



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3000
WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG

January 29, 2024

Dear Senators and Representatives:

As the 118th Congress works toward finalizing the twelve regular Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills, we write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to renew requests we have made during this Congress for appropriations that support the common good and protect the poor and vulnerable. We also wish to encourage the same bipartisan cooperation that led to the enactment of the continuing resolution that avoided a government shutdown in November of last year (P.L. 118-22), and which excluded [harmful provisions](#) that would severely weaken humanitarian protections long enshrined in U.S. and international law.

With respect to the regular Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills, the USCCB, together with our partners, has submitted the following requests:

[Letter Urging Retention of All Pro-Life Provisions](#)

[Letter on Agriculture Appropriations](#)

[Letter on Migration-Related Appropriations](#) (SFOPS, LHHS, CJS, and DHS)

[Letter on D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program](#) (FSGG)

[Interfaith Coalition Letter on Nonprofit Security Grant Program](#) (DHS)

[Letter on Housing Appropriations](#) (THUD)

[Letter on Humanitarian and Development Assistance](#) (SFOPS)

These requests, summarized below, reflect the importance of protecting the dignity of all. We urge your consideration of the following as you move forward with the important work of funding the government.

- **Retain All Pro-Life Appropriations Riders** – We strongly [urge retention](#) of all new and longstanding pro-life riders across the appropriations bills. Provisions such as the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance in the House State and Foreign Operations (SFOPS) funding bill and others that counter new overreaching pro-abortion policies by the Administration, as well as longstanding policies such as the Hyde and Helms Amendments, provide essential protections for women, their preborn children, and the conscience rights of medical professionals.
- **Support International Poverty-Reducing Humanitarian and Development Assistance** – The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with low and middle-income nations, and enhance human security. We urge Congress to ensure the highest funding levels possible in Fiscal Year 2024, as explained in our [USCCB/CRS Letter on FY 2024 International Humanitarian and Development Assistance](#), as reflected in [USCCB testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations](#), and as indicated in the [USCCB/CRS chart of accounts](#).
- **Support Assistance to Help Families, Children, and Service Providers at Home and Abroad Cope with Food and Nutritional Deficits** – The Church is deeply concerned that the rise in the cost of food due to inflation puts stress on the poorest families to get the food they need to be healthy. Programs such as WIC that safeguard the health of low-income women and children should be funded appropriately. We [urge Congress](#) to pay particular attention to these needs.
- **Support Legal Immigration and Humanitarian Protection** – The USCCB works to advance the Church's concern for the lives and dignity of immigrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking, and other newcomers. This is underscored by our [migration-related appropriations requests](#), which urge robust funding for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, anti-trafficking programs, and other priorities.

- **Provide Robust Funding for Housing and Community Development** – The USCCB has long held that decent housing is a human right and its provision involves a public responsibility. The demand for affordable housing far outpaces the supply and there are not enough resources to assist all those who are in need. We [urge robust investments](#) in vital programs which address the human right to shelter.
- **Provide Adequate Funding for Federal Agencies Tasked with Caring for the Environment** – [The USCCB encourages](#) Congress to fulfill what Pope Francis has called an “inalienable responsibility” to preserve our environment and natural resources, by increasing funding levels for the agencies that are instrumental in conserving and caring for our nation’s most precious natural resources.
- **Provide Robust Funding for the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program** – The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program empowers parents to make the best educational choice for their children, and provides an educational lifeline for low-income families in the District of Columbia. We [urge Congress](#) to support those students who are at most risk of falling behind by increasing the funding for this vital program.

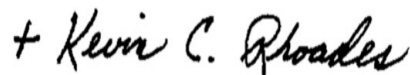
Finally, we wish to [reiterate](#) and underscore our deep concern about calls by some to condition enactment of any supplemental, continuing, or regular Fiscal Year 2024 funding bill on the inclusion of extraneous migration-related policy provisions for which there is no precedent in the appropriations process. This includes those contained in the [Secure the Border Act of 2023 \(H.R. 2\)](#), a divisive bill that the House narrowly passed last year, and other harmful migration-related proposals that have been circulating in the Senate in recent months. Such provisions would severely weaken humanitarian protections long enshrined in U.S. and international law without sustainably reducing migration. Catholic social teaching clearly recognizes a country’s right to secure its borders in accordance with the common good. However, the USCCB opposes measures that seriously contradict our nation’s fundamental commitment to humanitarian protection, especially those that would undermine protection for the sanctity of human life. We urge Congress to reject their inclusion in any appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



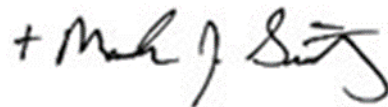
Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities



Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend
Chairman, Committee for Religious Liberty



Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly
Bishop of Spokane
Chairman, Committee on Catholic Education



Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz
Bishop of El Paso
Chairman, Committee on Migration



Most Rev. Borys Gudziak
Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy
of Philadelphia
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and
Human Development



Most Rev. A. Elias Zaidan
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of
Los Angeles
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and
Peace