

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

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The NAC Focus Areas are issues that primarily impact women, children and families on the margins, including but not limited to human trafficking, immigration, poverty and U.S. policies that affect the Good Shepherd mission worldwide. Related areas include the root causes that underlie the concern, or current situation). They include but are not limited to: Covid-19, environmental degradation, families, racism, and violence.

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: Temporary Protective Status for Nicaragua

General Content: Letter asking the Biden administration to redesignate TPS for Nicaragua. Redesignation continues to be a focus as the recent extensions of TPS are not enough to protect the thousands of Nicaraguans who have fled since 2018.

The recent Inter-American Human Rights Court decision to hold Nicaragua in contempt, attacks against the Catholic community, and the 2022 Human Rights Committee Report make it clear that Nicaragua needs a redesignation. The consolidation of judicial, electoral, and presidential power under the Ortega-Murillo regime and the brutal repression of perceived dissenters made democratic governance impossible. The structural and economic impacts of Category 4 Hurricanes Eta and Iota are still felt to this current moment, and an increasingly contracting economy is cause for concern. More than 150,000 Nicaraguans have fled to Costa Rica and neighboring countries.

Sent to: President Joe Biden, Alejandro Mayorkas Secretary of Homeland Security, Anthony Blinken Secretary of State

Sponsored by: American Friends Service Committee and Florida Immigration Coalition (FLIC)

- Also: US Policies that affect Good Shepherd Mission Worldwide

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY/ECONOMY/FAMILY

ISSUE: DEBT LIMIT

General Content: Letter urging Congress to use any procedural means necessary to vote before the end of the 117th Congress to increase or suspend the debt limit.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Need

ISSUE: LATINA EQUAL PAY

General Content: Sign on to support Congresswoman Leger Fernandez of New Mexico who will be introducing a resolution in recognition of Latina Equal Pay Day on Thursday, December 8th.

Sent to: Congresswoman Leger Fernandez' & Congresswoman Barragán's offices.

Sponsored by: Justice4Women

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

General Content: Letter calling on Congress to invest in affordable housing and community development programs in fiscal year 2023! In preparation for the upcoming year,.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Low Income Housing Coalition

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

General Content: Letter urging the Biden administration to use the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget request to call for robust funding for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs that help low-income households and communities thrive. W

Sent to: President Biden, and Marcia Fudge Secretary Department of Housing and Urban Development

Sponsored by: Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding

NAC FOCUS AREA: US POLICIES THAT AFFECT GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION WORLDWIDE

ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES

General Content: Letter calling on President Biden to show his support for the African continent by committing to (1) financing the loss and damage fund agreed to at COP27 and (2) supporting a new issuance of Special Drawing Rights for cost-free, debt-free crisis relief. African countries need these resources to respond to current economic and climate change crises.

Sent to: President Biden

Sponsored by: American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

- Also: Environmental Degradation and Poverty

OTHER RELATED AREAS

AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: FOREST ACT (S.2950/H.R 5508)

General Content: Letter urging Congress to pass the FOREST Act (S.2950/ H.R. 5508). This bill is a critical step in tackling global deforestation and forest degradation that contribute to climate change and biodiversity loss, while promoting good governance and leveling the playing field for responsible businesses at home and abroad. It demonstrates solidarity with Indigenous peoples around the world, including in the Amazon region of South America, who have been protecting critical forest habitats for millennia. It is one mechanism for weakening the link between deforestation and violent land invasions that lead to food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and even forced displacement. Specifically, the bill will:

- Prohibit agricultural commodities produced on illegally deforested land from entering the U.S. market;
- Require companies to carry out and report on risk-based due diligence, including supply chain traceability, on imports of commodities linked to deforestation;

- Increase U.S. engagement with and support for countries taking meaningful steps to improve governance and reduce deforestation;
- Strengthen tools to tackle deforestation-related corruption and financial crime; and
- Establish a federal government procurement preference for zero deforestation Products.

Sent to: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

Sponsored by: The Sisters of Mercy

- Also: Us Policy That Affect Good Shepherd Mission and Poverty

AREA: RACISM

ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR COMM. VIOLENCE INTERVENTION FUNDING (INCL VIOLENCE INTERRUPTER PROGRAMS)

General Content: Letter in support of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriation of \$150 million toward Community Violence Intervention. Request to see up to \$20 million out of the \$150 million to be specifically dedicated to the violence interrupters in the committee's report language.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: Interfaith Criminal Justice Coalition (ICJC) of WISC

ISSUE: RECOGNIZING RACISM AS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

General Context: Endorsement of Senators Brown, Booker, and Padilla's reintroduction of a Senate **Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis**.

Previous iterations of this resolution were introduced in [2020](#) and [2021](#).

This year's resolution **acknowledges that health care disparities have existed in America for centuries, and how those disparities are being magnified and exacerbated - presently - during the COVID-19 pandemic.** 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.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: Senators Brown, Booker and Padilla

STATEMENTS / ACTIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

ISSUE: SUPPORT OPPOSITION THE BILL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA THAT DECRIMINALIZES THE SEX TRADE IN ITS ENTIRETY

On 30 November 2022, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola, presented for public comments a bill that would repeal all criminal offences related to prostitution, which the Minister characterized as a bill to “decriminalize sex work” (the Bill). Among other provisions, the Bill would repeal “brothel owning and keeping, including any house or place kept or used for purposes of prostitution or for persons to visit,” as well as “engaging in sexual services of persons 18 years or older.” The Bill in effect, decriminalizes the sex trade in its entirety, including patronizing (sex buying), brothel keeping, and procuring prostitution (pimping).

We, the undersigned, women’s and human rights advocates, frontline service providers, and sex trade survivor leaders from around the world, are offering our comments on the Bill to the Government of South Africa. We stand with the sex trade survivors and the people of South Africa who oppose this bill. Prostitution is Neither “Sex” Nor “Work”: It is a Profitable System of Sexual Exploitation. The terms of tis petition are in accord with GS Position Papers (Sr. Clare Nolan)

Sponsored by: Coalition Against Trafficking of Women, and other organizations known to GS

ISSUE: OMNIBUS SPENDING PACKAGE FAILS TO INCLUDE PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT IN DEVASTATING BLOW TO WOMEN AND FAMILIES

“...The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) will ensure that expecting and new moms are no longer fired or forced off the job because they need temporary, reasonable accommodations to avoid devastating health complications and support their families.

We are not giving up. There is still time for Leader Schumer and Congressional leaders to find a path forward, including but not limited to, an omnibus amendment. Failure is unacceptable—millions of women across the country are counting on you.”

Sponsored by: A Better Balance: The Work & Family Legal Center

ACTION ALERTS

1. Prioritize Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care in Year-end Spending Package
2. Respect the Dignity of Pregnant Workers, Pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)

BLAST EMAILS TO CONGRESS

1. **Shared NAC’s Mental Health One Pager:** Developed with agencies to highlight to Congress the particular mental health needs from Good Shepherd’s perspective working with clients.
2. Please prioritize **Permanent Legal Status for DACA recipients**

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES IN WHICH NAC WAS INVOLVED:

- ✚ Individual year-end advocacy around passage of legislation to combat human trafficking, working closely with Sen. Menendez and Rep. Chris Smith’s office, as well as with staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. While not all the pending legislation passed into law, two of the four did: **S.3946 - Abolish Trafficking Reauthorization Act of 2022** and **S.3949 - Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022.**

- ✚ around passage of the **Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act** (with targeted members of the House and Senate).
- ✚ against **Anti-Immigrant Amendments on Omnibus: Lee 6563 & Tester/Sinema Amendment** (with targeted members of the Senate)

FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION (NAC Actions Mattered)!

1. On December 22, 2022 The Senate **PASSED** the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** as an amendment to the omnibus spending package! Upon Senate and House passage, it will be a momentous victory to support the health and economic security of pregnant and postpartum workers.
2. The House and Senate have passed the **MAT Act!** The bill, which is included in the omnibus bill.

What We Achieved: By signing on and participating in various discussion we:

- ✓ Built the MAT Act into the most broadly supported overdose prevention bill this session.
 - ✓ Won more cosponsors than 99% of bills in the House. We secured the support of more than 275 Democratic, Republican, and Independent members of Congress.
 - ✓ Secured the policy's inclusion in President Biden's State of the Union address as part of his Unity Agenda.
 - ✓ Gained the outspoken support of senior officials from both the Trump and Biden Administrations, who urged Congress to pass the MAT Act.
 - ✓ Achieved major endorsements from publications like The New York Times and The Washington Post.
3. On Friday Dec 23, after years of work, President Biden signed into law major parts of the **BURMA Act**. The new law: Broadens the U.S. government's authority to impose sanctions on the post-coup regime, Aids opposition and resistance groups, and places sanctions on high-ranking members of the ruling junta. This is the most significant action taken by the U.S. government for Burma in almost two decades. "The [BURMA] Act will provide much needed hope and support to the struggling people of our country," Duwa Lashi La, acting president of the National Unity Government (NUG), said in a written statement. "We also thank the [Myanmar] diaspora and people of good conscience across the US who worked tirelessly in support of this achievement."

SMALL FUNDING GRANT

The United States Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking received \$62,500 from a source which does not want to be identified. We are an articulated partner on the grant, USCSAHT is the receiver of the \$62,500 in funds (I think because they are a c3). And USCSAHT was approached initially but Ann Oestrich, IHM "insisted" that NAC be a partner. At this time we are uncertain about the amount of funding we will be granted.