



# CIRCLE *of* PROTECTION

January 11, 2024

Dear President Biden and Members of Congress,

We are writing as the Circle of Protection, a coalition of churches and ministries with a combined membership of 100 million people. This letter is about pending issues that are especially important to people in poverty. Jesus identified with people in need - people who are hungry or thirsty, strangers, people who can't afford proper clothes, and prisoners (Matthew 25).

We applaud the leaders of Congress from both parties for reaching a compromise on the overall funding level for non-defense programs in the current fiscal year. We hope Congress will move quickly to finalize the appropriations bills.

A very high priority in FY2024 appropriations is funding to provide **WIC nutrition assistance** for all eligible women and children who apply. Congress has maintained this principle on a bipartisan basis for more than 25 years. We also urge you to protect funding for other poverty-focused programs such as housing, child care for low-income families, rural development, K-12 education, and poverty-focused international development.

**International humanitarian assistance** is a matter of life-or-death for many of the world's poorest people, so the \$11 billion for humanitarian assistance that the President has requested is also a high priority for us.

Finally, the **Child Tax Credit** is one of the country's most powerful anti-poverty policies. Congress should not cut taxes for businesses without expanding the Child Tax Credit by an equal amount for low-income families who don't receive the maximum credit, prioritizing families with the greatest need.

We pray for each of you and all those in authority, with hopes for a more "quiet and peaceable life" (I Timothy 2:1-2) for the people of this nation.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. David Beckmann, Dean's Advisor for Political and Economic Justice, **Virginia Theological Seminary**; Coordinator, **Circle of Protection**

John A. Berry, President, **The U.S. Society of St. Vincent De Paul**

Rebecca Blachley, Director for Government Relations, **Episcopal Church**

Sean Callahan, President and CEO, **Catholic Relief Services**

Rev. Galen Carey, Vice President, Government Relations, **National Association of Evangelicals**

John Carr, Founder, **Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, Georgetown University**

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

Rev. Chris Kellerman, S.J., Secretary of Justice and Ecology, **Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States**

Silas Kulkarni, Director of Strategy & Advocacy, **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Rev. Carlos Malavé, President, **Latino Christian National Network**

Bridget Moix, General Secretary, **Friends Committee on National Legislation**

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President and General Secretary, **National Council of Churches**

Bishop A.J. Richardson, Senior Bishop, Tenth Episcopal District, **African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Kerry Alys Robinson, President and CEO, **Catholic Charities USA**

Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President and Founder, **National Latino Evangelical Coalition**

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

Rev. Jim Wallis, Inaugural Chair and Founding Director, **Center on Faith and Justice at Georgetown University**

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; President, **Skinner Leadership Institute**