

**ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS
BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADERS: month of November 2020**

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor, RGS

COVID – 19 RELATED

NAC FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: PRIORITIZE FOR THE PEOPLE ACT IN 117TH CONGRESS*

General Content: Rationale: Only a healthy, well-functioning democracy has the capacity to attend to any of the pressing needs our faith calls us to address: the COVID pandemic, systemic racism, climate change, hunger, violence, poverty, healthcare and more. The challenges that face our nation are serious and deeply concerning—and include partisan gridlock among policymakers. Meaningful democracy reforms are also needed to lay the foundation for addressing the multiple crises that confront our nation.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Network

NOTE: *Also includes other focus areas: Poverty, Environment, racism, violence

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

NOTE: All Immigration focuses in this section are also part of U.S. Policies that affect other Countries where GS is present

ISSUE: 2021 INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION TRANSITION REPORT

General Content: Transition Report calls on the new administration to enact humane and equitable reforms to our immigration policies. It includes: Reforming Border Security, Interior Enforcement, and Detention Policies; Championing Refugee Resettlement and Protect Asylum Seekers; Improving Access to the Immigration System, Protections, and Public Benefits; Supporting Migrants Beyond U.S. Borders and includes Key Legislative Initiatives such COVID relief for immigrants.

Sent to: Biden-Harris Transition Team

Sponsored by: Interfaith Immigration Organization

ISSUE: CENTER CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS IN FEDERAL POLICY UNDER BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION

General Content: It is crucial that the Biden-Harris Administration show broad support across national, state, and local partners to uplift the needs of children in immigrant families throughout the new Administration's early actions.

The wellbeing of children of immigrants is imperative to our nation's future. One in four of all children in the U.S. live in immigrant families – an entire generation of American children. The Biden-Harris Administration and new Congress must center children of immigrants—both to address the extensive harm to immigrant children and families over the last four years, and to advance public policies, systems, and investments that ensure all children in the U.S. can grow, thrive, and reach their full potential.

These federal transition recommendations lay out shared priorities for COVID relief and early actions across immigration enforcement, health, education, nutrition, and economic security.

Sent to: General Statement of Position shared with Biden-Harris Administration

Sponsored by: Children Thrive Action Network

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: URGE CONGRESS TO INVEST IN FAIR AND ROBUST ENFORCEMENT OF THE TAX LAWS

General Content: If the Senate stays in the hands of Leader McConnell next year, a priority for the tax community is to push the IRS ramp-up enforcement on corporations and the wealthy who are not paying taxes. This will generate significant revenue for investment purposes. The letter suggests that currently a significant amount of enforcement dollars is spent going after low-income individuals (EITC recipients in particular) because they are relatively easy cases. This puts poor people at significant risk and fails to address more significant problems.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Center for American Progress

ISSUE: FIRST YEAR HEALTH POLICY PRIORITIES LETTER FOR BIDEN TRANSITION

General Content: The letter urges the transition team and incoming administration to: Take bold and immediate action to address the COVID-19 pandemic; Pursue common-sense reforms that make health coverage and care affordable for all families in America; Bring down health care costs and transform our health care system by ending health industry abuses and prioritizing high-quality, consumer-centered health care; and, End racial injustice in health and health care, and ensure all individuals and families have equal opportunity to live a healthy life, free from health disparities and barriers to care because of who they are, where they live, what language they speak, or how they identify.

Sent to: President Elect Biden and Presidential Transition Co-Chairs

Sponsored by: Families USA

*also, racism focus

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

ISSUE: ACCESS TO VACCINE

General Content: Scientists are getting closer to developing a vaccine to combat the COVID virus. It is extremely important that everyone around the world has timely access to treatment and priority should be given to those most at risk to receive treatment in the U.S. and around the world. There is deep concern that international trade laws will restrict the development and distribution of a vaccine and we are asking the U.S. and governments around the world to commit to a just and equitable policy toward the development, manufacture, and distribution of a vaccine.

Sent to: World Trade Organization

Sponsored by: NETWORK

NON COVID-19

NAC FOCUS AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

ISSUE: YAZOO PUMPS PROJECT 2020

General Content: This letter urges the Corps to withdraw the deeply flawed Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) that was issued in mid-October. The disastrous and expensive Yazoo Pumps would likely increase downstream flood risks for thousands of people and damage up to 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Mississippi River watershed that support more than 450 species. However, the impacts of the Yazoo Pumps and the deeply flawed DSEIS reach far beyond the state of Mississippi – allowing the project to go forward would set a terrible precedent of ignoring a 2008 Clean Water Act 404(c) veto of the same project. Further, the DSEIS fails to consider even a single alternative to the destructive and dangerous Yazoo Pumps, in direct violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, modern approaches to floodplain management, and common sense.

Sent to: Mr. David Olson U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Sponsored by: Mississippi River Network

**ISSUE: WEAKENING CRITICAL PROTECTIONS FOR CLEAN WATER AND WILDLIFE
HABITAT**

General Content: Letter urging the Corps of Engineers to withdraw its rushed Proposal to Reissue and Modify Nationwide Permits (NWP) that would weaken clean water protections and fast-track greater destruction and degradation of water quality and aquatic habitat. The letter urges the Corps instead to make full use of the standard five-year NWP revision cycle, postponing this NWP reissuance until 2022, to ensure that activities authorized under the NWP cause only minimal harm, as required by the Clean Water Act.

Sent to: Mr. David Olson U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sponsored by: Mississippi River Network

ISSUE: PENTAGON BUDGET FY22

General Content: Letter asks the Biden team to fund investments in clean energy, healthcare, and peacebuilding by decreasing the Pentagon budget. This letter will be sent to the transition team privately at the end of this week.

Sent to: Biden-Harris Transition Team – First week of December

Sponsored by: WISC

- Also poverty and violence focus areas

ISSUE: PENTAGON BUDGET FY22

General Content: A modified letter for Congress, which will be sent publicly in the beginning of next year that addresses clean energy, healthcare and peacebuilding by decreasing the Pentagon budget.

Sent to: Members of Congress and publicly - January

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NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: PRISON PHONE JUSTICE

General Content: Letter advocating for fair and equitable access to communications by incarcerated people, whether they have communication disabilities or are detained because of their immigration status. The Federal Communications Commission recently opened a docket proposing to lower interstate calling rates, cap international rates, and address the needs of people with disabilities. With adequate pressure and widespread support combined with a strong record means that the FCC will be in a position to act quickly at the start of the next Administration. In this letter we are advocating for the lowest possible rates, as low as 5 cents per minute, for calling services in addition to remedies for the long-unaddressed needs of incarcerated people with communications disabilities.

Sent to: Federal Communications Commission

Sponsored by: UCC Media Justice

ISSUE: REUNITING FAMILIES SEPARATED AT THE BORDER

General Content: Affirmation of the priorities to beat the COVID-19 pandemic, support economic recovery, advance racial equity, and tackle the climate crisis. Request that the transition take place, move immigration justice to the top of the agenda. More specifically, to take immediate action to reunite the over 500 (some estimate over 600) migrant children with their families who were separated at our border

Sent to: President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris

Sponsored by: Latin America/Caribbean Committee ([LACC](#)) on behalf of the Loretto Community

ISSUE: LRIF STRATEGY GROUP: TRANSITION RECOMMENDATIONS

General Content: Transition recommendations for the first 100 days of the next administration that are needed because 1. Deferred enforced departure for Liberians expires on January 10, 2021; and 2. The Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness program application period ends December 20, 2020, action to protect the Liberian community is extremely urgent.

The LRIF Strategy Group's key recommendations include 1) designating and backdating DED for Liberia on Day One of the Biden admin 2) requesting the Biden admin call on Congress to reopen the LRIF program, 3) addressing the botched implementation of LRIF at USCIS, and 4) establishing a grant program for NGOs assisting LRIF applicants.

Sent to: Biden-Harris Transition Team

Sponsored by: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

ISSUE: IMMEDIATE DEPORTATIONS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS TO CAMEROON

General Content: Letter sounding the alarm over imminent deportations of asylum seekers to Cameroon, a country that our own government has recently condemned for extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses.

Over 700,000 people have been displaced and several thousand have been killed since the conflict in Cameroon began, with over 3.9 million currently in need of humanitarian support. ICE detainees returned to Cameroon face a high risk of being detained, beaten, disappeared, tortured, or possibly even killed.

Sent to: Representative Karen Bass Chair, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Christopher Smith, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Joaquin Castro, Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Lee Zeldin, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Zoe Lofgren, Chair, Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship, House Judiciary Committee; Ken Buck, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship, House Judiciary Committee; Representative Bennie Thompson, Chair, House Homeland Security Committee.

Sponsored by: Interfaith Immigration Organization

NOTE: The following Immigration focuses also are included as U.S. POLICIES THAT AFFECT OUR GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

ISSUE: FEDERAL REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION FUNDING

General Content: Support for federal funding for refugee related accounts and laying out immigration funding priorities. Urges the cutting of funding to agencies that increase family separation and investing in supporting a compassionate, just, and humane immigration and refugee resettlement system that upholds our nation's values by supporting appropriate adequate funds to support refugees, asylees, asylum-seekers, and other forcibly displaced populations in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) and opposing federal funding that drives unjust immigration enforcement, detention, and border militarization policies.

Sent to: Chairman Shelby, House, and Senate Appropriates Committee: Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger: CC: Mitch McConnell, Charles Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, CC: Kevin McCarthy

Sponsored by: Church World Service

ISSUE: SUPPORT OF THE MISSING PERSONS AND UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS ACT OF 2019

General Content: Both sides of the aisle are moving to pass a bipartisan bill through Congress right now that would address the humanitarian concern of migrant deaths and unidentified remains in remote areas of the border. The Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act was just passed in the Senate (S. 2174) by unanimous consent and is now headed to the House (H.R.

8772). Hundreds of people die every year attempting to cross the southern border. Border Patrol reports finding over 8,000 human remains since 1998, and many more are never found. Many of those remains are never identified due to a lack of resources for forensic practitioners in the border region. The bill moving through Congress will authorize funding for the critical work of identifying and transporting remains to give families closure. It will also authorize critical funding for 911-relay rescue beacons in the desert that will allow people in distress to call for emergency help. Many people who die in the region do so with a cell phone in their hand, but no cell service. These specially equipped rescue beacons will save lives. In addition to the above, the bill will require long-sought reporting by CBP related to migrant deaths and rescue beacons, and it will require GAO reporting.

Sent to: House Leaders

Sponsored by: Southern Border Communities Coalition

ISSUE: WELLBEING OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS - FEDERAL TRANSITION PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

General Content: The wellbeing of children of immigrants is imperative to our nation's future. One in four of all children in the U.S. live in immigrant families – an entire generation of American children. The Biden-Harris Administration and new Congress must center children of immigrants—both to address the extensive harm to immigrant children and families over the last four years, and to advance public policies, systems, and investments that ensure all children in the U.S. can grow, thrive, and reach their full potential.

Sent to: Biden-Harris Transition Team

Sponsored by: Children Thrive Action Network

ISSUE: ROOT CAUSES POLICY FRAMEWORK

General Content: We Joined other Interfaith groups in support of religious leaders in Central America, Mexico, and the U.S., who believe in the fundamental dignity of every person, are aware of the injustices perpetrated against indigenous and poor communities and are working together to address the roots causes of poverty, violence, and corruption which compel people in the region to leave their homes. This framework for action is offered with the goal of fundamentally changing economic, migration, development and human rights policies in the region while helping all our families and communities to survive this crisis and rebuild a future with justice and equity.

Sent to: Policy makers in the above countries

Sponsored by: Faith in Action

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

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gridlock among policymakers. Meaningful democracy reforms are also needed to lay the foundation for addressing the multiple crises that confront our nation

Sent to: Biden-Harris Transition Team

Sponsored by: Network

ISSUE: CFPB LEP DEBT COLLECTION

General Content: voice our concerns with the Bureau's approach to consumers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP consumers) in the recently finalized Debt Collection Practices (Regulation F) rule, and to encourage the Bureau to provide greater protections in its upcoming disclosure rule under the FDCPA. Providing meaningful language access in the debt collection process would be an important step in fulfilling the Director's stated intentions to prioritize progress for LEP consumers. Over 25 million people in the United States have limited English proficiency. While we appreciate the interest that the Bureau and its leadership have shown in LEP consumers, the Bureau needs to translate that interest into concrete action in its upcoming rule.

Sent to: Director Kathleen L. Kraninger
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Sponsored by: Americans for Financial Reform and Americans for Financial Reform
Education Fund

ISSUE: FOLLOW-UP CFPB LEP DEBT COLLECTION LETTER

General Content: supporting federal funding for refugee related accounts and laying out immigration funding priorities. Given that we expect to be rebuilding the resettlement program in the coming months, it is important that Congress considers additional funding for refugee accounts, above what the House & Senate have proposed so far for FY 2021 and that we emphasize our immigration-related priorities.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Church World Service

NAC FOCUS AREA: RACISM

ISSUE: WHY WE CAN'T WAIT – HR 40 REPARATIONS NOW

General Content: The ongoing mass protests police violence and racial inequality demand that we no longer be comfortable with the status quo. We need a national reckoning with structural racism in all its forms, which permeate every aspect of our society and create separate conditions for Black and white life in the U.S. House Resolution (HR) 40 is the answer to the moment we are in. It will establish a commission to study the brutality and inhumanity of slavery, its legacy, and its ongoing contemporary impacts, as well as develop proposals for redress and repair.

Sent to: House of Representatives as well as a public statement

Sponsored by: Human Rights Watch

NAC FOCUS AREA: VIOLENCE

**STATEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF
THE GOOD SHEPHERD, U.S. PROVINCES**

***A Call to Prayer for the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect and for Unity in the
Nation, November 11, 2020***

Sent to: Media Outlets

Sponsored by: Values Partnerships