



April 14, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries,

We write today on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations in support of the Clergy Act ([H.R. 227](#)). This legislation would establish a two-year window for clergy to revoke their exemption from Social Security and Medicare taxes and enroll in the programs. We are pleased that the bipartisan measure was advanced unanimously by the House Ways and Means Committee in December 2025, and we therefore urge consideration by the full House of Representatives as soon as possible.

The Catholic Church in the United States is led and supported by tens of thousands of men and women who have been ordained or taken religious vows and minister to the pastoral needs of more than 60 million American Catholics; as well as to countless others through our educational, charitable, and medical apostolates. According to the most recent statistics, there are more than 33,000 priests and 36,000 religious brothers and sisters in the United States.¹ It is estimated that priests and religious brothers and sisters over the age of 70 outnumber those under the age of 70 by nearly three to one.²

Like it does for so many Americans, Social Security and Medicare play an important role in the retirement and health care benefits of many in the Catholic Church. H.R. 227 would offer much needed relief and support for priests and religious who previously opted out of Social Security and Medicare to opt back into the programs. For one reason or another, many clergy members, often decades prior and due to inaccurate financial advice, opted out of contributing. Under current law, this opt-out is permanent. Allowing clergy to opt back in would help them move toward a more complete retirement and offer more comprehensive financial and physical wellbeing as they transition into the next phase of their lives and ministries. Notably, the legislation stipulates that clergy must still meet the standard 10-year contribution requirement to earn full retired-worker benefits, meaning they will only receive benefits proportional to their own contributions to the program. The last time Congress

¹ Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2025.

² National Religious Retirement Office, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2025.



United States
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established a two-year window during which clergy could revoke their exemptions was in 1999.

Priests and religious have spent their lives in service to Christ by ministering to the faithful and those in need. The Clergy Act would help enable them to obtain better financial and physical health in their retirement. We urge you to bring this legislation to a floor vote as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelton J. Fabre".

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald A. Hicks".

Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks
Archbishop of New York
Chairman, Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations

CC:
The Honorable Vince Fong
The Honorable Mike Thompson