

December 7, 2021

Dear Senators,

As heads of communion and national religious leaders from a variety of different faith traditions, **we urge you to quickly pass the Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376)**. The policies in this legislation would support human flourishing and creation care among our communities, nation, and world.

The Build Back Better Act contains a once-in-generation opportunity to help heal this country from its long-standing injustices and inequalities that were exposed by the COVID crisis and subsequent economic crisis. The provisions in this bill would advance us towards a society where every person can live with dignity. There are historic expansions to the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits that could cut child poverty nearly in half. There are momentous investments in childcare and universal pre-k, housing assistance, nutrition assistance, paid family and medical leave, and health care. The legislation protects undocumented members of our communities and provides meaningful reforms that assist immigrants mired in the green card backlog. Further, the Build Back Better Act puts over half a trillion dollars towards clean energy and addressing the climate crisis, which would protect human health and help address environmental injustices. Finally, the bill pays for these investments by raising taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations, bringing more fairness and equity to our tax code.

We applaud the House passing the Build Back Better Act. As the Senate considers the legislation, we urge you not to weaken any of these provisions. We are especially concerned by efforts to undermine the Child Tax Credit's effectiveness in reducing child poverty, such as work requirements or preventing immigrant families from accessing the credit. **We urge you to oppose any changes or amendments that would prevent disenfranchised groups from accessing vital assistance, including immigrants, the low-income families, and people of color.**

This bill works to address years of systemic issues and racial injustices. The legislation does not include all our priorities, but it is bold and impactful. It would be momentous step towards building God's Kingdom here on earth. In Proverbs (31.9) we are reminded of our responsibility to *"Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."* Our faith traditions command us to care for creation and look after those who are most vulnerable to the nation's action or inaction. We urge you to do the same. We implore you to quickly pass the Build Back Better Act."

Sincerely,

**Joyce Ajlouny**, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

**Rebecca Linder Blachly**, Director, Office of Government Relations, The Episcopal Church

**Rev. Jennifer Butler**, C.E.O., Faith in Public Life

**Rev. Eugene Cho**, President & CEO of Bread for the World

**Margaret Conley**, Director, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team

**Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune**, Chief Operating Officer, National Council of Churches USA

**Br. Paul D. Crawford, OFM Cap.**, President, Franciscan Action Network

**Pablo DeJesús**, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)

**Michele Dunne OFS**, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network

**Fran Eskin-Royer**, Executive Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

**Rev. Séamus Finn OMI**, Director OIP Trust/JPIC Office, U.S Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

**Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray**, President, Unitarian Universalist Association

**Susan Gunn**, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

**Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins**, Director of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office of Public Witness & Ministry at the United Nations

**Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe**, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church

**Sheila Katz**, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.

**Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston**, Executive Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)

**Abby J. Leibman**, President and CEO, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

**Mary J. Novak**, Executive Director, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

**Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner**, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, on behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism

**Jody Rabhan**, Chief Policy Officer, National Council of Jewish Women

**Diane Randall**, General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

**Rev. Amy E. Reumann**, Senior Director, Witnessing in Society, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Rick Santos**, President, Church World Service

**Sandy Sorensen**, Director, United Church of Christ Washington Office

**Rev. Ron Stief**, Executive Director, National Religious Campaign Against Torture

**Rev. Adam Russell Taylor**, President, Sojourners

**Carol Zinn, SSJ**, Executive Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious