

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

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: END TITLE 42

General Content: Catholic organizations and institutions across the country joined together to a sign on letter calling on the Biden administration to immediately end Title 42! Title 42, first put in place under the previous administration, continues to be propelled forward by the Biden administration for the alleged purpose of combating COVID-19. Public health experts have made clear that Title 42 is a pretext, which “ignores and misuses the science and core principles of public health.”

Under Title 42, people who have arrived at the U.S. border fleeing for their lives are denied their right to seek asylum. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has called Title 42 out of line “with international legal and human rights obligations.” Haitian and other Black asylum seekers have been particularly affected by this inhumane policy.

The United States has a legal and moral duty to protect asylum seekers and all the resources to do so. Join other Catholic organizations in rejecting anti-immigrant scapegoating and calling for a society in which, as Pope Francis guides us, “we will think no longer in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those,’ but only ‘us.’”

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

ISSUE: MISUSE OF TITLE 42

General Content: Catholic organizations reach out in shared faith to urge President Biden to end the use of Title 42 immediately. In his recent encyclical Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis offers us two paths for the for the future, writing: “Once this health crisis passes ... God willing ... we will think no longer in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those,’ but only ‘us.’”

Title 42 is taking our country down the wrong path. The letter addresses the following themes:

- The Misuse of Title 42 is Anti-Science and Perpetuates Anti-Immigrant Tropes
- The Misuse of Title 42 Violates International Human Rights Law and Undermines U.S.
- Credibility on the World Stage We Cannot “Restore the Soul of the Nation” with the Continued Misuse of Title 42
- Responding to Jesus’s Commandment: Love One Another

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: NETWORK and Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

ISSUE: REFUGEE ADMISSIONS DETERMINATION

General Content: Letter to President Biden urging him to set the Presidential Determination (PD) on refugee admissions for FY 2022 at 200,000, immediately engage in meaningful consultations with Congress, as required by law, and provide robust investments to ensure that the U.S.

resettlement program can meet today's humanitarian crises. This refugee admissions goal ensures that the United States has the flexibility to respond to the acute and profound crisis in Afghanistan while continuing to resettle refugees fleeing violence and persecution from around the world. The United States government must embrace the full restoration and strengthening of the U.S. resettlement program, and rebuild the essential infrastructure it takes to meet this historic moment.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: Interfaith Immigration Coalition

ISSUE: FAITH LEADERS: URGE BIDEN TO SET FY22 PD AT 200,000

General Content: As we face the worst refugee crisis in history, it is vital that the Biden administration set a robust refugee admissions goal for FY 2022 at 200,000 and advocate for a robust level of funding for the U.S. resettlement program, commensurate with this goal and taking into consideration the urgent need to rebuild our nation's capacity to provide welcome. Our call to the administration to commit to resettling up to 200,000 refugees harkens back to 1980 when the United States welcomed over 207,000 refugees in a single year. This refugee admissions goal ensures that the United States has the flexibility to respond to the acute and profound crisis in Afghanistan while continuing to resettle refugees fleeing violence and persecution from around the world. The United States government must embrace the full restoration and strengthening of the U.S. resettlement program, and rebuild the essential infrastructure it takes to meet this historic moment.

Sent to: President Joseph R. Biden

Sponsored by: Church World Service

ISSUE: ENLISTMENT AND NATURALIZATION

General Content: Certain policy guidance from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the subsequent changes to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) have effectively ended the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program, the sole pathway to enlistment and later naturalization for recipients of DACA and TPS. Immigrants have a long history in the armed forces, and the United States cannot afford to block talented, dedicated recruits from serving the only country they have ever known. Legislative solutions for a path to citizenship for DACA and TPS recipients like the American Dream and Promise Act include provisions for military service, but thousands of immigrants who may qualify for relief via military service are in reality blocked from serving.

Sent to: Under Secretary Cisneros, Rep. Pelosi, Rep. Hoyer, Rep. McCarthy, Sen. Schumer, and Sen. McConnell

Sponsored by: Dream.US and VoteVets

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

General Content: The letter expresses our enthusiastic support and appreciation for the maternal health provisions included in the Committee on Energy and Commerce print of the Build Back

Better Act. The Committee has demonstrated commitment to addressing our nation's maternal mortality crisis, which disproportionately impacts Black and Indigenous people, through bold policies that will help us ensure that pregnant and postpartum people have access to critical resources, health care coverage, community-based and social supports, and the high-quality health care they need in order to thrive.

Sent to: Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy
Sponsored by: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

- Also Racial Justice

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

General Content: As we emerge from the depths of the COVID crisis and the economic fallout, the House Committees have prioritized bold legislation that will bring about a just, sustainable, and inclusive recovery, one that addresses the systemic issues and racial injustices laid bare by the pandemic. Issues we want included are: to hold firm on \$3.5 trillion dollars of investment targeted at vulnerable families and communities. 1) Support basic human needs and allow all individuals to live with dignity (includes child care, housing, etc.), 2) Permanently close the Medicaid Health Gap and strengthen access to quality, affordable health care, 3) Include a pathway to citizenship for essential immigrant workers, farmworkers, people with DACA, TPS, and DED, and their families in the upcoming recovery packages, 4) Address the climate crisis with an emphasis on environmental justice, 5) Pay for these historic investments by raising taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations to bring more fairness and equity to our tax code, Reject additional money for the already-bloated Pentagon budget

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC)

- Also Covid-19, Environment, Racial Justice, Violence

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER PLAN

General Content: Corporate lobbyists representing groups from Big Pharma to dentists have launched an effort to tank the President's proposals. The statement, along with many of the other thoughtful letters and sign-ons can help demonstrate the support for these proposals needed to get BBB across the finish line.

Sent to: Dear Chairman Wyden, Chairman Neal, and Chairman Pallone Cc: Senate Finance Committee Members, House Ways and Means Committee Members
House Energy and Commerce Committee Members, House Education and Labor Committee Members, Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Murray

Sponsored by: Economic Policy Institute and Institute for Policy Studies

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General Content: **Addendum in a letter to previous statement:** Corporate lobbyists representing groups from Big Pharma to dentists have launched an effort to tank the President's proposals. The statement, along with many of the other thoughtful letters and sign-ons can help demonstrate the support for these proposals needed to get BBB across the finish line.

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House Energy and Commerce Committee Members, House Education and Labor Committee Members, Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Murray
Sponsored by: Economic Policy Institute and Institute for Policy Studies

ISSUE: PAID LEAVE PROVISIONS OF THE BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

General Content: The paid leave plan in the Build Back Better package includes a plan for 12 weeks of universal, comprehensive, and equitable paid family and medical leave! The plan is built off of the FAMILY Act and authored by Chairman Richard Neal (MA-1) and other members of the Ways & Means Committee, and would benefit millions of American workers, families, businesses, and individuals, as well as our entire economy.

Sent to: Members of Congress
Sponsored by: Catholic Labor Network

ISSUE: TAX RACIAL EQUITY LETTER TO PAY FOR BUILD BACK BETTER

General Content: The letter advocates for the health, well-being, and economic security of Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and other communities of color. We write to make clear how important it is to communities of color that Congress enact a robust budget reconciliation package of at least \$3.5 trillion in investments in our communities funded through fairer taxes on the rich and corporations. This legislation would advance racial equity by narrowing racial income and wealth gaps, as well as by funding these long-overdue investments."

Sent to: Members of Congress
Sponsored by: NETWORK

- Also Racial Justice

ISSUE: EXPANSIONS OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC) AND EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) CONTAINED IN THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

General Content: Letter urging Congress to promote and protect civil and human rights in the United States to make permanent, through the reconciliation bill, the temporary expansions of the child tax credit (CTC) and earned income tax credit (EITC) contained in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and to extend eligibility to include all families, regardless of immigration status. Too many people in communities across the country are struggling to get by. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, decades of discrimination and institutional racism in almost every area of life, including education, employment, housing, credit and lending, the criminal-legal system, health care, voting, and immigration have left many communities of color vulnerable to poverty.

Sent to: Members of Congress
Sponsored by: The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

- Also Covid-19, Immigration and Racial Justice

ISSUE: COMPREHENSIVE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING REFORMS

General Content: Health care is a human right, not a privilege. Sky high prescription drug prices that put needed and life-saving medications out of reach are an insidious denial of that human right and dignity. The letter urges the House of Representatives not to falter at this unique moment and opportunity for you to enact bold legislation to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans. Individuals who have Medicare, job-based health plans, Affordable Care Act plans or otherwise, all need to have affordable drug prices. It is time to stop drug corporations from setting and raising prices as high as they want, anytime they want, through anticompetitive behaviors and pricing that make drugs unaffordable and out of reach for millions of Americans.

Sent to: House of Representatives with CCs to: Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States, Charles Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Ron Wyden, Chairman of Senate Committee on Finance Richard Neal, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee, Frank Pallone, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee, Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee, Richard Burr, Ranking Member, Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee, Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee, Bobby Scott, Chair, House Education and Labor Committee, Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee

Sponsored by: AFL-CIO, AFSCME, Families USA, Protect Our Care, Public Citizen

ISSUE: DRUG PRICING REFORM

General Content: Letter supporting the drug price reform language that was released by the Energy and Commerce Committee including a special thank you.

Sent to: Chair Pallone

Sponsored by: Families USA

ISSUE: STRONG RX PRICING REFORMS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MEDICARE DENTAL PROVISIONS

General Content: Letter to Majority Leader Schumer and Chairman Wyden urging them to ensure that the Senate version of the final reconciliation package includes the robust Medicare drug price negotiation language passed through the House Ways and Means Committee, improves the Medicare dental benefit language, and includes other critical Medicare expansion priorities.

Sent to: Congressional and Committee Leadership, Majority Leader Schumer, and Chairman Wyden

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

ISSUE: AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA)

General Content: A letter expresses opposition to the current sky-high Pentagon budget and urge them to vote in favor of two amendments to the NDA) for Fiscal Year 2022 that would reduce it. [Amendment 1], led by Rep. Barbara Lee, would overturn the nearly \$25 billion increase that the House Armed Services Committee added to the Pentagon topline during markup of the NDAA. [Amendment 2], led by Rep. Mark Pocan, would go further by reducing the topline by 10 percent from the authorized level, exempting military personnel and the Defense Health Program.

Pouring billions more into the military, far beyond even the level requested by President Biden,

sends exactly the wrong message at this moment in history. We are struggling to end a deadly pandemic, work against the looming climate crisis, confront racial injustice, and secure badly needed relief for working people all over the country. These are problems that no amount of military spending could ever solve. Yet we are consistently told that resources are finite and asked how we will pay for efforts to address these challenges even as there always appears to be plenty of money to buy new and unnecessary weapons and fill the pockets of weapons contractors.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: People-Over-Pentagon and Public Citizen

Also Covid – 19, Environmental Degradation and Racial Justice

ISSUE: NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA) - 1033 Program

General Content: Rep. Pressley's NDAA floor amendment on the 1033 Program would place a moratorium on the transfer of all military equipment and weapons to law enforcement agencies. His office asked for the support of organizations that could endorse the amendment.

Sent to: House of Representatives

Sponsored by: Rep. Pressley's office

- Also, Covid-19, Immigration and Racial Justice

ISSUE: VETERANS AND CONSUMERS FAIR CREDIT ACT (National Federal Interest Cap)

General Content: Civil rights, community, consumer, faith, housing, labor, legal services, senior rights, small business, and veterans' organizations and academics write in strong support of Veterans and Consumers Fair Credit Act, which would extend the Military Lending Act's 36% interest rate cap on consumer loans to all Americans, including veterans, Gold Star Families, and un-activated reservists

Sent to: Chairman Sherrod Brown and Ranking Member Patrick Toomey
United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Sponsored by: Consumer Federation of America

ISSUE: PENTAGON BUDGET REDUCTIONS

General Content: Letter in opposition to the current sky-high Pentagon budget and urge you to vote in favor of two amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022 that would reduce it. [Amendment 1], led by Representative Barbara Lee, would overturn the nearly \$25 billion increase that the House Armed Services Committee added to the Pentagon topline during markup of the NDAA. [Amendment 2], led by Representative Mark Pocan, would go further by reducing the topline by 10 percent from the authorized level, exempting military personnel and the Defense Health Program.

Pouring billions more into the military, far beyond even the level requested by President Biden, sends exactly the wrong message at this moment in history. We are struggling to end a deadly pandemic, work against the looming climate crisis, confront racial injustice, and secure badly needed relief for working people all over the country. These are problems that no amount of military spending could ever solve.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Needs

- Also Covid-19, Environmental Degradation, Racism

NAC FOCUS AREA: U.S. POLICIES THAT AFFECT GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION

ISSUE: UNGA/GLOBAL VACCINE SUMMIT

General Content: Letter to President Biden ahead of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to urge him to take on a global leadership role and fulfill his promise of addressing COVID-19 around the world. He plans as host of the meeting to announcing an admirable target of 70% of the world's population to be vaccinated within the next year. Reaching this goal, however, will be impossible unless you and other world leaders take action to ensure equitable vaccine distribution. Specifically, he is asked to recommend the following policies:

- launch an ambitious global vaccine manufacturing program with other countries to help produce billions more highly effective doses within one year and support a dedicated financing line item in the Build Back Better Act committing billions of dollars to this effort;
- use your full authorities to require the few firms with monopolies over effective vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics to transfer technology and production know-how to manufacturers in the Global South;
- reallocate excess doses available in high-income countries to countries in the Global South via COVAX or regional procurement mechanisms; and
- work with allied countries on a final text to speedily enact a temporary, emergency waiver of certain World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) rules that create barriers to widespread production of COVID-19 health technologies including vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: The National Clinician Scholars Program

NAC: OTHER RELATED AREAS

VOTING RIGHTS

ISSUE: FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

General Content: This transformative legislation will protect access to the ballot, end partisan gerrymandering, counter undemocratic and dangerous election subversion efforts, and help to eliminate the undue influence of dark money in our elections.

Sent to: Sen. Charles E. Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

Sponsored by: Declaration for American Democracy Coalition

ISSUE: THE PEOPLE ACT AND THE JOHN LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

General Content: Request to the Senate: The For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act as a first priority when the Senate returns from recess. The reforms in both bills are critical to returning power to everyday Americans and ensuring their freedom to vote. While our coalition partners represent a diversity of beliefs and traditions, we unite around the common goal of creating a healthier, thriving democracy. The letter urges Senators to prioritize passage of these pro-voter, anti-corruption reforms and to do what it takes to pass them into law as soon as possible.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: Faithful Democracy

- Also Anti-Racism

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: INCREASED APPROPRIATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CONTROL

General Content: Letter calling for Congress to appropriate increased financing for international climate. The House Appropriations Committee passed their bill including with higher amounts than President Biden requested for several accounts. The letter calls on the Senate to pass higher amounts and that the final bill is as high as possible.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: Natural Resource Defense Council

SENTENCING REFORM

ISSUE: SENTENCING REFORM

General Content: In the letter, Faith organizations that represent thousands of people of faith across the United States state the belief that justice should be a balm of healing and a means of bring about equality for all people. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system still falls far short of this. Right now, Black men are six times as likely to be incarcerated as white men and Latinos are 2.4 times as likely. The exploding prison population is driven largely by harsh and outdated sentences that are punitive rather than restorative in nature. Therefore, this request urges the U. S. Senate to make immediate steps to pass important sentencing reform legislation that builds upon the beginning steps taken with the enactment of the 2018 First Step Act.

Sent to: Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell

Sponsored by: The Festival Center, Washington, DC

AREA: AFGHANISTAN

ISSUE: SUPPORTING AFGHAN EVACUEES DUE SEPT 16TH

General Content: in supporting a full evacuation of vulnerable Afghans and ongoing protection and support for those left behind, the letter asks Congress to help communities in the United States be fully ready to welcome Afghan refugees and help them integrate and thrive.

With approximately 48,000 Afghan evacuees who were in imminent danger arrived in the United States from August 17th-September 1st, and tens of thousands more arrivals expected in the coming weeks, it is critical that Congress take immediate action to ensure Afghan evacuees receive resettlement and integration services and have the chance to apply for legal permanent residence -- and to ensure that our communities have the resources they need to provide these services. Most of our new Afghan neighbors are entering the United States with humanitarian parole, which is temporary immigration relief and does not make them automatically eligible for refugee resettlement services.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Church World Service

RACIAL JUSTICE

ISSUE: THE TRUTH AND HEALING COMMISSION ON INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT

General Content: This bill would establish the first formal commission in United States history to investigate and document the attempted termination of cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples, assimilation practices, and human rights violations that occurred against American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians through Indian Boarding School policies. This investigation will be documented through culturally respectful and meaningful public hearings and the Commission will receive guidance from a Truth and Healing Advisory Board to develop recommendations for the Federal Government in a final report due no later than five years after enactment.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Office of Sen. Warren and Rep Davids

STATEMENTS

JOINT STATEMENTS WITH OTHER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER PLAN

General Content: Corporate lobbyists representing groups from Big Pharma to dentists have launched an effort to tank the President's proposals. The statement helps demonstrate the support for the proposals needed to get BBB across the finish line.

We joined organizations to urge Congress to stand up to this pressure and pass President Biden's bold \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better plan by the end of September. This down payment on the needs of our communities begins to meet the full scale of our country's climate, poverty, and inequality emergencies and reform a tax system rigged in favor of the wealthy and large corporations. Biden's Build Back Better plan and the Senate and House budget resolutions

passed in August paved the way for many of the priorities that House committees are now considering for inclusion in budget reconciliation legislation.

Sent to: Congress

Sponsored by: Economic Policy Institute and Institute for Policy Studies

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Sponsored by: Economic Policy Institute and Institute for Policy Studies

ISSUE: BUILD BACK BETTER

National Faith Leaders Calls for Wealthiest Americans to Pay Fair Share of Taxes in Build Back Better Plan

Sent to: Media sources

Initiated by: Faith in Public Life

ISSUE: CONSIGN FOSIL FUELS TO HISTORY

Statement by Catholic leaders in G20 Countries on Consigning Fossil Fuels to History

General Content: "Investments in fossil fuels continue to rise, even though scientists tell us that fossil fuels should remain underground...We continue along old paths because we are trapped by our faulty accounting and by the corruption of vested interests. We still reckon as profit what threatens our very survival." (Pope Francis)

The voices from the communities we work with are ringing out. Climate change is a present reality that is affecting our brothers and sisters around the world, particularly those in poor and climate vulnerable communities who have contributed to this issue the least. We see increasingly severe and frequent droughts and floods, loss of crops, and destruction of land. We cannot and must not be quiet in the face of such suffering and injustice.

The science is clear. The world needs to keep fossil fuels in the ground if we are to limit global warming to a below 1.5 degrees temperature rise by the end of 2030. We therefore call on our governments to use the G20 meetings in October to consign fossil fuels to history by:

1. Stopping any new developments of coal, oil, and gas within our own countries.

2. Immediately ending all funding of fossil fuels – including coal, oil, and gas – abroad.
3. Massively scaling up investments in clean and safe forms of energy such as wind and solar power, that prioritize energy access for the poorest communities.
4. Making good on promises to provide climate finance to support communities already affected by the impacts of climate change.

Our moral duty is unquestionable. Advanced economies must act first to tackle climate change and must act quickly to protect current and future generations and our common home. We must face our historic responsibility and act with justice, standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in our own countries and around the world. We need to act now. We do not have the luxury of time on our side.

Sent to: G20 Government Leaders

Sponsored by: The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, Coordinated by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

AMICUS BRIEFS

Amicus brief on behalf of an interfaith coalition of religious groups to be filed in the U.S. Supreme Court case *FBI v. Fazaga*.

The plaintiffs in the case, represented by the ACLU, are a group of Muslim Americans from Orange County, California who were surveilled and targeted by the FBI based on their religion. The allegations are disturbing (as covered in a [This American Life](#) episode): the FBI paid a confidential informant to infiltrate several mosques, attend daily prayers and classes, and surveil attendees by wearing audio and video recording devices. The plaintiffs sued the FBI for violations of their First Amendment rights.