



February 11, 2021

Dear Senator/Representative:

The Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN) represents a wide variety of religious organizations and faith traditions. We work to advance federal policies that will address the root causes of poverty so all individuals can live with dignity, ensuring a secure future for themselves and their families.

We welcome President Biden's American Rescue Plan, and we urge you to act quickly to pass a robust COVID relief package broad in scope and size that aligns with that plan. The COVID crisis is one of the most significant in our country's history, and it only makes sense that the response to the crisis be equal in scale. Furthermore, the high death rates and economic destruction faced by Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities have laid bare the impact of systemic racism and exclusion. As Congress prepares the next COVID package measures to reduce these shameful inequities must be critical components. The American Rescue Package does just that.

The December package was critical but only a stop-gap; the need remains enormous, with millions of Americans experiencing hunger, homelessness, and job loss as well as the incalculable loss of life. According to recent Census data, 24 million adults are in households struggling to put food on the table, and more than 15 million renters are behind on rent, facing imminent eviction and homelessness; including over 1 in 3 Black renters, over 1 in 4 Latino renters, and nearly 1 in 3 renters with children. Over one third of households are having difficulty covering basic needs and expenses, with communities of color facing the greatest hardships.

We urge you to prioritize the following policies:

- Prioritize recovery policies that center Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for adults not raising children and workers under the age 25.
- Expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC) by making it fully refundable, increasing it to \$3,000 per child and \$3,600 for children under 6, and institute as a monthly child allowance.
- Extend the increase in maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and increase the minimum monthly SNAP benefit for the duration of the economic downturn.
- Provide substantial emergency rental assistance with a strong national eviction moratorium.
- Provide robust funding for homelessness assistance.
- Extend enhanced Unemployment Insurance (PUA and PUC) throughout the duration of the pandemic and recession.

- Extend emergency paid family and medical leave.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

Much is uncertain in these challenging times, but this much is clear, without the will to act in a bold and aggressive manner, the economic and public health disaster will continue to ravage the country. As Congress continues to address the COVID crisis we urge you to utilize the [racial equity policy scorecard tool](#) and center racial equity in designing and implementing policies. We seek to rebuild our economy and society to be more inclusive, racially equitable, and just.

Sincerely,

Bread for the World

Catholic Labor Network

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the USA, Office of Justice and Ecology

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Sojourners

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society