

**OPEN LETTER FROM 32 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO PROTECT
BASE AND OCO LEVELS FOR FY2018 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET**

February 27, 2017

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Black
Chairwoman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Ranking Member
Committee on Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

We are national faith-based organizations committed to saving lives and advancing the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized persons and communities across the world. We support U.S. investments in international humanitarian and poverty-focused assistance and peacebuilding programs that alleviate suffering from hunger, extreme poverty, debilitating illness, complex emergencies and violent conflict.

As you finalize a budget resolution for fiscal year 2018, we urge you to support no less than **\$58.8 billion for the International Affairs Budget**. This is consistent with the current Continuing Resolution levels for fiscal year 2017 - \$39.6 billion in base funding, and \$19.2 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). Critical humanitarian and poverty-focused programs provide strong return on investment to the U.S. taxpayer, helping create a healthier world for everyone, and generating goodwill toward the United States.

Sustained funding from the base account is important for implementing organizations to plan effective programs and build mutually beneficial partnerships to successfully address poverty, violent conflict, and disease. While we remain concerned by the growing reliance on OCO funds for humanitarian assistance programs, these funds are critical to respond swiftly and adequately to protracted conflicts and complex emergencies through the International Development Assistance, Complex Crises and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts.

Faith-based organizations are uniquely supported by millions of Americans, raising more than \$6 billion a year, with 88 percent coming from private sources, and are often the on-the-ground implementers of U.S. government assistance. We are actively engaged around the world assisting and empowering the most vulnerable and marginalized populations with tools for a self-sustaining and more prosperous future. We are doing our part, but we cannot do it alone. The continued leadership of the U.S. government is crucial. Helping the most vulnerable at home and abroad to help themselves is at the heart of the American character and essential to U.S. and global human security.

We urge you to maintain --not pull back from -- the many gains made in recent years. In so doing, Congress will make possible continued U.S. global leadership to save lives and build a world of

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peace and prosperity for all God’s children. Recognizing the budget constraints in which you are working, we stand ready to work with you as you discern the nation’s priorities for 2018.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

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| 1. Adventist Development and Relief Agency | 17. Islamic Relief USA |
| 2. American Hindu World Service | 18. Islamic Society of Northern America |
| 3. American Jewish World Service | 19. Jewish Council for Public Affairs |
| 4. Bread for the World | 20. Leadership Conference of Women Religious |
| 5. Catholic Medical Mission Board | 21. Lutheran World Relief |
| 6. Children's Medical Ministries | 22. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns |
| 7. Christian Connections for International Health | 23. Mennonite Central Committee |
| 8. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness | 24. Muslim Public Affairs Council |
| 9. Church World Service | 25. Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church |
| 10. Conference of Major Superiors of Men | 26. Presbyterian Church USA |
| 11. Disabled Children's Fund | 27. The Episcopal Church |
| 12. Evangelical Lutheran Church of America | 28. Union for Reform Judaism |
| 13. Faiths for Safe Water | 29. United Church of Christ-Justice and Witness Ministries |
| 14. Food for the Hungry | 30. United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society |
| 15. Friends Committee on National Legislation | 31. U.S. National Council of Churches |
| 16. IMA World Health | 32. World Vision |



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