



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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April 9, 2020

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Wyden, Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady, Chairman Pallone, and Ranking Member Walden,

During this difficult time for our country, we are praying for our leaders in Congress and grateful for the decisive action you have already taken to ensure all who are affected by the Coronavirus pandemic have the resources they need. We commend the relief that has already helped meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable, helped employers retain their workers, and expanded unemployment benefits for those who have lost their jobs.

As the Catholic Church at the service of all God's people, we stand ready to work with you to advance the common good during this global and national health emergency, including by promoting the dignity and value of all human life, and by protecting poor and vulnerable people who are most at risk. Accordingly, as you move forward with your important work, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to use the money and policies in these bills to fund and promote life-affirming policies and not to advance the destruction of innocent human life.

As you contemplate a fourth legislative relief bill, we urge you to please consider the following requests which particularly fall within or are related to the jurisdiction of your committees. We ask that a fourth relief bill:

- **Increase the charitable deduction beyond the \$300 above-the-line contribution provided under the CARES Act.** Charitable institutions are being asked to do more than ever with severely reduced revenue. Further increasing the above-the-line portion of the charitable deduction would provide critical support to these charities.

- **Amend Section 2103 of the CARES Act to provide equal reimbursement treatment for nonprofits that are self-insured for unemployment benefits.** Section 2103 of the *CARES Act* applies to nonprofits that have opted to reimburse the state for unemployment compensation upon an employee's termination rather than pay the unemployment payroll tax. The nonprofits that prefer this model tend to retain workers for a long time and have little turnover—but the crisis has challenged these expectations. As drafted, Section 2103 provides unequal treatment to these nonprofits, as they are reimbursed for only one-half of the amount paid to the state to cover unemployment benefits while other employers' unemployment benefits are entirely covered by new federal assistance. We ask that Section 2103 be amended to provide one hundred percent reimbursement to nonprofits covered by this section to ensure that nonprofits that reimburse their state for unemployment compensation are provided equal treatment.
- **Provide free COVID-19 testing and treatment for all individuals living in the United States, including the undocumented, and ensure that those who utilize such services will not later be held deportable or excludable as a public charge.** We urge that the next legislative package ensure that testing and treatment for COVID-19 and related conditions are considered treatment for an emergency condition under 42 U.S.C. 1396b(v). Failure to address this problem would undermine efforts to contain the virus, potentially harming tens of millions of people, and it would put further strain on providers and states who will be burdened with uncompensated care costs. It is vital to ensure all have access to life-saving testing and care.
- **Provide tax incentives to all families for K-12 education expenses, including funding for education savings accounts.** We ask that Congress provide income tax credits that can be used for K-12 education tuition and expenses, or similar tax incentives such as expanded grace-period access and federally-funded education savings accounts, to help all families access an education best-suited for their children.
- **Advance healthcare options for the uninsured.** This is especially necessary with record claims of unemployment, which necessarily coincide with record numbers of people losing their employer-provided health insurance. To this end, Medicaid resources for states should be expanded. Increased federal investment in Medicaid can help states respond to public health needs and avoid cuts to healthcare and other vital services while serving as a proven tool to stimulate the economy. In addition, we ask that you consider how best to reach individuals who have recently lost their jobs, who do not qualify for Medicaid, and whose present situation makes getting private insurance for their families unaffordable. Methods of care for low-income and historically marginalized communities, such as community health centers, should be given special consideration for additional resources. We also encourage you to consider additional resources for training more palliative care workers and providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for front-line health care workers.
- **Amend the CARES Act to allow individuals with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), recently arrived refugees and asylees, and others to be eligible for cash payments.** The direct financial assistance to low- and middle-income Americans provided under the *CARES Act* has been an enormous source of immediate support for struggling individuals and families. More individuals and families

should be eligible for the \$1,200-per-adult and \$500-per-child cash assistance provided for them in that measure, including those mixed-status families with adults who have ITINs, children of U.S. citizens who have Social Security numbers, recently-arrived refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and others who otherwise would be eligible for comparable assistance, notwithstanding the complex ‘nonresident’ alien residency rules that currently apply to them.

- **Ensure that stimulus payments reach all low- and middle-income Americans without additional filing requirements, and that payments cover the duration of the crisis.** We welcome recent announcements by the Treasury and the IRS that Social Security recipients will not have to make additional filings to receive stimulus payments under the CARES Act. All groups such as recipients of SSI benefits and VA pension and disability benefits should be exempted as well. Given the challenges of the moment, eligible Americans should not have to make additional filings before receiving urgently needed stimulus payments. In addition, given the enduring nature of the crisis, additional payments should be considered to counter deepening economic insecurity for many families.

We are grateful for your consideration of these requests and look forward to discussing them in more detail with your staff. May you and your staff remain healthy and safe during this time.

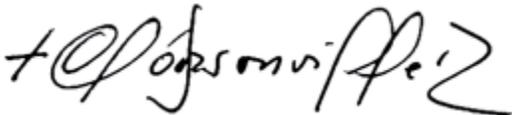
Sincerely,



Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development



Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, SJ
Bishop of Oakland
Chairman, Committee on Catholic Education



Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
Chairman, Committee on Migration