

# NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: November 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: IMMIGRATION POLICY HARMS**

Content: Letter on Opposing Immigration Policy Harms. It opposed the harmful funding and policy proposals that would harm immigrant communities—especially asylum seekers. Democrats and the White House seem to be actively considering accepting immigration restrictions in exchange for Republicans' being willing to pass basic funding legislation.

Sent to: President Biden; cc to: cc: Hon. Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States Hon. Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, Hon. General Merrick Garland, Attorney General, Department of Justice, Hon. Antony Blinken, Secretary, Department of State, Jeffrey Zients, White House Chief of Staff, Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor, Neera Tanden, Director, Domestic Policy Council

Sponsored by: National Immigration Law Center

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

#### **ISSUE: BIPARTISAN CONTINUOUS SPENDING TO INCLUDE EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR URGENT DOMESTIC NEEDS**

Content: Letter telling Congress to fulfill its most basic duty: to keep essential government services running. Congress must pass a bipartisan, bicameral continuing resolution (CR) including emergency funding to address urgent domestic funding needs including nutrition services such as WIC, child care, energy assistance, the substance use crisis, disaster relief, broadband access, and other critical priorities. We urge Congress to include the Administration's domestic anomalies and supplemental requests in the next CR. It is imperative that these emergencies receive the aid needed without being subject to any caps or offsets.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Need (NAC is a member organization)

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## **ISSUE: LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO SOCIAL SECURITY DEBT COMMISSION**

Content: The letter to Congress opposes the formation of a debt commission, which has been promoted during the ongoing debate around government funding. *The White House has accurately described such a commission as a "death panel" for Social Security.*

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Social Security Works, Org

## **ISSUE: MORAL IMPERATIVE TO END CHILD POVERTY**

Content: Letter to Members of Congress indicating that the Child Tax Credit has a proven, transformative impact on the lives of children and working families, and we call for its inclusion in any moving tax package. The letter insists that Congress not provide any tax relief to corporations without expanding the Child Tax Credit and to support a larger, monthly, fully refundable Child Tax Credit. Concern expressed about the 19 million children in low-income families who do not receive the full credit because their families do not earn enough money.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

## **ISSUE: CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT (CRA)**

Content: Letter opposing a Congressional Review Act (CRA) challenge to the recently published National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Joint Employer rule. Labor-intensive and underpaid industries like retail, hospitality, fast food, janitorial, construction, and delivery, millions of workers hired through intermediary subcontractors like staffing agencies and specialized contract firms are effectively deprived of their labor rights because the law fails to recognize who their employers are. The new rule reaffirms that a worker may be jointly employed and recognizes that employers who violate the labor rights through deceptive subcontracting schemes can no longer evade their responsibilities to their workers under the NLRA. Industry trade groups and large corporations are right now lobbying Congress to support a CRA challenge to overturn this critical rule. The letter urges Members of Congress to oppose a CRA in order to safeguard jointly employed worker's rights to negotiate for better working conditions, higher pay, and benefits under this rule.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Employment Law Project

## **ISSUE: TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)**

Content: This sign-on letter is in support of the Department of Health and Human Service's notice of proposed rulemaking entitled "Strengthening Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a Safety Net and Work Program." This proposed rule would make positive steps in the TANF program by enforcing rules to focus TANF spending on areas reasonably related to program purposes and towards families with lower incomes, and by eliminating the third-party maintenance of effort (MOE) spending option.

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Sent to: Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services

Sponsored by: CLASP, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Shriver Center on Poverty Law

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

### **ISSUE: TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Content: Letter to the Biden Administration in support of Temporary Protective Status for the Democratic Republic of Congo

Sent to: Biden Administration

Sponsored by: Interfaith Immigration Coalition

### **ISSUE: US INDONESIAN CRITICAL MINERALS AGREEMENT**

Content: A US- Indonesian critical minerals agreement without any environmental or social safeguards would be seriously concerning as it would be a green light to continue business as usual for an industry that is destroying forests, violating the rights of indigenous and local communities and poisoning communities.

Our letter adds to a growing chorus. Two weeks ago a *bipartisan* group of senators sent a letter to the Biden Administration raising concerns around labor, environment and community engagement, along with Chinese dominance of the sector. Earlier this summer labor, trade and environmental groups submitted comments to Treasury on EV tax credit implementation. Colleagues in Indonesia are working on their own letter to the Biden Administration.

Sent to: President Biden, cc: Ambassador Tai, Secretary Granholm, Secretary Raimondo and Secretary Yellen

Sponsored by: Public Citizen, Mighty Earth, Earthworks and ETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

- Also, Environmental Degradation

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

### **ISSUE: RACISM**

Content: a Stanford University study earlier this year found that Black taxpayers are audited at 3 to 5 times the rate of non-Black taxpayers. IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel has announced the agency is taking a number of steps before next tax filing season to address disparities—including

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re-focusing IRS enforcement efforts on wealthier individuals and corporations that are the largest source of the tax gap.

The changes the IRS is implementing are critically important, but more needs to be done to ensure that racial disparities are fully redressed and do not occur in the future. In particular, the agency should commit to regularly reporting on disparities moving forward, and to further disaggregating data by race/ethnicity, to ensure we have the information necessary to address any problematic practices as they arise. For more information about this problem and proposed solutions, see CSSP's recent blog post and the recommendations from the Treasury Advisory Committee on Racial Equity released earlier this year. The Letter is addressed to the IRS Commissioner asking him to address issues caused by racial disparities in audits.

Sent to: Daniel Werfel, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service

Sponsored by: Center for the Study of Social Policy

**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. Additionally, advocates are provided information on a cogent social justice issue or event.**

## **ACTION ALERTS (Education)**

- **Information sharing about NAC's** working from different angles and with different collaborative partners, such as The Alliance to End Human Trafficking (AEHT) (formerly U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking) in our commitment to making immigrants safer from the threat of human trafficking (Two bills: **the International Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023 (S. 920)** and **the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 5856)** which included working on provisions of anti-trafficking legislation while addressing the root causes of forced migration.

Another aspect is Rapid Work Authorizations for asylum seekers (H.R. 1325). Bundled into the package use by NAC and others for lobbying includes the **Passage of the Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023 (S. 3178, H.R. 6145)**. The bill would assist and protect unaccompanied children, including those in need of protection from trafficking, as they navigate the complex U.S. immigration system.

## **ACTION ALERTS (Call for Action)**

- Action to ensure that 600.000 mothers, babies and young children in need don't lose critical food assistance through the Special supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Introduction of advocacy campaign for Human Trafficking / Forced Migration grant

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## BLASTS TO CONGRESS

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

- Blasted to House and Senate Immigration LAs and Foreign Policy LAs Press Release launching advocacy campaign around human trafficking and forced migration nexus, highlighting Nov. 6 advocacy visits by NAC and AEHT leadership, and introduction of Children's Court Act

## AMICUS BRIEF

### U.S. vs. RAHIMI

Monitored Nov. 7 Supreme Court hearing of U.S. vs. Rahimi which considers the right of domestic abusers with a restraining order issued against them to possess a gun. Decision expected in June or July 2024.

## STATEMENTS

**ISSUED NOV 1 PRESS RELEASE promoting introduction of Children's Court Bill and highlighting all three priorities of Human Trafficking / Forced Migration Advocacy Campaign**

**QUOTE for Interfaith Immigration Coalition Statement opposing New Texas immigration Bills:** "The face of God is who we see as each migrant and asylum seeker crosses dangerous lands in search of safety and comfort to reach our country. Texas' new group of anti-immigrant bills is extreme and likely unconstitutional. People have the right to migrate and the right to be treated with dignity. The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants who have enriched and advanced our communities. Governor Abbott is expected very soon to sign these new bills into Texas law. They are not the answer and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd calls on the Biden Administration to immediately challenge these laws in court," said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

**QUOTE for Interfaith Immigration Coalition Statement re: Senate Negotiations:** "Members of the United States Senate not only represent their constituents, they represent American values and the American experience. Few of us are indigenous; most of us came or are descendants of those who came from another country in search of safety and a better life, and then contributed to a better life for all. With ties to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, an international religious congregation, the National Advocacy Center knows well the need for the legal right to seek asylum - we have sisters, lay partners and programs in 72 countries that help those in need. We call on senators to oppose anti-asylum restrictions and poison pill amendments to President Biden's supplemental funding request," said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

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## 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.

Sponsored by: Center for the Study of Social Policy

## CLIMATE CHANGE

In advance of COP28, organizations around the world are calling on world leaders to take immediate action to provide countries in the Global South with the resources that they need to meet their climate and development needs through the use of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), a cost-free, debt-free, condition-free alternative financing tool.

Sponsored by: Center for Economic and Policy Research

## SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS MUST URGENTLY BE PART OF THE COP 28 AGENDA

Statement to leaders gathering in COP28 to ask that they agree to the full deployment of new and existing Special Drawing Rights to help low- and middle-income countries meet the Paris Climate Agreement and Sustainable Development Goal agendas.

The climate crisis is already here, hitting the planet hard and imposing the heaviest toll on those more exposed to vulnerabilities and inequalities in the Global South. While debt servicing already exceeds climate spending in 9 out of 10 developing countries, 72% of climate finance is provided to them through additional loans.

Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) are an international reserve asset that the IMF can issue to complement the official reserves of its member countries. SDRs are not loans, they are not debt, and they do not have to be repaid to the IMF. Holders incur only an annual interest rate if they reduce SDR holdings vis-à-vis their cumulative SDR allocation by exchanging them for hard currency. They also do not cost anything to issue.

Sponsored by: Latindadd (Network of Latin Americans for Economic and Social Justice (requested NAC and other USA Catholic Advocacy Organizations to join them

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## OTHER ADVOCACY / LOBBYING ACTIVITIES:

**Co-sponsored November 2 Catholic / Christian Pray-In** near Lafayette Park outside the White House to call on President Joe Biden, a Catholic, to abide by Jesus's way of courageous love and heed Pope Francis's plea to take the side of peace, and urge all parties to **de-escalate hostilities; abide by an immediate ceasefire; and release all hostages.**

**Held November 6 Advocacy Day for leadership of NAC and AEHT on Human Trafficking / Forced Migration Grant.** NAC and AEHT representatives met with their Senators and Representatives about the three advocacy priorities:

- 1) TVPRA (HR 5856) / ITVPRA (S 920) passage with provisions that address root causes of trafficking and allow migrants to stay safely in home countries, avoiding making treacherous journey to U.S.
- 2) support for H.R. 1325 that would reduce wait time of migrants for work permits, making them less vulnerable to traffickers;
- 3) Immigration Court Efficiency Act and Children's Court Act (introduction pending in House and Senate) that would create a child-friendly court for unaccompanied minors, and lead to better protection for these children from exploitation and abuse,

**NAC Endorsed HR 586, Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act which passed the House with strong bipartisan support.**

**Reports:** Helped prepare and submit full **Form 990 for National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Inc.**, in conjunction with John C. Wash, CPA

**Coalition Work:** Campaign to End U.S. Child Labor (periodic), Coalition on Human Needs (weekly), Domestic Human Needs (Weekly / periodic participation), EAD Leadership Team (monthly) and EAD Subcommittee focused on 2024 Placeholder Event (periodic), Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Ecumenical Advocacy Days Leadership Team (monthly), Faiths United Against Gun Violence (monthly), Interfaith Immigration Coalition (periodic participation), Jubilee USA meeting (monthly), Washington Interfaith Staff Community and Heads of Washington Office meeting (monthly)

- **Attended WISC Press Conference calling for a Moral Budget**

## GOOD SHEPHERD AGENCIES / COMMUNITY BUILDING:

Participated in Mission Partner Gathering in St. Louis, MO (11/3 to 11/5)

Took part in Cristogenesis talk held for pre-Novice and Formation Team

## OTHER SIGNIFICANT NAC ACTIVITIES:

Attended Jubilee USA's Annual Meeting

Participated in Gathering Voices Presentation on Israel/Palestine Dialog. Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA executive director Ariel Gold in conversation with Raja G. Khouri and Jeffrey J.

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Wilkinson, the authors of a groundbreaking book “The Wall Between: what Jews and Palestinians Don’t Want to Know About Each Other” that offers concrete ways for Jews and Palestinians to speak (and listen) differently to each other.

Attended JWI's Webinar on Story Telling and Gender-based Violence.

Watched “The Faith Voice at COP 28” Webinar

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Held Advisory Committee / Board Meeting Nov. 20, 2023