

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

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS and Fran Eskin Royer

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: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ISSUE: PROTECTION OF IMMIGRANT TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

General Content: Committed to advancing the rights and protections of survivors of exploitation and trafficking, organizations working in advocacy welcome the pardoning of federal convictions for simple marijuana possession offenses for U.S. citizens and legal permanent resident¹. However, this letter urges the Biden Administration to expand the scope and protections of the pardon to *all* non-citizens, including immigrant trafficking survivors. This expansion would honor and strengthen the promises the Biden Administration made to immigrant survivors in the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking².

As long as trafficking persists, so will the complex intersection of human trafficking and the use of substances like marijuana. It has been understood across party lines for decades that substance use:

- can exacerbate one's vulnerability to trafficking
- be used by traffickers to initiate dependency as a form of coercion
- be used by a survivor before, during, and after their exploitation as an accessible therapy tool and coping mechanism for the physical and mental trauma of being trafficked³.

Sent to: Biden Administration, HHS, DHS and DOJ

Sponsored by: Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative, DC Catholic Coalition

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: TPS DESIGNATION FOR PAKISTAN

General Content: An ongoing humanitarian and climate crisis in Pakistan makes the return of its nationals dangerous and inconceivable. Catastrophic flooding has left one-third of Pakistan underwater, and devastated the country's healthcare, education, and agricultural infrastructure. It has resulted in the displacement of 7.9 million people, impacted more than 33 million people, and caused the death of at least 1600 people and counting. After record flooding, the UN health agency warned that the country is on the verge of a public health crisis as millions suffer from waterborne diseases. The ongoing environmental and humanitarian situation, and extraordinary and temporary conditions in Pakistan warrant an immediate designation of TPS and SSR.

Sent to: Biden Administration
Sponsored by: Masa Group

ISSUE: PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH AND DACA RECIPIENT

General Content: DACA was declared unlawful by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals last month. While the court allowed DACA renewals to continue, many more immigrant youth continue to live without any protections at all, including the over 90,000 DACA-eligible youth who continue to have their initial applications stalled. As DACA recipients, we cannot be left to simply await another court decision that will most likely upend our lives and futures. Immigrant youth and DACA recipients need permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship. The Letter calls on Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer to prioritize protections for immigrant youth and DACA recipients in any end-of-year package.

Sent to: House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Schumer
Sponsored by: United We Dream, the Immigration Hub, Unidos US, the National Immigration Law Center

ISSUE: EXTEND AND REDESIGNATE HAITI FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS

General Content: As the UN Security Council considers an international intervention in Haiti, the current TPS designation is set to expire on February 3, 2023. The Secretary of Homeland Security must decide by December 5, 2022. This request is for the Biden administration to extend and redesignate TPS for Haiti, swiftly release the Federal Register Notice, and timely adjudicate TPS applications, among other requests

Sent to: President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Secretary Mayorkas
Sponsored by: Masa Group

ISSUE: WELCOMING AND SERVING UNACCOMPANIED AFGHAN MINORS (UAMS)

General Content: The letter urges DHS (CBP) to reclassify unaccompanied Afghan minors as “unaccompanied children” who were initially not classified as such -- and urges HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to ensure that regardless of classification, Afghan children are able to receive child welfare-centered post-placement services for unaccompanied children and full legal representation. (The letter also includes a request for the federal government to ensure robust funding to serve Afghan minors and unaccompanied children.)

Sent to: Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Becerra
Sponsored by: Church World Service

ISSUE: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Yemen: 18th Month Extension and Redesignation

General Content: Yemen continues to suffer one of if not the largest humanitarian crises in the world, exacerbated by seven years of civil war. The regional, multi-actor conflict has resulted in the destruction of infrastructure, livelihoods, and social services, as well as weakened the resilience of communities and governance systems. Over 4.6 million people have been affected by the crisis in Yemen. Across Yemen, public services are on the brink of collapse while the prices of food, fuel, and other basic commodities have skyrocketed in recent months, pushing more than 80 percent of Yemenis below the poverty line. DHS must make the decision to re-designate/extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Yemen by January 2, 2023, continuing

protection from deportation and permission to work for over 1,300 Yemenis living in the United States and opening applications for those who have fled since the previous cut-off date.

Sent to: resident Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Secretary Blinken:

Sponsored by: Masa Group

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY/FAMILY

ISSUE: PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT (PWFA)

General Content: Letter urging Majority Leader Senator Schumer to bring the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to the Senate floor for a standalone vote. If the bill does not receive a vote this Congress, it could be years before it passes, and millions of workers will continue to suffer discriminatory treatment and be denied the accommodations they need due to pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. Time is running out.

Sent to: Majority Leader Schumer

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

ISSUE: CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC) AND EXPANDED EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)

General Content: The CTC reduced child poverty by almost half from 9.7 to 5.2 percent. Now with the expiration of the credit not only have millions of children fallen back into poverty but food insufficiency has risen sharply. The letter asks congress to not provide any tax relief to corporations without extending the credits and that corporations should not be prioritized over children and families struggling to escape poverty.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: WORLD DIABETES DAY INSULIN LEGISLATION LETTER

General Content: A letter to congressional leadership calling on Congress to advance insulin legislation that 1) ensures people without insurance and with private insurance, who are most vulnerable to rationing, have access to the insulin they need and 2) stops insulin manufacturers from charging excessive price.

Sent to: House and Senate Leaders

Sponsored by: Public Citizen and T1International

ISSUE: INSULIN LEGISLATION

General Content: A letter to the congressional leadership calling on Congress to advance insulin legislation that 1) ensures people without insurance and with private insurance, who are most vulnerable to rationing, have access to the insulin they need and 2) stops insulin manufacturers from charging excessive prices.

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

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

ISSUE: HEALTH INEQUITIES

General Content: Health inequities in the United States are the result of a long history of systemic racism, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression. The WISC Interfaith Coalition calls for an end to these stark divides and assurance that everyone has access to quality, affordable, and equitable medical care. Request is made to Congress to work to: promote continuous and expanded Medicaid coverage, increase Medicaid funding to the territories, address the Black maternal health crisis, and increase COVID-19 funding. Otherwise, the system continues to fail to eliminate the inequities that have plagued the United States for far too long. We urge you to support a year-end funding package that advances these priorities.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

ALSO: RACISM

ISSUE: END CHILD POVERTY: REINSTATE THE CTC EXPANSION

General Content: Letter highlights U.S. Census data that shows that child poverty was cut by 46% in 2021--much due to the Child Tax Credit expansion.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Prosperity Now

ISSUE: PUERTO RICO NUTRITION ASSISTANCE FAIRNESS ACT AND EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

General Content: A letter calling for needed funding and policy changes to correct longstanding inequities and address the hunger crisis impacting the people of Puerto Rico

Sent to: Members of the Senate and the Appropriates Committee

Sponsored by: MAZON | A Jewish Response to Hunger

ISSUE: MAINSTREAMING ADDICTION TREATMENT ACT (“MAT ACT”, S. 445, H.R. 1384)

General Content: This is a second correspondence regarding the request for passage of this act. In the midst of a deadly and accelerating overdose crisis, the MAT Act is a common-sense solution that will prevent overdoses, increase access to treatment, and reduce stigma.

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

Sponsored by: End Substance Use Disorder

ISSUE: CRITICAL PRIORITIES BEFORE THE CLOSE OF THE 117TH CONGRESS

General Content: Letter from the Washington Interfaith Staff Community, (NAC participates) to raise up several areas we see as essential for immediate action before the close of the 117th Congress. These are the critical priorities.

1. Expand the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.
2. Pass a full and robust FY23 federal budget. This cannot wait until a new Congress.
3. Address essential protections to voting rights and inclusionary democracy.

4. Ensure environmental justice and robust environmental protection.
5. Provide a long-delayed pathway to citizenship for immigrant communities.
6. Fund essential health care priorities. Promote continuous and expanded Medicaid and CHIP coverage by providing 12 months of continuous eligibility for adults and children on Medicaid and CHIP and 12 months of postpartum coverage through Medicaid. Increase Medicaid funding to the U.S. territories by maintaining the CMS interpretation on Puerto Rico, increasing the block grant allotments for all territories, and maintaining or increasing the federal matching rates to align with the states.
7. Address the Black maternal health crisis by including the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act (S.346/H.R.959) in end of the year legislation. And increase COVID-19 funding, partnering with federal, state, and local officials to confront the ongoing pandemic.
8. Address key needs globally. We ask you to ensure funding for the non-military components of President Biden's supplemental requirements.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC)

ISSUE: TAX CREDITS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH FAMILIES OVER LARGE CORPORATIONS

General Content: Letter calling on Congressional leaders to **take action** to enhance the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and prioritize tax credits supporting our children, youth, and families over tax breaks for large corporations during the closing weeks of the 117th Congress.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: First Focus

**NAC FOCUS AREA: US POLICIES
THAT AFFECTS GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION WORLDWIDE**

AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCING

General Content: Three separate letters urging President Biden and Congressional leaders to retain critical funding for international climate finance in the FY23 appropriations negotiations. Specifically, to retain the \$64.5 billion for U.S. foreign assistance programs in the House and Senate FY23 appropriations bills. Within that, we urge you to seek the highest possible amount for directly appropriated international climate finance to get as close to President Biden's \$11.4 billion commitment this year as possible, as many of our organizations advocated earlier this year [footnote]. This includes delivering no less than the \$3.76 billion included in S. 4662, the Senate FY23 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations legislation.

Sent to: President Biden, Dear Senate Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair Coons, and Ranking Member Graham, and House Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chair Lee, and Ranking Member Rogers,

Sponsored by: Coalition on Climate Change and Agricultural Control

OTHER RELATED AREAS

AREA: WAR RELATED CONCERNS: NUCLEAR WAR / MILITARY FORCE

ISSUE: STATEHOOD FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

General Content: NAC and the Congregation endorsed the D.C. statehood bill this Congress. Congresswoman Norton will be introducing the same bill in the next Congress. We listed again as an endorsing the bill next Congress.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Office of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton

AREA: NAMING AMBASSADOR FOR GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

ISSUE: NAMING OF AN AT-LARGE AMBASSADOR FOR STATE DEPARTMENT GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

General Content: Letter to Senate Leadership calling for the urgent confirmation of the Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues at the Dept of State. This letter calls on leadership to take action and prioritize this extremely important, high-level position within this term.

Sent to: Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell

Sponsored by: CARE USA

STATEMENTS / ACTIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Christmas Truce in Ukraine

As people of faith and conscience, believing in the sanctity of all life on this planet, we call for a Christmas Truce in Ukraine (in the spirit of the truce that occurred in 1914 during World War I) and urge our government to take a leadership role in bringing the conflict to an end through a ceasefire and negotiated settlement, before the conflict results in a nuclear war that could devastate the world's ecosystems and annihilate all of God's creation.

Initiated by: For USA: Fellowship on Reconciliation

ACTION ALERTS

1. Reduce Child Poverty with Expanded Child Tax Credit
2. Prioritize the passage of legislation providing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) holders with a pathway to permanent legal status.

BLAST EMAILS TO CONGRESS

1. Please bring the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) (S. 1486) to the floor for a vote and passage
2. Reduce Child Poverty by Approving Expanded Child Tax Credit Before Year End
3. Please include programs to reduce child poverty in YE Tax Extender Package

AMICUS BRIEF

Landor v. Louisiana Dept. of Corrections follows previous Amicus Briefs in which we have participated in that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) permits prisoners and other incarcerated persons to pursue money damages against officers who violate their right to freely exercise their religious liberties.

OTHER NEWS

Worked to support Rep. Chris Smith's negotiations with Senate offices around his anti-trafficking bill (Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022) and three (3) other anti-trafficking bills in the Senate; brought in USCSAHT as a partner.