

Take Action Now Tell Congress: Cuts Will Cost Lives!

November 2012

Cuts to Poverty-Focused International Assistance will Cost Lives!

***Tell Your Members of Congress to oppose cuts to
life-saving poverty-focused international assistance.***

Congress is expected to take up legislation after the November 6 election that could potentially cut poverty-focused international assistance that you and thousands of others in the Catholic community worked so hard to protect this past year. You know that this small amount of funding that represents less than 1% of the federal budget saves millions of lives. As Congress returns for a Lame Duck session, your voice is needed! Urge your Senators and Representative to preserve poverty-focused international assistance during Congressional deliberations on debt reduction and appropriations legislation. Urge them to pass fiscal year (FY) 2013 poverty-focused international relief and development funding at the levels passed by the Senate earlier this year, and to avoid sequestration by negotiating a bipartisan resolution to our debt crisis.



What would cuts mean to our brothers and sisters in the Congo and worldwide? Any cuts to poverty-focused international assistance could mean life or death for our brothers and sisters throughout the world. In Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) conflict over land, ethnicity, and natural resources has caused immense suffering. But with funding provided by the U.S. government, Catholic Relief Services and the Church are working with communities to ensure that the future is brighter and safer.

By bringing community members together to learn about, prepare, and plan for possible threats, early warning systems have kept people safe and

protected them from harm. In fact, as a result of the success of this program, CRS has recently been awarded a multi-year grant from the US government to expand this civilian protection program to other parts of the DRC, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. These efforts will be jeopardized if Congress fails to act and additional cuts take place.

TAKE ACTION!

Send an email to your Senators and Representative today!

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 4th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017
www.usccb.org/globalpoverty
globalpoverty@usccb.org • (202) 541-3160

Catholic Relief Services
228 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD 21201
www.crs.org/globalpoverty
globalpoverty@crs.org • 1-866-608-5978

MESSAGE TO MEMEBRS OF CONGRESS

Dear Senator/Representative:

As a supporter of the Catholics Confront Global Poverty initiative of Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to ensure that funding levels for international poverty-focused assistance are not reduced during Congressional deliberations on debt reduction and FY 2013 appropriations.

As a concerned member of my community and a Catholic, I call upon you to resolve urgently our fiscal concerns and future unsustainable deficits. As a government leader, you have the privilege to act for the common good. I ask that you join with Members across the aisle to put everything on the table to resolve our fiscal crisis: increased revenue, fair and just entitlement reform, unnecessary military and other spending. As the world's wealthiest and most powerful nation, we have an obligation to resist disproportionate cuts to programs that assist the poor and vulnerable at home and abroad.

If the government fails to act, sequestration would take effect on January 2, 2012 and cut approximately 8.2% from international poverty-focused relief and development assistance. International poverty-focused assistance is less than 1% of the federal budget. I strongly urge you to reject these across the board cuts and make more strategic decisions about United States' spending priorities. An 8.2% cut to poverty-focused assistance is life-threatening and would mean, among other things:

- 656,000 fewer children will have access to a quality primary school education annually;
- HIV/AIDS treatment will not be available for 276,500 people, potentially leading to 63,000 more AIDS-related deaths and 124,000 more children becoming orphans;
- 3.33 million People will lack access to lifesaving food aid.

I urge you to support the Senate levels for international poverty-focused relief and development accounts in FY 2013 in State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations, as well as Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole funding (in Agriculture appropriations). Poverty-focused international assistance provides hope from the American people by funding: disaster response (including support to refugee), development programs (such as water and education), disease-prevention (such as HIV/AIDs) and peacebuilding. Refugees fleeing the violence in Syria are only the latest to rely on US assistance. This assistance helps people to break the cycle of poverty. In fact, this November, CRS celebrates its 1 millionth partner who will step out of poverty with a microloan.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent life or death issue.

Sincerely,