

# NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER (NAC) PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: September 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: COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE (CJS) APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

Content: The request is to strike section 559 of the Fiscal Year 2024 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill on grounds of unconstitutionally. It seeks to exclude undocumented immigrants from the congressional apportionment calculation after each census. This in turn will jeopardize the accuracy of the 2030 Census.

Sent to: Chairperson of House Appropriations Committees: Rep. Hall Rogers, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, and Rep. Matt Cartwright, Ranking Member

Sponsored by: The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC and NALEO Educational Fund

#### **ISSUE: END OPERATION LONE STAR**

Content: Call to President Biden and his administration to forcefully condemn Governor Abbott's cruel and inhumane treatment of migrants at the Texas-Mexico border, end any federal cooperation with the unlawful activities of the Texas Department of Public Safety, and use all available resources and authorities to take action against Operation Lone Star.

Sent to: President Biden and Attorney General Garland

Sponsored by: Church World Service

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

#### **ISSUE: CHILD POVERTY AND REDUCTION ACT**

Content: The Child Poverty Reduction Act would establish a national child poverty reduction target in the United States, setting an official goal to cut child poverty in half within a decade. Given that we are backsliding on the progress our nation made in significantly reducing child poverty in 2021, a target is critical to building the political will and accountability needed to not only regain, but build upon this past progress.

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Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: First Focus on Children

## **ISSUE: COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH LOW INCOMES A PRIORITY IN THE FARM BILL**

Content: The Enhance Access to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Act would no longer condition college students with low incomes eligibility on performing 20 hours of outside employment or work-study. This permanent law change is warranted and long overdue. College students with low incomes, including many students of color, often face a disproportionate number of barriers to even getting to college and deserve to be able to focus on their studies once they arrive. Removing these barriers will ensure more equitable SNAP access for college students with low incomes and better respond to their economic needs.

Sent to: House and Senate Ranking Members: Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott

Sponsored by: Food Research and Action Center

## **ISSUE: CARE FOR MOMS ACT**

Content: There is a late minute push this year to try and pass the “Care for Moms Act”, a bill sponsored by Rep. Robin Kelly to address some of the core Black Maternal health challenges. While not as comprehensive as other Momnibus bills, this one has a shot at passage. Significantly, it would require states to expand Medicaid for one year of postpartum coverage. Current law makes it optional.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: NETWORK

## **ISSUE: WIC FUNDING (Nutritional Supplement for Women, Infants & Children)**

Content: Letter urging Congress to include sufficient resources in a short-term Continuing Resolution to ensure that WIC can continue providing all eligible women, infants, and children who seek to participate with the full, science-based nutrition benefit. The letter also calls on Congress to fully fund WIC for fiscal year 2024 to sustain current benefits and increasing participation.

Sent to: Congressional Appropriators

Sponsored by: National WIC Association

## **ISSUE: FAITHFULLY FUND OUR GOVERNMENT (AVOID SHUTDOWN/ PASS CR WITHOUT HARMFUL IMMIGRANT PROVISIONS)**

Content: Congress must prioritize human needs in the annual FY24 appropriations bills and reject cuts to essential programs such as: the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); nutrition assistance for schools; early childhood programs; access to affordable housing; and, other programs that support thriving children, families, and communities. As Congress considers annual spending bills, we also urge you to invest in critical infrastructure to welcome newcomers, to reject unrestricted funding for border security and

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enforcement, and to oppose restrictions to humanitarian protection. [We also] need strong government funding to implement the Inflation Reduction Act's climate and public health programs to protect all people and our Sacred Earth.

- Also, Immigration, Environment

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC)

## **ISSUE: U.S. REPLENISHMENT PLEDGE TO GREEN CLIMATE FUND**

Content: The letter calls for the White House to make an ambitious pledge to the Green Climate Fund's second replenishment. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the world's largest multilateral fund dedicated to investing in developing countries to address the climate crisis. The GCF is also a lynchpin of the political bargain underpinning the Paris Agreement, and key developing country leaders have already underscored the stakes of a strong GCF replenishment. A US pledge is part of demonstrating global leadership, reinforcing our commitment to our partners, and preserving US standing in the world.

- Also, Environment

Sent to: Biden Administration

Sponsored by: INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCE COALITION

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

### **ISSUE: PROPOSED RULE ON MENTAL HEALTH PARITY**

Content: The letter supports parity enforcement related to mental health prior authorization requests, provider networks, and provider reimbursements. We also encourage the relevant agencies to take further steps to make mental health more affordable and accessible.

Sent to: Health & Human Services Commissioner Werfel, Administrator Brooks-LaSure, and Assistant Secretary Gomez

Sponsored by: Young Invincibles

## ***NAC FOCUS AREA: Other Related Areas***

### **VOTING RIGHTS**

#### **ISSUE: JOHN LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT**

Content: H.R. 14, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2023 bill seeks to restore and modernize the full protections of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965. The bill text is identical to the text introduced in the 117th Congress. The fight for voting rights is as urgent today as it was decades ago.

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Sent to: House of Representatives

Sponsored by: Terri Sewell, U.S. Congresswoman – Alabama 7<sup>th</sup> District

**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.**

- **ENSURE ADEQUATE WOMEN INFANT CHILDREN (WIC) FUNDING**

Message to the Senate urging them to provide an increased WIC funding level that ensures all 600,000 pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and toddlers in the richest country in the world get the crucial food aid they need.

- **URGE THE HOUSE TO PASS A BUDGET THAT PROTECTS THOSE MOST VULNERABLE**

Request to Members of the House to swiftly pass a budget that protects the most vulnerable, opposing any cuts in human needs spending above those already agreed to in the debt ceiling deal.

- **"IF YOU DO NOT SOUND THE ALARM WHEN NEEDED, YOU WILL BE JUSTLY CON-VICTED BY YOUR SILENCE."** (St. Mary Euphrasia, Conferences, p 3600:  
**Take action for families and immigrants, to avert a shutdown!**

Join NAC in urging Congress to immediately pass a clean Continuing Resolution (CR) – a resolution that would allow the government to continue operations. We want to work for a CR that does not completely strip human needs programs for low- and middle-income people and families, and one that protects immigrants seeking asylum within our borders. We are, at our core, a country of welcome, built by immigrants who continue to enrich and strengthen our nation.

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

1. **Please join Hill Letter for IMF SDR Issuance:** NAC urged the offices of Catholic Democrats in the House and Senate to sign onto a letter led by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and Reps. Chuy Garcia, Pramila Jayapal, and others, urging President Biden to help protect U.S. jobs and bolster the economies of developing countries by supporting a new, cost-free issuance of [Special Drawing Rights](#) (SDRs) by the IMF. The poorest people in our world are suffering a great deal of the burdens of the various global crises: climate, debt, poverty, hunger, and war. **One of the few tools available to the Biden administration to mitigate the risk of economic downturn at home and abroad is a new issuance of SDRs by the IMF.** And all at **\$0 cost to US taxpayers.** *(Solely Dems were sought at this time because, despite efforts to build bipartisanship, Republicans won't*

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*entertain support for SDRs, so organizers wanted to concentrate on building pressure from Dems to the President.)*

- 2. Please sign on to the bipartisan Dear Colleagues letter urging the Biden Admin and DHS to redesignate TPS for Nicaragua:** NAC sent a blast to all House members (Immigration and Foreign Policy LAs) urging them to sign on to a bipartisan “Dear Colleagues” letter asking the Biden Administration to redesignate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nicaragua. The country has been facing worsening socio-political and humanitarian crises for years.

## STATEMENTS

### **NAC Quote for Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) Statement on Shutdown:**

“How we – how our government – treat the least among us reflects who we are and what we want America to be. Whatever your faith or belief system, we all must recognize the hardship that shutting down the federal government would have on the most vulnerable around us. Children will go hungry. The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd calls on Congress to pass a bi-partisan continuing resolution that fully funds government programs at the agreed upon levels earlier this year,” said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

### **NAC Quote for Interfaith Immigration Coalition Statement on Remain in Texas and US-Mexico Agreement:**

“All levels of government are disappointing and failing in their duties to welcome migrants, but the Biden Administration has found a new level with its plan to force migrants who enter without authorization to remain in Texas near the border where towns are small and even the few cities have very limited resources to care for those crossing,” said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. “The U.S. must do better to assist asylum seekers and migrants seeking safety and better lives among us.”

## OTHER ADVOCACY / LOBBYING ACTIVITIES:

### **Policy Work with U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (Joint Grant Work):**

Final preparations for and holding of Sept. 8 Policy Meeting. Brought together excellent group of policy experts and stakeholders for input on focus areas for advocacy portion of project. Will be announced soon.

### **Attended NETWORK’s “Invest in Communities that Welcome” Press Conference on the Hill:** Uplifted need for govt to invest in communities that embrace and assist immigrants.

**Participated in Sept. 20 (2 pm) #EndChildPoverty Twitterstorm:** Led by First Focus on Children and the Children’s Defense Fund; highlighting new Child Poverty Data released by Census Bureau

### **Took part in Child Labor Coalition Policy Advocacy Working Group Meeting**

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**Attended and presented at Sept. 28 to 30 USCSAHT Conference** (new name: Alliance to End Human trafficking). Sr. Ann Scholz, SSND and Fran Eskin-Royer presented a workshop on Faithful Advocacy: Building the Beloved Community. Met with Winifred Doherty, RGS, and former GSS NYC social worker, Maureen Jerkowski, OSF. Networked with many, including FADICA and Talitha Kum representatives.

**Coalition Work:** Coalition on Human Needs (weekly), DC Catholic Coalition Meeting (monthly), Domestic Human Needs (monthly?), EAD Leadership Team (monthly), Faiths United Against Gun Violence (monthly), Jubilee USA meeting (monthly), Washington Interfaith Staff Community and Heads of Washington Office meeting (monthly)

## GOOD SHEPHERD AGENCIES / COMMUNITY BUILDING:

One-on-One with Sr. Olga Cristobal re: her experience at the Kino Border Initiative

Outreach to Hill about Mental Health Provisions in Approps Bill that impact our agencies, and outreach to agencies about Mental Health Parity Sign-on letter.

Outreach to Provincial that covers Nicaragua about possible advocacy.

## OTHER SIGNIFICANT NAC ACTIVITIES:

National Domestic Violence Hotline 101: Empowering Support for Survivors

Meetings with potential Fulbright scholarship recipient who wants to partner with NAC, focusing on child sex trafficking education and awareness raising.

Ongoing work with Zip Recruiter on Policy Advocate position promotion – reviewing resumes, preparing for interview process.