

**ADVOCACY CENTER PRIORITIES AND NAC SIGN-ONS
BY U.S. PROVINCE LEADER: September 2020**

Prepared by Brigid Lawlor

COVID-19 RELATED SIGN-ONS

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: COVID-19 RELIEF THAT INCLUDES CHILDREN IN MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

General Content: A letter urgently calling on Congress to pass a COVID-19 relief bill that includes a stimulus payment for all families in need. Every federal economic stimulus bill passed thus far has excluded immigrants and their families. As a result, an estimated 3.5 million children living in mixed-status immigrant families, the majority of whom are U.S. citizens, have been denied the critical assistance their families need to ensure basic needs are met in the face of an urgent public health and economic crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that our wellbeing is deeply connected. One in four children living in the U.S. are children of immigrants and their wellbeing is imperative to our collective future. All children in the United States must be cared for.

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

Sponsored by: Children Thrive Action Network

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: COVID RELIEF BILL

General Content: Letter urging Congress to work together and pass a robust COVID relief bill before recessing for the elections. Our people and communities cannot wait until next year for action. As we approach the sobering loss of 200,000 lives in America with no end of the pandemic in sight, the vulnerable struggle under the weight of the health pandemic and crushing economic stagnation. As public servants elected to promote the common good, you must put aside destructive partisan gamesmanship and pass a robust COVID relief bill providing critical assistance to families and communities.

Sent to: Members of the Senate and House of Representatives

Sponsored by: Friends Committee on National Legislation

ISSUE: PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT (H.R. 2694)

General Content: The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would ensure that pregnant workers can continue safely working to support their families during their pregnancy by requiring employers to provide reasonable, temporary accommodations to pregnant workers so that they can remain in the workforce throughout their pregnancy. No worker should have to choose between the health/safety of their pregnancy and earning a paycheck. This letter specifically speaks to the moral imperative to protect the dignity of pregnant workers.

Millions of families rely on their earnings. In 2017, 41 percent of mothers were the sole or primary breadwinners in their families, while 23.2 percent of mothers were co-breadwinners. Whole families suffer when pregnant workers are forced out of a job.

Within the COVID-19 context, such critical accommodations might include proper protective equipment, telework, or staggered work schedules that offer employees commute times which avoid crowded public transportation and increased exposure.

Sent to: House of Representatives

Sponsored by: Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism & Women of Reform Judaism

NOTE: *On Sept. 17th, the Act passed in the House: 329-73. Now it goes to the Senate!*

ISSUE: EXTEND KEY CHILD NUTRITION WAIVERS THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

General Content: The U.S. Province Leaders previously signed onto a letter urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use its authority to extend the critical waivers to allow the continued operation of the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option. Today (September 14, 2020) the USDA provided additional guidance on the SFSP and SSO waiver extensions made on August 31st. Additionally, school districts and community sponsors will continue to need flexibility on these waivers throughout the rest of the school year. Now we are urging USDA to extend these waivers to June 30, 2021.

Sent to: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Sponsored by: Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

ISSUE: NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA) MILITARY HUNGER

General Content: Letter calling the Senate Armed Services Committee to prioritize hungry military families in the final FY 21 NDAA. The scope and severity of food insecurity for military families have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, and there is an urgency to take action to address this issue now. This moment has also highlighted the significant racial inequities that exist throughout our society, including within our Armed Forces. With service members of color overrepresented among low-income junior enlisted ranks (and underrepresented among officers and military leadership), the Military Family Basic Needs Allowance would help to correct a longstanding injustice by providing needed assistance to struggling military families who are disproportionately people of color.

Sent to: Senate Armed Services Committee

Sponsored by: Jewish Response to Hunger and the National Military Family Association

(This letter addresses both the focus area of poverty and racism)

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

ISSUE: GLOBAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACT (S.4139)

General Content: In a letter to Senators about the urgent need for funding to respond to the grave health, hunger, and economic crises in developing countries, we urge support for the Support for Global Financial Institution Pandemic Response Act, S.4139; and to ensure its provisions (U.S. support for issuance of Special Drawing Rights by the IMF), please move forward alongside it a funding package that includes \$20 billion for foreign aid and support for IMF expanding debt relief.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

ISSUE: LABOR VIOLATIONS IN MEXICO

General Content: The letter advocates for trade policies that center on the human dignity of every person and benefit the lives of the least of these in the United States and in the countries with which we have trading relationships.

Of note is the arrest on June 10, Susana Prieto Terrazas, a labor lawyer d in Matamoros, Mexico in the state of Tamaulipas. She supported workers in the formation of the SNITIS union and most recently had been advocating for safety equipment in factories and compensation for workers whose factories were closed due to COVID-19. Ms. Prieto feared contracting COVID-19 in prison, especially given pre-existing health conditions. She was released but persons associated with her suffered severe consequences.

COVID-19 has presented another threat to workers' rights in Mexico. Mexican workers in call centers and factories have faced incredible pressure to keep working, even when they are sick, or lose wages.

Sent to: Ambassador Lighthizer and Secretary Scalia

Sponsored by: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NAC FOCUS AREA: OTHER RELATED CONCERNS

ISSUE: 2020 CENSUS DEADLINE EXTENSIONS ACT

General Content: Senator Schatz and Senator Murkowski are introducing a clean, bipartisan bill to extend the statutory deadlines for apportionment and redistricting. The current statutory deadlines are not justifying the Census Bureau's decision to end the count one month early but will cause the agency to rush their back-end data quality checks.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Office of U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI)

ISSUE: IMPACT OF COVID-19 FOR RARE & CHRONIC DISEASE VOTERS

General Content: Letter with recommendations that state officials can still pursue to ensure rare and chronic disease patients can safely vote in this election. In addition, there are recommendations for educating voters in partnership with the patient community and for future elections.

Sent to: National Governors Association. The National Association of Secretaries of States and the National Conference of State Legislatures also copied

Sponsored by: American Diabetes Association and the Arthritis Foundation

NON COV-19 RELATED SIGN-ONS

NAC FOCUS AREA: IMMIGRATION

ISSUE: OPPOSE MORE FUNDING FOR CBP AND ICE IN FY21

General Content: Letter urging opposition to oppose any anomalies or any other funding mechanism that would increase funding for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in a Fiscal Year 2021 Continuing Resolution, including the anomaly requested for CBP by the Office of Management and Budget. The consequence of a Continuing Resolution - which continues Fiscal Year 2020's astronomical funding levels for CBP and ICE - will be harmful and deadly for countless immigrants, the millions who call the border region home, and people across the country now confronting armed CBP officials at political protests

Sent to: Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, and Ranking Member Fleischmann; Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Capito, and Ranking Member Teste

Sponsored by: Southern Border

ISSUE: ICE DETENTION ON CHURCH PROPERTY

General Content: Letter to tell ICE, DHS and our elected officials that faith communities demand freedom for Binsar and the protection of sensitive locations that are meant to ensure no ICE enforcement at houses of worship, hospitals, schools and public religious ceremonies or public demonstrations. Binsar Siahaan was arrested on September 10. He serves as the congregation's caretaker and lives with his family in a house on the property of Glenmont United Methodist Church in Silver Spring, MD. This is a clear violation of the agency's own sensitive locations policy. As faith communities committed to solidarity with immigrants, we must act swiftly to ensure that Binsar is released, and that ICE is held accountable for this atrocious act.

Sent to: Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, Senior Official Tony Pham, U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives,

Sponsored by: Church World Service

ISSUE: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW AMERICANS ACT OF 2020

General Content: Letter urging congress to support the New Americans Act of 2020. This bipartisan legislation directs the United States Department of Labor (DOL) to study the factors that lead to the underemployment and unemployment of immigrants and refugees who hold professional credentials earned outside the U.S.

Sent to: Members of Congress

Sponsored by: Upwardly Global, World Education Services, Church World Service

NAC FOCUS AREA: POVERTY

ISSUE: FAMILY CRISIS CASH ASSISTANCE ACT

General Content: To amend the Social Security Act to provide for a Family Crisis Cash Assistance Program, and for other purposes. The Family Crisis Cash Assistance Program is a permanent, automatic trigger-based cash assistance program. After a natural disaster (triggered by a Stafford Act declaration) or an economic crisis (triggered by a sudden increase in the unemployment rate or unemployment insurance claims), families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line receive monthly cash assistance until an off-trigger is met.

Sent to: Members of the Senate

Sponsored by: Office of U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI)

NAC FOCUS AREA: VIOLENCE

ISSUE: REINSTATEMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY

General Content: A letter to Attorney General Barr asking him not to accept an award at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast for reinstating the death penalty as it is in opposition to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our Catholic faith teaches that executions are an attack on human dignity that perpetuate a culture of violence. Recognizing the immorality of the death penalty, our Catechism states that it is “inadmissible” for faithful Catholics to condone or to participate in executions.

Sent to: Attorney General Barr

Sponsored by: Catholic Mobilizing Network, The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, and Sr. Helen Prejean