



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader,
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), with its 167 member-agencies operating over 3000 services sites across 50 states and the U.S. territories, has a long history of serving local communities and alleviating poverty. In 2021, the Catholic Charities' nationwide network assisted more than 15 million people.

As Congress considers an end of the year spending agreement for Fiscal Year 2023, I urge you to allocate additional funding for critical initiatives that serve low-income communities and fund essential humanitarian and disaster relief efforts. Please include the following **priorities** in any end-of-the-year funding agreement:

Family and Child Income Support and Nutrition:

- **Child Tax Credit/Earned Income Tax Credit.** Investing in a permanent refundable expanded Child Tax Credit, coupled with an extension of the Earned Income Tax Credit will continue to be highly effective in fighting poverty.
- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).** Increase funding to invest in child care programs to ensure that children have access to quality and affordable child care and that teachers are paid an adequate wage.
- **Child Nutrition Waivers.** Reestablish waiver authority to the USDA so that schools are able to provide free meals to all children or receive the higher Summer Food Program reimbursement for all meals served.
- **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (S.4431/H.R.1065).** This measure, which requires reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers, has overwhelming bipartisan support and will significantly reduce the hardships and discrimination that pregnant women suffer in the workplace.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Congress should **raise the asset limits for SSI beneficiaries** enabling them to have more savings in case of an emergency, without risk of losing their benefits. We also urge Congress to treat Puerto Rico and the territories in the same manner as the states.

Housing:

- **Multi-Year Mandatory Funding for Housing Vouchers** to allow more low-income families access to rental assistance, including project-based/tenant-based housing vouchers.
- **Expansion of and reforms to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit** to better serve the lowest-income and most marginalized households, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Chair of the Board
Neal Black

President & CEO
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

Episcopal Liaison
The Most Reverend
Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of Venice, FL



Disaster and Humanitarian Relief/Emergency Supplemental Funding:

- **Florida Disaster Supplemental Request (Rubio-\$33 Billion)** for areas devastated by hurricane Fiona in Florida and other necessary supplemental funding for other areas impacted by natural disasters during the past year.
- **Puerto Rico Disaster Supplemental Request (Grijalva-\$5 billion)** to provide emergency appropriations to rebuild and modernize Puerto Rico's power grid, making it resilient to natural disasters such as Hurricane Maria, and Fiona this year.
- **Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP).** Appropriate **\$130,000,000** and, in addition, a minimum of **\$200,000,000** for the purpose of providing shelter and other services to families and individuals encountered by the Department of Homeland Security begin to meet the rapidly growing demand for assistance.

Health and Behavioral Healthcare/Medicaid:

- **Extend current telehealth waivers for two years** to allow Congress to continue to evaluate and work on a permanent expansion of telehealth programs and ensure continued access to care for rural and underserved communities.
- **Establish 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage** and Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance continuous coverage for children as required federal benefits to address maternal mortality and improve the health and well-being of mothers, babies, and children.
- **Medicaid Cliff in U.S. Territories.** Congress must address the upcoming Medicaid fiscal cliff in Puerto Rico and the territories. In December of this year, the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMPA) will be lowered back to 55% which will harm access to care for millions of Medicaid beneficiaries. Congress should implement a permanent solution to this problem that should include eliminating the statutorily set pending caps and FMPA.

Immigration/Refugees/Human Trafficking:

- **Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA).** Adopting AAA will help address immigration status uncertainties and grant permanent resident status for over 75,000 of our Afghan allies and their families who fled Taliban rule.
- **American Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6).** We urge a bipartisan commitment to support a solution that provides permanent legal status for Dreamers, TPS and DED holders, thousands of whom are deeply rooted in our communities and live with the fear of deportation.
- **Fredrick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act (H.R 6552).** We support this bipartisan measure to continue and enhance our nation's efforts to combat human trafficking and support survivors.

Charitable Giving and Nonprofits: Nonprofits represent the third-largest employer in the country. Congress should renew and make permanent the universal charitable (non-itemizer) deduction and retroactively restore the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

CCUSA remains committed to carrying out the Gospel mandate of serving people in need and welcoming the stranger. As we carry out this work, we look forward to continued collaboration with Congress and the administration.

Sincerely,



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA