

August 23, 2021

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator/Representative:

As you consider the year-end annual appropriations bills, as members of the Catholic Cares Coalition, we write to urge you to provide robust funding for purchasing, production, delivery, and outreach efforts for COVID-19 vaccines around the world.

The Catholic Cares Coalition is a national coalition of more than 55 Catholic religious and non-profit organizations promoting COVID-19 vaccination in our communities and working to address vaccine equity in the U.S. and around the world. Our organizations have been at the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world from the very first days of the pandemic. Like so many Americans, we have lost dedicated staff and loved ones to the cruel impacts of COVID-19. Despite this, our respective ministries continue the daily work of educating, feeding, sheltering, caring, and praying with those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is in this work and our shared belief that all people are born with innate dignity and worth that we understand the obligation we have as individuals and a nation to do our part to help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United States has been blessed with incredible life-saving vaccines for our nation. These vaccines have allowed our country to emerge from the pandemic's darkest days and begin a slow return to a life of family, celebration, and community. Through the incredible work of scientists, the support of public authorities, and the prayers of millions, we have made incredible progress in ensuring all people have access to a safe, effective, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines. However, if we are to end the COVID-19 pandemic, this blessing must be shared with those around the world still living through the deadliest days of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus recognizes no race, class, or national border. It is a truly global problem requiring global solidarity to come together to save lives and end the pandemic. The ongoing surges within the U.S. are a reminder that we cannot stop this pandemic anywhere unless we stop it everywhere! We therefore urge you, as you consider the fiscal year 2022 appropriations, to provide robust funding for global vaccine access and distribution.

To date, through our national efforts, the United States has provided over 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines around the world. Through this effort we are saving more lives every day. We thank you for your leadership in providing support to global vaccine efforts over the last year. However, the United States must continue to redouble our global efforts to distribute vaccines equitably and efficiently. We therefore urge you to provide additional funding and support for the manufacturing and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines. These efforts will help

ensure that the supply of COVID-19 vaccines is sufficient to meet the ongoing global need and help increase the capacity of low-income and developing countries to safely transport and store the vaccine.

We also urge you to include support for vaccine outreach efforts which include faith-based organization and leaders. These organizations in the United States and around the world are often at the front-line of efforts to care for those in need and are trusted community leaders. The COVID-19 distribution in the United States has demonstrated the incredible importance of ensuring vaccine delivery is supported by messengers who know and understand their communities. By investing in community outreach efforts, we can help to ensure that local communities are invested and actively involved in reaching members most in need in their communities.

Finally, we urge you to support efforts to strengthen health systems and global vaccine production capacity by investing and sharing resources with low-income countries. These investments not only provide an effective way to expand capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic but also help strengthen health systems around the world to be prepared for future health emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a devastating reminder that all of us are at risk if one corner of our globe has a weak public health system.

We thank you again for your leadership over the last year. The United States has a unique opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to all people in need around the world by supporting a robust global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We stand ready to work with you and with those in our communities to ensure that the promise of the COVID-19 vaccine becomes a reality for all people around the world. To learn more about our work, visit www.CatholicCares.org.

Sincerely,

Catholic Cares Coalition Signature Organizations

Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of U.S. Catholic Priests

Bons Secours Mercy Health

Catholic Charities USA

Catholic Climate Covenant

Catholic Health Association of the United States

Catholic Medical Mission Board

Catholic Relief Services

Christian Brothers Conference

Bishop Thomas R. Zinkula, JCL, JD, Diocese of Davenport

Diocese of Sioux City

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Felician Services, Inc.

Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Mission Service
Friends in Solidarity, Inc.
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
In Word and Witness
Magis Americas
Maryknoll Affiliates
Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
Maryknoll Lay Missioners
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Maryknoll Sisters
Missionary Society of St. Columban
National Association of Church Personnel Administrators
National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry
National Catholic Education Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Providence Health System
Saint Jude the Apostle
SOAR! Support Our Aging Religious
United States Catholic Mission Association