 3-part mandate to:

- research/study the history and harm of slavery in California;
- educate the public and elected leaders about its findings; and
- explore a wide range of potential reparations as defined by international law.

Their work is already bearing fruit, forging new ties across race, class, culture, and religion.

Sent to: The Task Force to include our endorsement in future communications on this concern

Sponsored by: Sisters of Mercy of the America's

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ACTION ALERTS:

HELP TURN SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

- An advocacy action to limit ballooning military spending and prioritize the needs of people.

THE CRUX OF THE NATIONAL DEBT LIMIT CRISIS

- An advocacy action to tell your representative in Congress to increase the national debt limit without cutting social services

EDUCATION: Invitation to our virtual briefing on the intersection of human trafficking and migration, *“Forced Migration and the Threat of Human Trafficking.”* This free, one-hour, online briefing will be held on Wednesday, June 14 at 2:00 p.m. EDT.

BLASTS TO CONGRESS:

Please co-sponsor Black Maternal Health (Momnibus) Legislation: The U.S. maternal mortality crisis, especially among Black Americans, requires urgent attention and action. The fact that the U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among its peer countries is unconscionable. Representative/Senator XXXXX can be part of the solution by supporting Momnibus legislation. The legislation provides proven means to end the disparities in care that Black people face when giving birth. Childbirth should not be a death sentence. We strongly encourage the Senator to support this important legislation. *(sent to Health LAs in the House and Senate)*

Please oppose H.R. 2 Secure the Border Act of 2023: H.R. 2 would criminalize immigrant children and their families, and it would harm faith-based organizations and our ability to serve their communities. *(sent to House Immigration LAs)*

Please protect critical anti-poverty programs: Shared sign-on letter from 30 faith organizations asking for protection of critical anti-poverty programs (e.g., food, healthcare, income supports and housing) in the debt ceiling negotiations. Letter was to at Pres Biden and Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy *(sent to Leg Directors in the House and Senate)*.

June 14 webinar promotion “Forced Migration and the Threat of Human Trafficking” *(sent to House and Senate Foreign Policy and Immigration LAs, AND staff of the following committees: Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senate HELP Committee, Senate Homeland Security Committee, House Foreign Affairs Committee, House Homeland Security Committee, House, Education and Workforce Committee)*

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STATEMENTS:

IMMIGRATION: TITLE 42

As the Biden Administration prepares for the long overdue end of the Title 42 expulsion policy at the border, reports suggest they are planning to increase the use of immigration detention for arriving asylum seekers.

A newly convened gathering of organizations (including NAC) advocating against immigration detention and for humane immigration policies and community investments prepared or signed on to an open statement to the Biden Administration urging them not to jail asylum seekers and migrants as a response to the end of Title 42 and VOTE NO TO H.R.2

Circulated by: NETWORK

NAC also issued its own [brief statement](#) in response to the end of Title 42

OTHER ADVOCACY / LOBBYING ACTIVITIES:

Establishing relationship with Child Labor Coalition (effort of the National Consumers League) to respond to growing concerns about child labor violations in the U.S.

Regular coalition meetings: Coalition on Human Needs (weekly), DC Catholic Coalition Meeting (monthly), Justice for Immigrants (monthly), Ecumenical Advocacy Days Leadership Team (bi-weekly), Jubilee USA meeting (monthly), Washington Interfaith Staff Community and Heads of Washington Office meeting (monthly), Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (monthly), Interfaith Immigration Coalition (weekly), Farm Bill Meetings (monthly), Coalition of the Willing Meeting - Saving Medicaid, SNAP (monthly)

The Faith Community and **Sen. Jerry Moran** (KS) on Violence Interrupters & Reentry Meeting

Weekly Human Trafficking / Forced Migration Grant Meeting work in lead up to June 14 webinar (phase 1 of 3)

Attended:

- **Senate H.E.L.P. (Health, Education, Labor & Pensions) Committee Hearing:** A Crisis in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Care: Closing Gaps in Access by Bringing Care and Prevention to Communities
- **Senate Finance Committee** Subcommittee Hearing on Health Care
- **Coalition meeting with staffer of Rep. Yadira Caraveo** (CO) to discuss the RESTORE (Re-Entry Support Through Opportunities for Resources and Essentials) Act that would

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repeal the ban on SNAP benefits for people with prior felony drug convictions, allowing them to apply for food assistance 30 days before being released.

- **Meeting with Sojourners:** A Faithful Budget: Defending the Social Safety Net Infrastructure
- **Meeting on The End of Title 42:** What This Means for Seeking Asylum at the U.S.-Mexico Border

Arranged for Sister Carol Pregno, a West Virginia resident, to participate in a constituent meeting with staffer of Senator Joe Manchin regarding debt ceiling

Engagement with Good Shepherd Services NY on NY Debt Relief Bill advocacy: The New York Taxpayer and International Debt Crises Protection Act (A2970/S4747) would require predatory “vulture” funds and private lenders to participate in debt relief for developing countries. This is the first global debt relief bill to move in the NY legislature in almost 20 years (cleared Judiciary Committee of the Assembly with bipartisan vote). *Jubilee USA-led effort.*

GOOD SHEPHERD COMMUNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Engagement in pre-meeting work and meeting with the **Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Congregational Leadership Team (PIM online participation in Carrollton meeting),**

Work with the “**Collaborate / Amplify for Social Justice**” PMNA Mission Statement Subgroup

North American Mission & Values Reflection (monthly)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NAC ACTIVITIES

QuickBooks Online training/troubleshooting (ongoing)