

**OPEN LETTER FROM 27 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO PROTECT  
BASE AND OCO LEVELS FOR FY2017 SFOPS BILL**

April 11, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

We are national faith communities and 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 release 302(b) funding allocations for fiscal year 2017, we urge you to support no less than **\$52.7 billion** for the State-Foreign Operations (SFOPS) appropriations bill. We also ask that you increase base level funding within the bill. 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.

Robust funding from the base account is important for on-the-ground agencies to plan effective programs and build sustainable partnerships to successfully address poverty, violent conflict, and disease. In this regard we are concerned by the continued use of overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds for humanitarian assistance. Without decreasing total humanitarian funding, we urge Congress to incrementally move OCO humanitarian funds into the base International Development Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) accounts in order to respond adequately to protracted conflicts and complex emergencies.

Using primarily privately generated resources, faith-based organizations are actively engaged around the world assisting those who are the least and the last in terms of material resources. We are doing our part, but we cannot do it alone. The partnership 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 global human security.

We urge you to accelerate --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 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 2017.

Thank you!

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Sincerely,

1. ADRA International
2. American Hindu World Service
3. American Jewish World Service
4. Bread for the World
5. Catholic Medical Mission Board
6. Children's Medical Ministries
7. Christian Connections for International Health
8. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness
9. Church World Service
10. Conference of Major Superiors of Men
11. Disabled Children's Fund
12. The Episcopal Church
13. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
14. Faiths for Safe Water
15. Food for the Hungry
16. Friends Committee on National Legislation
17. Global Poverty Project
18. IMA World Health
19. Islamic Relief USA
20. Islamic Society of North America
21. Leadership Conference of Women Religious
22. Office of Social Justice, Reformed Church in North America
23. Presbyterian Church (USA)
24. Union for Reformed Judaism
25. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
26. The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
27. World Vision



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