



U.S. Foreign Assistance and Faith Communities: Together Saving Lives

Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance Fly-In: Talking Points

WHY YOU?

As faith leaders you are uniquely positioned and urgently needed. Your unique voice can remind Members of Congress of the life-saving accomplishments of U.S. foreign assistance and the moral call to protect programs that focus on poverty, health, development, peace-building and humanitarian aid. Because human security remains undercut by hunger and thirst, extreme poverty and chronic poor health, a record-breaking refugee crisis, violence and disasters natural and man-made...and now COVID-19 — preserving and increasing funding is compassionate, morally right and wisely practical.

Your voice can urge Congress to fully fund and not rollback success. You can urge Congress to accelerate life-saving gains and continue American leadership that will save lives and help build toward a more secure world for all God's children.

You can remind Congress that faith-based organizations commit billions of dollars. We are doing our part! The generosity of faith communities significantly leverages federal dollars. Our faith-based organizations (FBOs) actively engage with the least and the last in terms of offering both material resources and hope. Many of the largest American FBOs are experienced U.S. Government implementers, on the front lines, trusted by local communities, and effectively working with local partners to ensure sustainability. As we ask for steady federal funding, our FBOs raise over \$5 for every public \$1 received, totally over \$6.5 billion, most in private funds. And, U.S. government funding, influence, leadership and convening powers are fundamental to our success. Whether or not an FBO takes federal dollars, we all see benefits from U.S. government engagement which provides coordination, enhances our ability to function in the field, and enables us to succeed in effectively serving others.

On the home front, faith communities are in all 50 states and have Congress' back. People of faith deeply appreciate the bipartisan Congressional support for this critical funding and oppose proposed cuts to the small International Affairs Budget, especially cuts to humanitarian, poverty-focused and peace-building assistance.

Speak from your faith values and your experiences: What calls you to the importance of America assisting our global neighbors in need? Share your experiences and stories that illustrate how this is important to you personally, to your faith community, and to our common values as a nation.

Feel free to include some of the following ideas and data in your Congressional meetings, but most important, make sure to express your personal passion and commitment to on-going U.S. foreign assistance:

COVID19: This historic pandemic exacerbates existing humanitarian needs. Experience from previous emergencies teaches that the most vulnerable people bear the brunt through increased malnutrition and poverty; the disruption and breakdown of supply chains; increased need for water and sanitation for hygiene and critical health services. The cost of meeting needs increases due to shortages, logistics and new safety protocols. For example, implementing procedures to prevent COVID-19's spread makes virtually every step-in delivering food assistance slower and more cumbersome.



U.S. Foreign Assistance and Faith Communities: Together Saving Lives

U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE WORKS! HISTORIC SUCCESS MEANS WE MUST SUSTAIN AND INCREASE PROGRESS. NOT ROLLBACK SUCCESS:

In an historic decline, 7 million fewer children will die this year than in 1990, according to UNICEF. 75% of countries have at least halved under-5 mortality which proves improved child survival is possible even in severely impoverished places. Such large-scale, measurable outcomes through poverty reduction, improved health and development, and humanitarian assistance must not be permitted to rollback ever, including during the demanding coronavirus pandemic.

PENNIES SAVE LIVES: In tight budget times, no part of the federal budget has a greater Return on Investment, benefitting more people, more cost-effectively. For example:

- \$1 a year per American funds all U.S. government foreign assistance programs to provide access to safe drinking water
- 50 cents a year funds America's contribution to finally eradicating polio
- \$3 a year funds work to defeat malaria

WE'RE FOR FAMILIES EVERYWHERE: Our well-being as a nation is intimately connected with the well-being of our most vulnerable neighbors at home and abroad. Reducing economic desperation and the potential for violent conflict is a priority for all of faith traditions.

URGENT LIFE-SAVING NEEDS REMAIN:

- **Early child death:** Millions of children under 5 still die annually, mostly from preventable diseases.
- **Education:** 132 million girls are not in school; 16 million will likely never attend in their lifetime.
- **No water and toilets:** Hundreds of thousands of healthcare facilities and schools still lack the safety and dignity of clean water and sanitation.
- **Food insecurity:** Even short bouts of malnutrition have devastating lifelong impact on children's health, learning ability and later economic potential.
- **Refugees and internally displaced persons:** We face the largest refugee crisis since World War II, with some 80 million people urgently in need of assistance. These populations suffer unimaginable misery and violence is the leading cause of forced displacement.