

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: June 2022

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ISSUE: OPPOSE AMERICAN LAW INSTITUTE (ALI) MODEL LAW

General Content: ALI is voting on revisions to the Model Penal Code (MPC) which includes narrowing and weakening the sexual assault law including the sex trafficking statute.

Sent to: American Law Institute Annual Meeting

Sponsored by: Coalition Against Human Trafficking

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS FOR VENEZUELA

General Content: The designation of TPS for Venezuela is set to expire on September 9, 2022, with the decision date coming up on July 31, 2022. Letter to the Biden administration requesting an 18-month extension and redesignation of TPS for Venezuela. The letter also addresses ongoing and extraordinary conditions that make safe return to Venezuela impossible due to political and human rights abuses and its humanitarian crises.

Sent to: President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken

Sponsored by: The TPS-DED Administrative Advocacy Coalition

Also: U.S. Policy that affects the Good Shepherd Mission in Other Countries

ISSUE: AFGHAN FAMILY REUNIFICATIONS & PASSPORT BARRIERS

General Content: Letter calling on the Department of State to ensure that passport requirements do not prevent Afghan refugees, including parents and siblings of unaccompanied children, from seeking safety in the U.S.

For 10 months, unaccompanied Afghan children have been longing for their families left in Afghanistan. Some of these kids remain in ORR detention all this time, with significant impact on their mental health and sense of stability. Currently, these families are expected to secure a passport in order to reunify with their children in the U.S.—an impossible requirement for so many now that the Taliban is in power again. Many are in hiding or simply unable to fulfill this requirement, leaving their fate and unaccompanied children in the U.S. in a dangerous limbo.

Sent to: President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken

Sponsored by: National Immigration Justice Center

ISSUE: TITLE 42 IMPLEMENTATION

General Content: Letter calling on the Biden administration to use its maximum authority, within the bounds of current court orders, to mitigate the harm of Title 42 and restore access to asylum.

Sent to resident Biden, Secretary Mayorkas (Homeland Security) , and Director Walensky (CDC)

Sponsored by: Human Rights First

ISSUE: TITLE 42 (ASYLUM ISSUES)

General Content: During the second week of June, the Biden administration will host the Summit of the Americas for the first time. It will take place in Los Angeles and bring together the leaders of most countries in the region to discuss complex issues and seek ways to support and coordinate with each other. One of the issues is migration.

The expectations are organized in three themes: 1) Protecting the Rights of Migrants and Ensuring Access to Asylum; 2) Protecting Immigrants in the U.S.; and 3) Expanding Legal Pathways and Uniting Families.

The request is for the Biden Administration to continue to pursue an end to the Migration Protection Protocols (MPP) and Title 42—which deny asylum seekers access to protection and send them back to harm— by strenuously fighting court and legislative efforts to impede their termination.

Sent to: President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary – Homeland Security, Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor

Sponsored by: Immigration Hub

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: ACCESS TO BABY FORMULA ACT

General Content: In February 2022, Abbott Nutrition – the largest manufacturer of infant formula in the United States – announced a recall of its most popular products after dangerous bacteria was discovered in its Michigan facility and potentially linked to a series of infant illnesses and at least two infant deaths. The Michigan facility is associated with approximately 20% of all infant formula production in the United States. The closure of the Michigan facility has led to significant shortages in infant formula across the country, both for primary products and for specialty formulas that can be a major or exclusive source of nutrition for infants with allergies or digestive issues, as well as older children and adults with metabolic disorders., President Biden announced a series of actions to increase the infant formula supply, including increased flexibilities for WIC shoppers, FTC action to crack down on unfair market practices, and new imports of formula from abroad. The 1.2 million infants who receive formula benefits through WIC are typically limited to one brand of formula, but the President and Secretary Vilsack secured an additional two months where Abbott Nutrition will covering the cost of competitor brands (through the end of August).

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National WIC Association

FOLLOW UP NOTE: On May 19th, both chambers of Congress approved the Congress Approves Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen WIC Response to Infant Formula Supply Crisis This sign-on is appearing on our June Report due to a technical error. It was omitted May report.

ISSUE: COVID-19 DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FUNDING

General Content: Letter urges Congress to provide at least \$10 billion in domestic funding and \$5 billion in international funds for COVID – 19 vaccines, testing, therapeutics and deliver systems.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Catholic Cares Coalition

Also: Covid-1 and U.S. Policies that affect Good Shepherd Mission in other countries

ISSUE: HEALTH CARE PRIORITIES IN THE RECONCILIATION BILL

General Content: Letter urges the Senate to include the following health care priorities in the reconciliation bill: Improving Medicaid Infrastructure – This includes closing the Medicaid coverage gap and increasing FMAP, providing 12 months of postpartum coverage and continuous eligibility for children, allowing states to cover incarcerated people for 30 days before their release, and establishing permanent funding to the U.S. territories.

1. Addressing the Black Maternal Health Crisis
2. Making the Affordable Care Act Premium Tax Credits Permanent

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

ISSUE: PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT

General Content: Letter in support of bringing the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to the Senate floor for a vote. This bi-partisan, common sense legislation promotes healthy pregnancies and economic stability for working families in all communities.

Sent to: Catholic Labor Organization

Sponsored by: Members of the Senate

ISSUE: MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

General Content: The sign-on letter joins with “The Transition-Aged Youth Coalition comprised of state and national organizations and young people with lived experience in foster care are urging Congress to address the mental health needs of children and youth impacted by the child welfare system. The letter help call attention to this population as Congress continues their work on a comprehensive mental health package.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Need

ISSUE: BUDGET 2022 APPROPRIATIONS

General Content: Letter asking Congress to approve a full FY'22 omnibus appropriations bill and not just a full year continuing resolution with strong investments in human needs programs. A full year continuing resolution would lock in funding at 2021 levels. It would restrict funding for critical services and programs, as people are still struggling from the negative effects of the pandemic. In particular in impacts housing, particularly for persons of color, food insecurities. Human Services agencies are already drained and unable to meeting needs.

Sent to: Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

Also: Covid and Radical Equity

(NOTE: This Sign-on belonged on the February List of sign-ons but wasn't included in the tallie)

ISSUE: CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC)

General Content: The enhanced Child Tax Credit (CTC) is a historic provision of the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act, reinforcing the Biden Administration's promise of providing financial relief during the COVID crisis as well as advancing equity. However, due to pandemic challenges and insufficient outreach to communities of color, large numbers of children missed out on receiving the CTC. Without an extension, hundreds of thousands of otherwise eligible U. S. citizen children will be forever denied the 2021 enhanced Child Tax Credit. The letter urges the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to reopen the tax filing deadline for taxpayers in need of Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) so that their children can receive the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC).

Sent To: Secretary Yellen, Treasury Department and Commissioner Rettig, IRS

Sponsored by: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), Children's Defense Fund (CDF), Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), National Immigration Law Center (NILC), and UnidosUS

ISSUE: CHILD CARE

General Content: Follow-up letter urging Congress to make significant and sustained investments in childcare. The goal of the letter remains the same. Congress must make the choice to invest in families, women, children, care, and education, and to value the workforce that performs this essential work.

Sent To: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Association for the Education of Young Children

ISSUE: CORPORATE TAX BREAKS

General Content: The letter opposes Corporate Tax Breaks in Must-Pass Bills Unless Families are Provided with Commensurate Relief. The letter details a various recommendations; to allow Research and Development (R&D) expenses to be deducted annually, instead of every five years, and any such corporate tax benefit must be paired with meaningful support for an expansion to the Earned Income Tax Credit or refundability or expansion to the Child Tax Credit, which would provide relief for millions of families.

Sent To: Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer

Sponsored by: Congressional Progressive Caucus

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

ISSUE: ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON CORRUPT OFFICIALS AND OLIGARCHS IN GUATEMALA

General Content: Guatemalans are struggling to restore democracy and the rule of law to their country. The letter asks the Biden-Harris Administration to apply tough financial sanctions on corrupt officials and oligarchies in Guatemala. Their President has recently forced more than two dozen independent judges, prosecutors and human rights defends into exile for having the nerve to stand up against corruption and rights abuses. The attacks on the rule of law is a part of a systematic effort to roll back the progress that Guatemala has made I holding military leaders accountable for human rights abuses and root out corruption that impoverishes ordinary Guatemalans.

Sent to: President Biden, Vice President Harris and Secretary of State Blinken

Sponsored by: Root Causes Initiative

ISSUE: SYRIA TPS EXTENSION AND REDESIGNATION!

General Content: The designation of TPS for Syria is set to expire on September 9, 2022, with the decision date coming up on July 31, 2022. The TPS-DED Administrative Advocacy Coalition initiated a campaign for TPS extension and redesignation for Syria. With the tremendous support of our allies and NGO partners, we wrote a letter to the administration to immediately redesignate TPS for Syria for 18 months, publish a timely Federal Register Notice (FRN), provide a minimum 180-day registration period, and launch a public information campaign to notify the impacted community of the decision. Further, we are requesting a waiver of application fees and call for dedicated funding to address the backlogs that have caused disadvantage and hardship to applicants. This letter will serve as a companion to a subsequent Congressional letter.

Sent to: President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, Homeland Security and Secretary Blinken,
State

Sponsored by: MASA Group

ISSUE: GRATITUDE TO PRESIDENT BIDEN FOR HELPING CUBA PLUS ADDITIONAL STEPS NEEDED

General Content: Interfaith and organizations who have a long history of relationship with Cuban faith partners, wrote a letter to President Biden to thank him and his administration for taking measures to lift some of the harmful restrictions imposed on Cuba and the Cuban people. We appreciate that you have recognized the unprecedented humanitarian situation on the island. We hope these initial positive steps will help increase support for the Cuban people and allow Cuban Americans to assist their families on the island. Additional recommendations were suggested regarding the fact that the people continue to experience severe shortages of essential medicines, food, and other vital materials amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, the continued political reality is of concern. Specifically, the letter asks:

- Reinstatement of all forms of people-to-people travel, both group and individual
- Ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Havana can provide full consular services so that responsibilities are no longer exported to its embassy in Guyana.
- Revise and remove restrictions on U.S. banks so they can establish corresponding accounts with Cuban banks not managed by the military.
- Reverse the prohibition on U-turn transactions, and allow Western Union wire services to resume. These steps would ease access to remittances and maximize their impact, especially for Cuban entrepreneurs.
- Resume bilateral conversations around the Memorandums of Understanding signed under the Obama administration, including the high-priority issues of counter-narcotics and law enforcement cooperation, environmental protection, food security, and public health.
- Remove Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism List, which continues to complicate all significant aspects of engagement with the island, including delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Sent To: President Biden

Sponsored by: Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness

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. They include but are not limited to: **COVID-19, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, FAMILIES, RACISM, and VIOLENCE.**

AREA: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GUN VIOLENCE

ISSUE: FUNDING TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GUN VIOLENCE

General Content: The letter asks for: a) 115 million for NICS improvement, with a minimum of 25 million set aside for DV records, b) to allow states without relief from disability statutes to be eligible for NARIP grants if they use those grants for DV records, c) an additional \$50 million for NICS in the FBI's budget to allow them to handle the higher volume of checks within 3 days to avoid default proceeds transfers, d) requiring the DV points of contact at ATF Field Offices and US Attorney District Offices to build relationships with local programs, e) \$4-6 million for OVW's Homicide Reduction Initiative, f) 8-10 Million for OVW's Domestic Violence Lethality Reduction Initiative, g) \$7 million for NIJ research on domestic violence homicide prevention.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

ISSUE: VIOLENCE INTERRUPTION GRANT PROGRAM

General Content: Letter calling on Congress to fund the violence interruption grant program in the FY23 appropriations bill via report language. Violence interrupters are a hyperlocal solution to community-based violence. Violence interrupters come from the community in which they serve. They typically have been incarcerated or involved with the criminal legal system, and they may have been deemed high-risk for violence in the past or have connections to people who are. This formula yields credibility and makes them effective violence interrupters in the communities where they work. Currently, program administrators worry about what could happen to the funding for these programs in the future when interest wanes. The work will be no less important, communities will still be faced with ongoing trauma, and therefore violence will be present. This is why we are asking that Congress dedicate \$20 – 30 million in federal funding, via report language, for violence interrupters in the FY23 appropriations bill.

Sent To: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

AREA: WAR IN UKRAINE

ISSUE: TYPE OF ACTION FOR SHARED HUMANITY AND JUST AND LASTING PEACE

General Content: Rather than focus in on specific policies, this letter is about principles and urging members of Congress to take actions that support our shared humanity and desire for a just and lasting peace.

It urges Congress to do all it can to prevent the escalation of violence, the expansion of war aims, and the prolongation of fighting. In particular it urges members of Congress to:

- Continue to support efforts hold responsible parties accountable for their role in any war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the conflict.
- Consistently apply the principles of humanitarian action, accountability, and justice in conflicts around the world.
- Continue support to the humanitarian and protection needs of people displaced by this conflict, including Ukrainian residents of African and Middle Eastern descent, and urge that this support not come at the price of the needs of the tens of millions displaced globally.
- Support for diplomatic efforts that create incentives for a negotiated settlement necessary to reach a just and lasting peace

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

AREA: GUNS SAFETY

ISSUE: BI-PARTISAN GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

General Content: Letter affirming and encouraging the Senate to continue to work together to pass the provisions outlined with provisions outlined below:

- By providing federal funding to support state implementation of Extreme Risk
- investing in mental health services, especially suicide prevention, crisis and trauma intervention, and recovery programs
- By requiring additional investigative steps to review juvenile records and consult with local law enforcement before a person under the age of 21 is able to purchase a long gun
- By closing the dating partner loophole, Congress would be closing a key gap in federal law that leaves victims of abuse vulnerable to injury and death by an armed domestic abuser
- By providing the legislation, resources, and guidance needed for the Justice Department and its subsidiary agencies to crack down on interstate gun trafficking
- By clarifying the definition of a gun dealer and increasing penalties for those who violate rules governing their activity
- By providing increased school security resources, including safety measures for all schools and training for staff and students

Sent to: The Senate Committee on Gun Legislation

Sponsored by: Washington Interfaith Staff Community

ISSUE: GUN SAFETY

General Content: Letter to the senate encouraging them to support the deal developed by bipartisan senate committee on gun safety.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: Everytown for Gun Safety

STATEMENTS MADE WITH OTHER ADVOCACY GROUPS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On Tuesday (June 21) the Senate introduced the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act which is the legislative text put together by ten Republicans and ten Democrats to take action on gun violence. The Senate vote on the motion to proceed was 64-34 in favor.

An updated statement was prepared to urge them to follow through and act on this piece of legislation. Below is a public statement

THE STATEMENT:

The Senate is poised to take long overdue action on gun violence. There is a significant realization from within our diverse communities that action is needed.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act will provide for reasonable measures to ensure a clean background check for Americans under age 2, address gaps in the boyfriend loophole, encourage states to address gun violence through Red Flag Laws and crisis intervention initiatives, increase funding for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), funds to strengthen state record keeping systems, a significant investment in community-based violence intervention, and mental health access.

In a time of civic strain in the United States, the Senate is showing that Americans can work together and come up with significant measures that save lives. We urge immediate passage.

Sent to: A Public Letter also sent to Congress

Sponsored by: Faiths United

ACTION ALERTS

June 7, 2022: To support and promote targeted investments in rental assistance, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund in any reconciliation package.

June 20, 2022: To call for passage of this critical bi-partisan effort to curb gun violence and break a 30-year impasse around meaningful gun violence legislation.

June 27, 2022: To ask the Senate to support The Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022.