



## Protect the Poor and Vulnerable *In a Tough Budget, a Broken Economy and a Wounded World*

Catholic leaders from across the country come to Capitol Hill to offer hope at a time of fear and uncertainty, to safeguard human life and dignity at a time of economic crisis and continuing war, and to bring "charity in truth" to those in power. Our message reflects old values in new times.

- Put the needs of the poor and jobless first in our public priorities, budget and tax policies, and economic recovery efforts.
- Ensure that health care protects the life, dignity, consciences and health of all.
- Preserve poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance to promote a better, safer world.

At a time of economic crisis brought about by irresponsible action, we call for new responsibility and solidarity. We support budget, tax and economic policies that assist and protect "the least among us," offer decent jobs at decent wages for the unemployed, and preserve international assistance to the poorest people in the poorest places on earth. The everyday experience of Catholic parishes, Catholic Charities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and Catholic Relief Services makes clear the moral and human costs of the economic crisis, short-sighted budget cuts, environmental neglect, and global poverty, hunger and disease.

Our life and dignity agenda begins with the consistent defense of unborn human life and assistance to pregnant women and their children. Our priorities include: providing welfare, nutrition and housing assistance that respects human dignity and offers hope; U.S. leadership for a two-state solution that brings a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, recovery for Haiti, and a stable peace after the referendum in Southern Sudan; support for human rights, beginning with religious freedom and the defense of Christians and other minorities who are under attack; fixing a broken immigration system by adopting compassionate and comprehensive reform; promoting environmental justice including climate change policies that assist the poor in our own country and around the world; and other issues touching human life and dignity. In a spirit of "faithful citizenship," we come to Capitol Hill to urge action in these specific areas:

### **PUTTING THE POOR AND VULNERABLE FIRST IN BUDGET PRIORITIES**

In the face of historic deficits and rising costs of entitlement programs and war, the nation faces unavoidable choices on how to balance needs and resources and allocate burdens and sacrifices. The message of the Catholic community is as clear as Matthew 25 – a central moral measure of our nation and the federal budget is how "the least of these" are treated. Those who are jobless or live in poverty, those who are hungry or homeless do not have powerful lobbies, but they have the most compelling claim on our consciences and our common resources. The Catholic community supports policies that strengthen the safety net and opposes proposals that weaken it in this time of increasing needs and rising poverty.

In the debates and decisions to come over how to raise sufficient revenues, allocate limited resources, and balance competing interests, we urge our leaders to look at these choices from the "bottom-up": how to protect and defend the lives and dignity of the poorest and most vulnerable, not only in our own nation but around the world as well. We urge Congress and the Administration to adequately fund domestic discretionary programs and entitlement programs that protect low-income and vulnerable people – put those who are poor and vulnerable first.

## **HEALTH CARE THAT PROTECTS THE LIFE AND DIGNITY OF ALL**

In this new Congress, the debate over health care continues. Catholic teaching insists that health care is a fundamental human right, an essential protection for human life and dignity. Assuring health care that protects the life and dignity of all remains a national priority and moral imperative. Health care should not depend on a person's stage of life, where they work, how much they earn, where they live, or where they were born. In the ongoing debate, the Catholic bishops continue to support health care that:

- 1) ensures access to quality, affordable, life-giving health care for all;
- 2) retains longstanding requirements that federal funds not be used for elective abortions or plans that include them, and effectively protects conscience rights; and
- 3) protects the access to health care that immigrants currently have and removes current barriers to access.

Specifically, the bishops support legislation to fix the serious moral flaws in the health care law and continue to protect consciences and prohibit all federal funding for abortion: the Protect Life Act, H.R. 358; the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act H.R. 361; and the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, H.R. 3.

## **PRESERVE POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

On international issues, the Catholic community urges Congress to preserve \$20.25 billion (or 0.6 % of the federal budget) for poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts that save lives and reduce crushing poverty. U.S. international assistance is an essential tool to advance solidarity and enhance national and global security. U.S. foreign aid has improved the lives of many. It needs to be strengthened and better integrated into a comprehensive strategy with trade, agriculture and climate change policies.

We particularly support a range of essential programs that save lives and preserve human dignity: agricultural assistance to poor farmers; drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; cost-effective vaccines for preventable diseases; assistance to orphans and vulnerable children; mosquito nets to prevent malaria; food aid for famines, emergencies, and development; emergency health care, shelter, and reconstruction in disaster-devastated places like Haiti; peacekeepers to protect innocent civilians such as in Sudan and the Congo; assistance to vulnerable migrants and refugees fleeing conflict or persecution; and debt relief for poor nations. (See chart for detailed list of poverty-focused accounts supported by USCCB and CRS.)

If cuts are mandated in the broader Foreign Assistance budget, we urge Congress to make cuts in programs that do not serve the poorest persons and communities, and instead to give priority to those elements of programs that serve the poorest. For example, in the Economic Support Fund, assistance for Sudan and Haiti must be retained. In addition, the civilian capacity at the U.S. Agency for International Development needs to be maintained to effectively carry out these programs. If cuts are proposed in other international assistance programs, we urge our leaders to preserve essential help for the poorest people in the poorest places on earth.

The Catholic community urges the Congress and Administration to give moral priority to programs and policies that protect the life and dignity of those who are poor and vulnerable in a difficult budget year, a broken economy, and a wounded world.



**POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT**  
**and HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTS**  
**SUPPORTED BY USCCB and CRS**



<b><u>FUNDING ACCOUNT TITLE (\$ in thousands)</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2011<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b><u>CR Cuts<sup>2</sup></u></b>	<b><u>% Cut</u></b>
Child Survival and Maternal Health (including vaccines)	700,000	unknown*	
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	15,000	unknown*	
HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	350,000	unknown*	
Other Infectious Diseases (neglected tropical diseases)	1,140,000	unknown*	
Development Assistance (including Feed the Future)	2,980,896	-1,207,100	-40.5%
International Disaster Assistance	860,700	-431,000	-50.1%
Transition Initiatives (post-conflict countries)	48,000	-3,365	-7.0%
Migration and Refugee Assistance	1,605,400	-582,222	-36.3%
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	45,000	-365	-0.8%
Global Health and Child Survival (includes PEPFAR)	5,500,000	-654,300	-11.9%
Millennium Challenge Account (development projects)	1,279,700	-489,700	-38.3%
P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace	1,690,000	-687,000	-40.7%
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education	209,500	-109,500	-52.3%
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,182,300	-283,800	-13.0%
Peacekeeping Operations	285,950	19,050	+6.7%
International Development Association (including debt relief)	1,285,000	-342,695	-26.7%
Debt Restructuring	70,000	-39,900	-57.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,247,446</b>		<b>-26.7%</b>

\*Cuts included in larger account; impact on these subaccounts unknown.

(about 0.6% of the federal budget)

<sup>1</sup> FY 2011 Administration Request

<sup>2</sup> Proposed House Continuing Resolution (CR)