

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES
NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: November 2021

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NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: VISA PROVISIONS IN BUILD BACK BETTER

General Content: Letter urging Congress to support the visa-related provisions in the Build Back Better package. The provisions will begin to clear backlogs and provide many of our community members the family-based, employment-based, and diversity visas that are long overdue. We can't prolong the failures of our current immigration system and the BBB would make truly historic improvements.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Asian Americans Advancing Justice

ISSUE: REGULATION THAT WILL HARM UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

General Content: The HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is taking steps to implement Trump-era regulations that would replace the Flores Settlement Agreement. , The letter addressed to President Biden, urges him to intervene and not squander a historic opportunity to transform how we care for unaccompanied children in federal custody.

In August, over 100 organizations joined together to urge HHS to change course and engage in a more transparent rule-making process. Despite that letter and repeated conversations, HHS seems intent on moving forward with regulations designed to gut the third-party accountability and oversight that has provided protection to children in immigration custody for the last 20 years, exposing to public scrutiny the government's repeated failure to treat immigrant children with dignity and respect.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Center on Immigration and Justice

ISSUE: BODY RESTRAINT USED BEFORE AND AFTER DEPORTATION MISSIONS

General Content: Letter urging members of Congress to press the Department of Homeland Security Offices of CRCL and the IG to investigate ICE's abuse of a full-body restraint device called "The WRAP" before and during deportation missions.

With the November 16th announcement that DHS has declined to open the promised "swift and thorough investigation" of the "horrible and deeply troubling" actions of US Border Patrol agents against Haitian refugees in Del Rio, a previous letter demanded that DHS does not silence ICE torture by The WRAP as well.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: African Communities Together, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, the Cameroon Advocacy Network, the Haitian Bridge Alliance, the UndocuBlack Network, Texas A&M University School of Law's Immigrant Rights Clinic, and Witness at the Border

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: MEDICAID FUNDING IN BUILD BACK BETTER

General Content: Letter to Congress urging that they continue to support inclusion of funding for Medicaid HCBS in Build Back Better.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Justice in Aging

ISSUE: CHILD NUTRITION ACT

General Content: Support of a bill in the House of Representatives to amend the of 1966 to support women, infants, and children impacted by substance use disorder, and for other purposes. The Supporting Healthy Mothers and Infants Act would amend the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) section of the Child Nutrition act to:

- Remove stigmatizing language in the Child Nutrition Act related to substance abuse disorder,
- Ensure the WIC program develops materials and conducts outreach for eligible individuals impacted by substance abuse disorders who are not currently in the program,
- Directs USDA to work with HHS to develop evidence-based nutrition education materials,
- And requires developed materials to be made available through an online clearinghouse.

Sent to: House of Representatives

Sponsored by: Rep. Kathy Manning (NC-06), Rep. David Trone (D-MD), who led the bill last Congress, and Reps. Glenn 'GT' Thompson (R-PA), Brett Guthrie (R-KY), and Ann Kuster (D-NH)

ISSUE: MODERNA EXCESS

General Content: The letter asks the Moderna CEO to respond to three specific questions:

1. Does Moderna have excess production capacity "in the billions [of doses] through 2022" that could be allocated towards low- and middle-income countries, as White House Chief Science Officer Dr. Kessler has stated?
2. Will Moderna heed the call of the White House and the World Health Organization to share know-how and transfer technology through the WHO to qualified manufacturers in other parts of the world?

3. Will Moderna commit to providing the doses that it produces to low- and middle-income countries where they are needed most, including through COVAX, and at cost?

Sent to: Moderna CEO, Stéphane Bance

Sponsored by: People's Vaccine Alliance

ISSUE: WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FOOD, NUTRITION, HUNGER, and HEALTH

General Content: On October 26, 2021, U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Mike Braun (R-IN) and U.S. Representatives James P. McGovern (D-MA) and Jackie Walorski (R-IN) introduced S. 3064/ H.R. 5724 - a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would convene a second national White House conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health. The first such conference occurred just over 50 years ago, culminating in the creation and expansion of programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Leadership Conference of Women Religious

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

General Content: Letter to House and Senate on Build Back Better Act thanking the House of Representatives for the momentous gains made in the Build Back Better Act, reinforcing the need to keep the package intact as it makes its way through the Senate, and urging swift passage onto signature before President Biden.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Families USA

ISSUE: PAID LEAVE FOR ALL

General Content: Many media outlets have been characterizing the care infrastructure investments in Build Back Better as “social spending” or “social safety net” -- phrases that are not adequate and that fail to describe the many jobs that will be created or the critical role that the care economy plays in connecting people to work and ensuring all work is possible. To help address this, MomsRising and NWLC pulled together some guidance to media.

Sent to: Open Letter to Media Outlets

Sponsored by: New America

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER ACT - AMENDMENTS

General Content: Letter urging Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act and oppose harmful amendments.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: SUPPORT INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE AND UNIVERSAL PREK

General Content: Letter urging Congress to support the Build Back Better Act's inclusion of Child Care and Universal Pre-Kindergarten along with the explicit federal non-discrimination language accompanying the provisions. These new federal funds have the power to transform the lives of young children, their families, and others who care for them.... "As you face the opportunity and obligation to repair the harms of the COVID-19 crisis and remedy long-standing inequities in our country, we urge you to focus your effort and attention on ensuring that children, families, and early educators – especially those from marginalized backgrounds, have both the resources they need and the protections to which they are entitled to build back better for themselves, their communities, and our country."

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights

ISSUE: BUILD BETTER ACT: CHILD CARE PROVISIONS

General Content: Letter offering strong support for the early childhood education and childcare provisions of President Biden's Build Back Better proposal, and we urge lawmakers to vote for this legislation. This legislation invests in children and families by expanding access to high quality, affordable care that is critical to the families we serve in communities across America.

Sent to: Senate Leader Schumer, House Speaker Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, and House Minority Leader McCarthy,

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation and Save the Children

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER ACT (BBB) – HEALTH PROVISIONS

General Content: Letter urging support for health provisions in BBB during Senate deliberations. These include:

- Closing the Medicaid coverage gap that that will lead to 2.2 million uninsured people gaining coverage;
- Allowing Medicare to negotiate for fair drug prices and lowering prescription drug costs;
- Making Marketplace coverage more affordable through meaningful premium reductions;
- 12 months of continuous eligibility in Medicaid and CHIP; making federal CHIP funding permanent, investments in the perinatal workforce, health coverage of people transitioning out of incarceration, and funding for consumer assistance programs;
- Making crucial investments to address pervasive maternal health inequities by

ensuring 12 months of postpartum coverage to Medicaid enrollees in every state and including key pieces of the groundbreaking Momnibus;

- Providing high quality care for older individuals and people with disabilities in their homes and communities;
- Ensuring workers have four weeks of paid family and medical leave;
- Expanding Medicare to cover hearing services and hearing aids; and,
- Investing in critical programs that address social drivers of health such as nutrition, education, housing, child care, and climate change.

Sent to: Leader Schumer (Senate) and Speaker Pelosi (House)

Sponsored by: Families USA

ISSUE: White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health

General Content: On October 26, 2021, U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Mike Braun (R-IN) and U.S. Representatives James P. McGovern (D-MA) and Jackie Walorski (R-IN) introduced S. 3064/ H.R. 5724 - a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would convene a second national White House conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health. The first such conference occurred just over 50 years ago, culminating in the creation and expansion of programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program. The letter shows support for these programs by faith-based groups.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Bread for the World

NAC: OTHER RELATED AREAS

Explanation of RELATED AREAS (Root Causes, implicated in the Concern, or Current Situation). These would generally be contained within a FOCUS AREA listed above and noted to assist NAC with statistics for grant writing, etc. **COVID-19, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, FAMILIES, RACISM, VIOLENCE, OTHER**

AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: OIL & GAS LEASE SALE IN THE GULF

General Content: Despite campaign promises toward bold and meaningful action on climate and environmental justice, the Biden Administration is moving ahead with the *largest* offshore lease sale in U.S. history. Lease Sale 257 will offer more than 80 million acres of the Gulf of Mexico to Big Oil, more area than the Trump Administration initially proposed. Moreover, federal officials have unlawfully relied on outdated and irrational environmental analysis in deciding to hold the sale.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Biological Diversity

ISSUE: NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

- **General Content:** Letter to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) about the proposed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Regulations Revisions. The letter to support NEPA protections for people and the environment, including reducing barriers to public input and requiring meaningful assessment of *all* reasonable alternatives and equitably evaluating impacts – including climate and public health impacts – of proposed major federal actions.

Background: NEPA is the foundational law for ensuring that people have a voice in federal decision-making, guiding the environmental impact review process for major federal activities that impact the environment, public health, and livelihoods around the country. In 2020, the Trump administration drastically rolled back NEPA regulations, undermining public input and scientific integrity while ignoring climate impacts in such major federal decisions – and 331 groups joined a broad sign-on letter opposing those changes. Now, the current CEQ has issued a proposed rulemaking as the first step in a two-phase rulemaking process to restore robust NEPA protections

Sent to: Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

Sponsored by: Water Protection Network

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCE

General Content: Letter pushing the Biden Administration to significantly increase the amount of international climate finance for the upcoming fiscal year (FY23) – to \$5.8 billion with specific amounts per key area (from the \$3.3 billion we called for in FY22). This increased funding request over FY22 is a mid-step to meeting the President’s pledge to deliver \$11.4 billion a year in international climate finance by FY24. It is important that these funding levels also be requested as part of a strong, overall funding request for international poverty-fighting and conservation efforts.

Sent to: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) - Acting Director Shalanda Young

Sponsored by: International Climate Finance Coalition

- Also, Poverty, US Policy that Affects

AREA: DRUG ADDICTION

ISSUE: MAINSTREAMING ADDICTION TREATMENT ACT ("MAT ACT") (H.R. 1384 / S. 445)

General Content: In the 12-month period ending in March 2021, 97,000 people were reported to have died from a drug overdose, the highest number on record. The bipartisan Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act ("MAT Act") (H.R. 1384 / S. 445,), which would simply make life-saving treatment for people with opioid abuse disorder more accessible to people who need it, helping to close racial inequities and urban-rural divides in treatment access. Specifically, the MAT Act eliminates the redundant, outdated, and stigmatizing requirement that practitioners apply for a separate waiver through the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder. Eliminating the waiver is supported by research-based

evidence as indicated by the number of healthcare associations that have endorsed the bill. The bill also provides funding for an education campaign on how to treat opioid use disorder.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Church World Service

- Also, Racial Equity, Poverty

AREA: PRISON REFORM

ISSUE: EQUAL Act, S. 79

General Content: Letter Urging the Senate to support and pass the EQUAL Act, S. 79.

The EQUAL Act would finally end the federal sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine established in 1986 when Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. Congress set a 100:1 disparity, sentencing crack cocaine offenses at a higher level even though the drugs are nearly identical chemically and comparable in physiological and psychoactive effects. Although it did not address the disparity fully, Congress passed the bipartisan Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, which reduced the disparity to 18:1 for pending and future cases only. The change was not made retroactive until the bipartisan First Step Act of 2018.

The consequences of the sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine, in particular, have been devastating, especially for communities of color. From 1994 to 2014, Black and Hispanic people accounted for over 75 percent of growth in the federal prison population, largely driven by the enactment of longer sentences for drug offenses, of which the federal sentencing disparity placed a significant part. This is especially true for the Black community. As shown in the following figure from the U.S. Sentencing Commission report, Black Americans are more likely to be arrested and convicted for crack cocaine than for powdered cocaine, which is why the disparity has been so devastating for the Black community.

JOINT STATEMENTS WITH OTHER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

“Blessed is the one who stays awake” – Our response to criticism of today’s movements for social justice

In a **speech** given to the **Congress of Catholics and Public Life** in Madrid, Spain on November 4, Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, characterized today’s movements for social justice as anti-Christian pseudo-religions. We reject this negative and misleading stereotype of movements which we support and with whom we act for justice in solidarity. We are motivated by their very commitment to the values that we believe to be at the heart of the gospel of Jesus and expressed so eloquently in Catholic social teaching.

Sponsored by: PAX CHRISTI USA

ISSUE: COVID-19 VACCINES AND TREATMENTS TO ALL GLOBALLY

The statement calls upon the countries in attendance at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 12th Ministerial Conference to take a vitally important action to vastly increase access to COVID vaccines and treatment globally. This Ministerial Conference is scheduled for 29 November to 3 December in Geneva. In this statement we urge all countries to vote to override the WTO's Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS), usually referred to as the "TRIPS waiver." This action will allow for the recipe for the vaccine to be publicly available temporarily. Such a move would facilitate the mass production of vaccines to save lives. Unfortunately, several countries continue to support the pharmaceutical industry's rights to protect their profits from Covid-related vaccines and technologies that are guaranteed by WTO unless "Waived."