

OPEN LETTER FROM 27 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATORS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

July 27, 2018

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration

Dear Chairmen Hoeven and Aderholt, and Ranking Members Merkley and Bishop,

As members of the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance, a network of over 50 faith-based organizations advocating for the world's most vulnerable people, we would like to thank you for your continued support in robustly funding life-saving education, child development, food assistance, and security programs within the Agricultural appropriations bill. Our community is committed to empowering those suffering from extreme poverty, hunger, and food insecurity around the world, which is why we appreciate both the sustained and increased funding levels to these accounts within the International Affairs and Foreign Agricultural Service budgets. Thanks to your committee's efforts, the U.S. government has made impressive strides in combating global hunger and malnutrition. Just last year alone, international food assistance made an extraordinary impact for 49 million people in 61 countries worldwide.

Despite the significant progress that has been made, world hunger driven by violent conflict and climate-related shocks is on the rise. Today, 815 million men, women, and children go to bed hungry, and lack nutritious food necessary to live. Additionally, 124 million people in 51 countries face crisis-level food insecurity or worse, which requires urgent humanitarian action to save lives, protect livelihoods, and reduce hunger and malnutrition. After steadily declining for over a decade, food needs of extremely vulnerable communities are increasing.

As your committees look towards conference negotiations for fiscal year 2019, we urge you to provide the maximum level of funding possible for these vital programs that work to alleviate suffering for people living in extreme poverty and food insecurity. Specifically, we ask that you provide no less than:

- **\$1.7 billion for Food for Peace, as proposed by the Senate**
- **\$210.25 million for McGovern-Dole, as proposed by the Senate**

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The Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance will continue to promote the human dignity of each individual, recognizing that sustained and increased levels of foreign assistance funding is not only a smart investment, but also the morally right action to pursue. Thanks to the collective efforts of U.S. leadership, global partners, and the faith community, millions of people will no longer have to live a life of dealing with the consequences of hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity, and chronic disease. Undoubtedly, you and your congressional colleagues have played an important role in achieving this reality, and we hope to continue to work alongside of you to ensure these critical investments remain well funded in the future.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

1. Adventist Development and Relief Agency
2. American Hindu World Service
3. American Jewish World Service
4. Bread for the World
5. Children's Medical Ministries
6. Christian Connections for International Health
7. Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
8. Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
9. Church World Service
10. Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic)
11. Disabled Children's Fund
12. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
13. Faiths for Safe Water
14. Food for the Hungry
15. IMA World Health
16. Islamic Relief USA
17. Islamic Society of North America
18. Jewish Council for Public Affairs
19. Leadership Conference of Women Religious
20. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
21. Mennonite Central Committee, U.S, Washington DC Office
22. National Council of Churches
23. Presbyterian Church (USA)
24. Sojourners
25. The Episcopal Church
26. The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
27. United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries

Cc: Members of the House and Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies