

ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS MONTH OF: July 2020

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor

ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: INCLUDE IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN COVID-19 RELIEF

General Content: Letter urging Congress to take action to address the exclusion of immigrant families, workers, taxpayers, and their U.S. children and spouses from the CARES Act and other COVID-19 recovery packages in the next pandemic relief legislation. **Immigrants have been left out of every relief package so far**, even though they are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and are risking their health and safety as essential workers during the pandemic. We cannot let immigrants be excluded from relief again. If our nation wants to recover from this economic and public health crisis, we need to ensure that *everyone* is included.

Sent to: Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer

Sponsored by: National Immigration Law Center

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: LOW-INCOME ACCESS TO BROADBAND

General Content: Letter to the Senate seeking an emergency broadband benefit as part of the Phase 4 COVID-19 package. During the COVID-19 crisis, the need for broadband internet has never been greater, exacerbating the consequences of the existing digital divide in the communities our organizations represent, even as fewer people will be able to afford connectivity during the crisis. The health and safety of all depends on continued social distancing: broadband is essential for this to occur. The House of Representatives in the HEROES Act introduced the Emergency Broadband Connections Act, with almost identical provisions. The legislation will:

- 1) Authorize appropriations for \$8.8 billion in order to guarantee an \$50 emergency broadband benefit (\$75 in tribal areas) to every eligible low-income household in the country that makes a request to their Internet Service Provider (ISP), and, offer a one-time discount for ISP-provided devices;
- 2) Improve the existing Federal Communications Commission low-income Lifeline program to offer unlimited voice minutes and texting.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

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ISSUE: URGENT NONPROFIT PRIORITIES IN COVID-19 LEGISLATION

General Content: Congress is expected to pass its last piece of COVID-19 legislation this month. It is urgent that nonprofits tell the House and Senate to include nonprofit policy solutions in the final package.

- **Continue Emergency Funding Programs**, including improvements to the Paycheck Protection Program, creation of a nonprofit jobs-expansion program, and funding for community support grants programs that enable nonprofits to serve vulnerable populations.
- **Provide Low-Cost Loans to Mid-Size and Larger Nonprofits** that have been left out of and not able to access government funding.
- **Strengthen Charitable Giving Incentives** by expanding the incentives to all taxpayers, not just itemizers, via an above-the-line or universal charitable deduction of one-third of the standard deduction.
- **Provide Full Unemployment Benefit Reimbursement** benefits paid to laid off or furloughed employees of self-insured or reimbursing nonprofit employers.

Sent to: Members of Congress:

Sponsored by: National Council of Non-Profits

ISSUE: PANDEMIC TANF ASSISTANCE ACT

General Content: Letter to the House and Senate Leadership urging support for Senator Wyden's Pandemic TANF Assistance Act (S.3672), which would establish a \$10 billion COVID Emergency Grant Program so low-income families can access emergency funding during the pandemic to cover groceries, utilities, and other basic necessities and for many of the populations of people who were left out of other federal assistance like immigrants, tribes, territories and adults fleeing domestic violence.

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

Sponsored by: The Children's Defense Fund, First Focus on Children, and the Coalition on Human Needs (CHN)

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ISSUE: EXPAND SCHOOL YEAR MEAL WAIVERS

General Content: Letter urging the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use its full administrative authority and allow the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option to be used to feed children during the upcoming school year, along with other supporting flexibilities.

This is critical to ensuring communities have the flexibility needed to provide meals to children at school, to send meals home with children when they are not at school, and to provide meals at community sites closer to children's homes through the child nutrition program that makes the most sense given the unprecedented circumstance

Sent to: USDA

Sponsored by: Feeding America

ISSUE: THE UPCOMING COVID-19 RELIEF PACKAGE

General Content: Letter urging Congress to prioritize the most vulnerable individuals and communities in the upcoming COVID-19 relief package. Programmatically, to: 1) Expand and increase SNAP, 2) Allocate more money for housing, homeless assistance, and extend the moratorium on evictions, 3) Extend expanded unemployment assistance, 4) Expand the EITC and Child Tax Credit, 5) Authorize Another Economic Impact Payment, and, 6) Authorize Pandemic TANF.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: NATIONAL MORATORIUM ON POWER, WATER, AND BROADBAND SHUTOFFS

General Content: urge the Senate to take decisive, moral action and implement a nationwide moratorium on the shut-offs of electricity, water, broadband, and all other essential utility services for all households, places of worship, and other non-profit community centers as part of the next COVID-19 rescue package.

Sent to: Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Barasso, and Ranking Member Carper, Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Manchin, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell,

Sponsored by: United Church of Christ

ISSUE: COVID RELIEF PACKAGE

General Content: Letter urging Congress to protect Human Needs priorities in this next COVID relief bill. The current plan is lacking and would leave millions of Americans without the support they need.

The need is to urge both the House and Senate to act swiftly to agree on legislation that doesn't compromise on the needs of the American people. They need to directly address COVID-related public health concerns, food and housing assistance, workforce protections and support, state

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and local aid including education funding, and protecting our democracy via the election and census: this relief bill needs to be large and comprehensive, and it needs to happen ASAP.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Coalition on Human Need

ISSUE: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS DURING COVID-19

General Content: Letter urging the Senate to suspend SNAP work requirements for students enrolled in secondary education.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: MAZON | A Jewish Response to Hunger

NAC FOCUS AREA: US POLICIES THAT AFFECT OUR MISSION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

ISSUE: FOREIGN AID FOR COVID-19

General Content: Letter asking that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ensure that the next emergency supplemental package includes at least \$12 billion for foreign aid. Rationale Seeing the reality of the growing, grave threat to life and livelihood the coronavirus poses to people in countries less well-off than the United States, and recognizing that our nation's economy and efforts to contain the coronavirus are interconnected with those in other countries,

Sent to: House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi

Sponsored by: Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns

NAC FOCUS AREA: VIOLENCE

ISSUE: HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIR

General Content: Request that the Democratic Caucus elect a chair who will lead the committee in advancing a vision of restraint and progressive realism in U.S. foreign policy. The includes: Ending our Endless Wars, Oppose Militarization and Surveillance at Home, Diplomacy First, Oppose Regime Change and Scrutinize Non-Electoral Transfers of Power, Oppose Broad-based Sanctions that Harm Civilians, Consistently Upholding Democratic Values live in full equality that centers human rights and dignities for all people., A Global Economy that Prioritizes People and the Planet, not Corporate Profits, Ending the Arms Sales Rubber Stamp, Demonstrated Record of Independence from Special Interests, Refugees Are Welcome Here, Adequately fund the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Office of Refugee Resettlement to meet the needs of refugees during the COVID-19 crisis.

Sent to: Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, and Whip Clyburn

Sponsored by: Win Without War and Demand Progress Education Fund

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NAC FOCUS AREA: OTHER INDIRECTLY RELATED ISSUES

ISSUE: ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS

General Content: In addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has yet to address the needs of people who need language and communications assistance. This has led to a lack of information going out to limited English proficient communities, hospitals denying the presence of communications support staff and an exacerbated impact of the pandemic on limited English proficient populations and people with disabilities.

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

Sponsored by: Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

ISSUE: COVID ELECTION FUNDING

General Content: Letter asking Senators to provide \$3.6B for emergency election funding and \$400M for supplemental Census decennial operations in the next COVID response package. The Senators are urged to prioritize these emergency funding needs, thus protecting the foundation of our democratic systems and the health of voters and election workers.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: Network

ISSUE: INVESTMENT IN STATE AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

General Content: Letter urging the Senate to make additional Investments in state and Local Elections. The problems in the primaries cannot be repeated in this November's election. Voters have been able to cast their ballots during wars, natural disasters, and pandemics, and the COVID-19 pandemic presents unique circumstances to voting this year. Our democracy requires continued investments, and we strongly urge you to provide \$3.6 billion for election funding in the Senate version of the Heroes Act.

Sent to: Senator Roy Blunt, Chairman and Senator Amy Klobuchar, Ranking Member Senate Committee on Rules & Administration

Sponsored by: Franciscan Action Network, Common Cause

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ISSUE: COVID-19 SAFER DETENTION ACT

General Content: Letter of support for bipartisan the COVID-19 Safer Detention Act. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) reports that, as of July 20, over 9,522 people in its custody have tested positive for COVID-19 and almost 100 have died. As BOP Director Michael Carvajal recently told the Senate Judiciary Committee, “prisons are not designed for social distancing. In fact, they are designed for just the opposite.” Congress must find a sensible way to reduce the federal prison population and make our institutions safer.

Sent to: Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Feinstein:

Sponsored by: Sentencing Reform

ISSUE: CORPORATE IMMUNITY DUE TO COVID-19

General Content: Letter expresses deep concern about the Senate Republican corporate immunity proposal. Granting immunity from worker lawsuits to corporations that fail to protect their workers from COVID-19 will lead to even more unsafe working conditions, as employers would be incentivized to cut costs on safety measures they might otherwise take if the threat of legal action remained. The Senate Republican corporate immunity proposal will also let employers off the hook for ‘pandemic-related’ violations of minimum wage and overtime laws, discrimination laws, paid leave laws, and more.

Granting employers immunity from liability for COVID-related claims would especially endanger Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other workers of color and women who make up a large share of workers in essential and in-person reopening jobs—even as communities of color have been the most vulnerable to coronavirus infection and death.

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

Sponsored by: National Employment Law Project

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NON-COVID 19 RELATED ISSUES

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: MILITARY HUNGER

General Content: Letter to Senate and House Armed Services Committees urging them to provide needed assistance to these struggling military families by prioritizing the Military Family Basic Needs Allowance in the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This bipartisan proposal would address a longstanding shortcoming in military compensation policy that has left thousands of military families — primarily lower ranking enlisted service members with multiple dependents — to endure the painful reality of food insecurity.

Sent to: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Tillis, and Ranking Member Gillibrand

Sponsored by: MAZON | A Jewish Response to Hunger

NAC FOCUS AREA: RACISM

ISSUE: ICE CITIZENS' ACADEMY (Letter 1)

General Content: ICE in Chicago is leading the way in a racist initiative, which they're calling the ICE ERO Citizens Academy. This program trains citizens to perpetuate race-based violence and further normalizes hate crimes that already devastate communities. The letter opposes the creation of the Citizens' Academy.

Sent to: Chicago City Council and IL elected officials

Sponsored by: Church World Service

ISSUE: ICE CITIZENS' ACADEMY (Letter 2)

General Content: At a time when the nation is being forced to grapple with systemic police violence, ICE has invited civilians in Chicago to engage “in scenario-based training and exercises conducted in a safe and positive environment, including, but not limited to defensive tactics, firearms familiarization, and targeted arrests.” These actions by ICE are making the current environment even more frightening for immigrants and have raised alarm with local organizations and advocates across the country who see these types of training as potentially encouraging vigilantes to profile and target people in their communities. The letter opposes the creation of the Citizens' Academy.

Sent to: Robert Gaudian, Chicago ICE Field Office Director

Sponsored by: Church World Service

NAC FOCUS AREA: VIOLENCE

ISSUE: DEATH PENALTY REINSTATED

General Content: A statement that condemns the restart of executions of U.S. citizens by their government. The death penalty violates the basic tenets of our faiths and the inherent worth of

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all human lives. The death penalty does not have a deterrent effect. The death penalty is a profound waste, economically and in other ways. The death penalty is racist due to the fact that people of color are sentenced to death disproportionately. The death penalty is unjust.

We call for the immediate end to executions, for legislative action banning the use of the death penalty, and for court injunctions recognizing that the death penalty is unconstitutional and cruel.

Sent to: Public Statement

Sponsored by: The Interfaith Criminal Justice Coalition

ISSUE: STATEMENT ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

General Content: The Statement rejects the existential threat to humanity that nuclear weapons pose. It reaffirms that the presence of even one nuclear weapon violates the core principles of our different faith traditions and threatens the unimaginable destruction of everything we hold dear. Nuclear weapons are not only a future risk, their presence here and now undermines the ethical and moral foundations of the common good. We call for your commitment to a world that is more peaceful, safe, and just—a world only possible with the elimination of nuclear weapons. It makes an appeal to you to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Sent to: Open Public Statement:

Sponsored by: Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons

ISSUE: TO REBUILD PUBLIC TRUST, CLOSE THE REVOLVING DOOR

General Content: Letter to the presidential campaigns calling for a strong commitment to a conflict-of-interest free leadership as it relates to the transition team and potential administration.

Sent to: Presidential Campaigns

Sponsored by: Demand Progress

16 COVID RELATED ISSUES

6 NON-COVID RELATED ISSUES