

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES SIGNED ON TO ON BEHALF OF

U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: March 8 – 31, 2020

(Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, Liaison)

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: IMMIGRATION-RELATED REQUESTS FOR CORONAVIRUS PACKAGE 3 (SUPPLEMENTAL)

General Content: Americans are looking to our government to come together and protect *all our communities* as we struggle to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Tragically, the administration's requested third supplemental funding package leaves immigrant communities in the cold and, in so doing, puts *all our health and safety* at risk. Now is not the time for the administration to assert its anti-immigrant agenda by yet again manipulating the appropriations process. Now is the time for unity and smart public health-oriented responses.

This document provides context for three critical immigration-related requests with regard to the 3rd supplemental COVID-19 package:

1. Eliminate Immigrant Restrictions on the New Medicaid State Option for COVID Testing
2. Oppose All DHS Funds for ICE and CBP
3. Restrict Transfer and Reprogramming of Funds for Immigration Enforcement

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Immigration Hub

ISSUE: MARYLAND TRUST ACT (SB901)

General Content: The Trust Act is crucial legislation that will stop the state of Maryland's participation in the unjust targeting of immigrants and undocumented persons by limiting state and local police cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, creating policies to make places like schools and hospitals safer for immigrants, and building community trust and safety for all.

Sent to: General Assembly of Maryland

Sponsored by: CASA

ISSUE: EXTENDING VALIDITY PERIODS FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS - COVID-19

General Content: A letter that urges the Departments of State and Homeland Security to ensure that refugees and immigrants applying to travel to the United States are not unjustly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tens of thousands of would-be travelers to the U.S. have spent years or decades seeking status in the United States for employment, family, or humanitarian-based reasons. Many will be unable to travel during the validity period of their travel documents, to submit applications, attend interviews, or to provide evidence to respond to Requests for Evidence. This letter asks the Departments of State and Homeland Security to extend deadlines and exercise positive discretion wherever possible.

This letter also urges the Departments to resume refugee admissions as soon as it can be safely done and to take steps to ensure that the FY2020 refugee admissions goal will be met.

Sent to: Secretary Pompeo and Acting Secretary Wolf

Sponsored by: Church World Service

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ISSUE: IMMIGRATION COURTS

General Content: Letter urging the Department of Justice (DOJ) to close all during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We are now facing a global pandemic and the DOJ is failing to meet its obligations to ensure a safe and healthy environment within our nation's immigration courts. As of the date of this letter (3/24/2020, Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is still adjudicating all detained hearings – including unaccompanied children in custody. In addition, for calling for the temporary closure of all immigration courts (there are 68), this letter also calls for the use of telework in order to ensure priority matters, including detained bond matters, are addressed. The letter also calls for DOJ to permit all detained respondents to immediately receive telephonic bond redetermination hearings.

Sent to: The Honorable William P. Barr, Attorney General, James McHenry, Director, Executive Office for Immigration Review

Sponsored by: American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 511, American Immigration Lawyers Association, National Association of Immigration Judges (Note this letter is being sent by NGOs with them and at their request).

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: COVID-19 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE LETTER

General Content: The coronavirus, a new strain of which causes COVID-19, is primarily a public health crisis, as it begins to spread across the United States and threatens the lives and health of the most vulnerable members of our communities., The following recommendations: each have several subcategories not included here, i.e. changing specific laws that are contrary to the category.

1. Get help to more families facing corona-related job loss more quickly, preventing widespread economic hardship, bolstering macroeconomic response to slow additional job losses, and helping affected families and communities get back on their feet more quickly.
 - Provide emergency administrative funding for state unemployment insurance programs, since need will rise, and the federal government bears statutory responsibility for the costs of state administration.
2. Support workers who need to balance work and new caregiving responsibilities related to coronavirus: This includes steps such as:
3. Empower employees and employers to prevent further spread of the virus. This includes steps such as:

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Womens Law Cent

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ISSUE: EVICTION CRISIS ACT

General Content: Congress is considering a spending package to mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus. We believe there may be an opportunity to include the campaign's proposal for an Emergency Assistance Fund to keep people stably housed in times of crisis

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Opportunity Starts at Home

ISSUE: CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE: BI PARTISAN EFFORT TO PASS \$8.3 BILLION PACKAGE INSUFFICIENT

General Content: The coronavirus outbreak, or COVID-19, has shaken countries around world and threatens a recession. Uncertainty grows as communities are struggling to respond. Congress is working bipartisan process to pass an initial \$8.3 billion package, but that legislation is insufficient. We call on Congress to prioritize the needs of low-income people and their families who need assistance. We have a sacred obligation to ensure adequate resources reach those who do not have the financial ability to weather a crisis.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: NETWORK

ISSUE: 2021 Labor-HHS-Ed 302(b) FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

General Content: A letter about the Subcommittee's share of appropriations shows lawmakers the strength of support for vital services including child care, Head Start, home heating assistance, job training and education, nutrition for seniors, substance use and mental health services, public health protections, and community actions' anti-poverty programs.

Sent to: House and Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittees.

Sponsored by: The Coalition on Human Needs

ISSUE: ENSURE EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES ARE USED TO END HOMELESSNESS

General Content: Homelessness is one of our country's most urgent, tragic, and solvable crises. We can't end homelessness, however, by ignoring the evidence about what works. These evidence-based approaches include "Housing First" and ending the criminalization of homelessness, both of which the Trump administration has rejected. The letter also urges the administration to help address the underlying cause of homelessness - the severe shortage of homes affordable and available to America's lowest income seniors, people of color, women, people with disabilities, families with children and other individuals – by expanding investments in proven solutions like housing vouchers, the national Housing Trust Fund, and public housing.

Sent to: President Trump and Secretary Carson

Sponsored by: National Low-Income Housing Coalition

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ISSUE: EMERGENCY DIAPER FUNDING

General Content: Diaper banks across the country are stepping up their efforts to serve children and families in their communities. Quarantines and closures are exacerbating poverty and creating situational poverty. Diaper banks are distributing more diapers to partners, handing out up to two months' supply to families, and even partnering with COVID-19 testing sites and schools to coordinate product distribution to families. There is also an awareness of adult diaper needs which are supported by Medicaid but need attention as well.

In order to meet this rapid rise in demand, we are asking Congress to create a \$200 million emergency grant program for states and organizations to fund diaper distribution. We will be sending this letter today.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Diaper Bank Network

ISSUE: COVID-19 FUNDING REQUEST TO INCLUDE NONPROFIT AGENCIES

General Content: Three requests for improving the draft bill sent to Senate Majority Leader McConnell includes

Expressly include charitable nonprofits in the \$200 Billion loan fund for businesses, including airlines. The charitable sector needs an immediate infusion of \$60 billion and the loan program is a fast way to get cash in the hands of organizations serving immediate needs in communities, yet facing lost and declining revenue due to the pandemic.

Improve the above-the-line charitable deduction by raising the cap to \$2,000 and allowing all taxpayers to immediately claim the deduction on their 2019 taxes (due on July 15), and afterwards through 2021.

Clarify that charitable nonprofits of all sizes are able to participate in the emergency Small Business Loan Program by using the tax-law definition of charitable organizations (Sec. 501(c)(3) public charities) and removing the language that excludes nonprofits that are eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursements.

Sent to: Senate Majority Leader McConnell

Sponsored by: St. Francis Ministries

ISSUE: COVID-19 FUNDING FOR MEDICAID FMAP AND STATE FISCAL RELIEF

General Content: Letter urging Congress to include two essential provisions in the "Phase 3" package that is being finalized today:

- \$150 billion in direct aid to states for purposes of fiscal relief, and
- At least a 12% increase in federal Medicaid matching funds, (known as "FMAP")

Without these policies included in the next package, families, individuals and vulnerable populations will be left behind facing unemployment, a looming recession, and more.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Families USA

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ISSUE: OPPOSING THE NON-PROFIT MEDICAID EXCLUSION IN COVID-19 PACKAGE

General Content: Oppose the provisions in Senator McConnell's proposed package that deny critical sustaining loans to non-profits. McConnell's proposal excludes non-profits that provide Medicaid-reimbursed services and establishes caps that would exclude many nonprofits. Community-based nonprofits provide essential services to people in their communities, particularly those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Call is for a removal of that proposal.

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

Sponsored by: National Women's Law Center

ISSUE: GILEAD CLAIM TO SUPER-MONOPOLY ON COVID-19 DRUG

General Content: Letter regarding Gilead's "orphan drug" designation for COVID-19 drug. The concern is about access to medicines for those in poverty. This designation gives the company exclusive rights to the drug and the ability to price at whatever price it deems fit.

Sent to: Daniel O'Day, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Gilead Sciences

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

ISSUE: LETTER TO INSURERS: WAIVE PATIENT COST-SHARING FOR ALL COVID-19 RELATED TREATMENTS

General Content: addressed to A third of Americans report that they or a family member avoided going to the doctor when sick or injured in the past year due to cost, meaning that many Americans put off care rather than risk medical debt and even bankruptcy just to get the care they need.

Forty percent of Americans do not have sufficient savings to pay for even a \$400 emergency, and the average health insurance deductible is between \$1800 and \$6500 per year.

Even once tests are widely available, high out-of-pocket costs mean that even if they test positive for COVID-19, they may not be able to afford necessary treatment, especially hospitalization.

Sent to: the top 10 health insurance companies that have not yet announced waiving cost-sharing.

Sponsored by: Public Citizen

ISSUE: CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM'S NEED FOR CO-VID 19 RELIEF

General Content: Letter urging Congress to swiftly act to meet the needs of children and families in and at risk of entering the child welfare system in the next COVID-19 relief package. It is crucial that Congress provide critical supports to families facing the stress and disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, by equipping the prevention and child welfare systems with the tools it needs to handle the crisis.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Children's Defense Fund

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**NAC FOCUS AREA: US POLICIES THAT AFFECT GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION
IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

General Content: Letter drafted by the Washington Working Group on the International Criminal Court (ICC) affirming support for the ICC's functions in response to efforts within the US – from US officials – to denigrate and delegitimize the court.

Sent to: Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

OTHER RELATED NAC AREAS

ISSUE: 2020 CENSUS FAITH DECLARATION LETTER

General Content: Document by faith groups of all denominations affirming the right of all people to participate in the 2020 Census and remain committed to helping our neighbors be counted. All people, regardless of race, religion or immigration status have God-given dignity and it is imperative that our government counts every person living in this country.

Sent to: Media Outlets

Sponsored by: Faith in Public Life

ISSUE: COVID-19 HEALTH CARE WORKER PROTECTION ACT OF 2020

General Content: Support the passage of *the COVID–19 Health Care Worker Protection Act of 2020* (H.R. 6139/S. (# yet to be set) a vitally important commonsense bill that would protect the safety of health care workers caring for patients with coronavirus. This important public health legislation requires the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard to ensure that health care workers are protected from the spread of COVID-19.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: National Employment Law Project

ISSUE: POORLY TARGETED TAX CUTS NOT A RESPONSE TO COVID-19 EMERGENCY

General Content: Letter to Congress today opposing tax cuts to the wealthy and corporations or enacting a payroll tax cut as a way to respond to the novel coronavirus emergency. Instead we suggest economic remedies proposed recently by several leading economists, including immediate substantial cash payments to all households and increased federal support for the states, especially to cover Medicaid and other healthcare spending, and paid sick leave.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Americans for Tax Fairness

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ISSUE: PUBLIC SAFETY FOR VOTING IN LIGHT OF CORONA VIRUS

General Content: Second letter urging Congress to (1) appropriate at least \$2 billion and (2) adopt a number of key policy measures in the upcoming Coronavirus economic stimulus legislation that would ensure both the public's safety and an inclusive and fair voting process for 2020 primary and general elections.

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

Sponsored by: The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

ISSUE: SENATE CARES ACT/Lankford Amendment

General Content: The Senate CARES Act includes an above-the-line (or universal) deduction of \$300, an amount that most nonprofits agree is insufficient to promote relief or recovery, let alone overcome the impact of the 2017 tax law. Senator James Lankford (R-OK) is seeking to offer an amendment during the Senate debate that would create for one year a deduction all taxpayers taking the standard deduction could claim of \$4,000 per person and \$8,000 per couple.

Sent to: Senate

Sponsored by: National Council of Non-Profits

ISSUE: CONSIDERATION FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

General Content: Request to release from prisons as many people as possible applying the Justice Collaborative's [Decarceral Guidelines](#), including:

- Immediate release of elderly and medically vulnerable people;
- Early release of anyone within 18 months of their release date; and
- Lift of any ban to access social services and housing for people who will be, and who have already been, released.

For the general health of staff and those who are incarcerated we urge penal facilities to:

- Provide soap and water readily available and accessible for everyone; and
- Create, release publicly, implement, and enforce a policy, vetted by public health officials for handling COVID-19 within each facility.

Given the limitations to face-to-face visits we recommend the following be made available:

- Free unlimited phone calls;
- Free and unlimited video conference access; and
- Free and unlimited access to emails.

Sent to: President Trump and Attorney General William Barr with cc to: Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader Charles Schumer

Sponsored by: National Council of Churches

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ISSUE: HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS MUZZLING DOCTORS, NURSES AND OTHERS

General Content: Letter to the American Hospital Association demanding that the organization publicly denounce any such efforts to muzzle health care professionals and call on its member hospitals and health care systems to encourage their doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to speak freely about coronavirus patient caseloads, dwindling hospital supplies, and any other challenges that should be immediately addressed

Sent to: Richard J. Pollack President and Chief Executive Officer American Hospital Association

Sponsored by: Public Citizen