

Jubilee USA Network
110 Maryland Ave. NE, Ste 210
Washington, D.C. 20002

November 9, 2023

For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.' (Matthew 25:35-40)

Dear Members of Congress,

As religious leaders we write to request action that enables Puerto Rico, our home, to promptly, fully and permanently support nutrition assistance benefits for all its people in need. Please include Puerto Rico in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Since 2015, we have been calling for measures on Puerto Rico's debt and economic crisis, later aggravated by natural disasters, earthquakes and the COVID pandemic. We worked with Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress and the White House calling for debt relief and a comprehensive called strategy for economic and social recovery encompassing jobs, disaster aid, infrastructure, tax and social programs.

In spite of the recent debt reduction deal, due to the fiscal conditions accompanying it and amidst rising inflation, more families and children depend on food aid. Because Puerto Rico is not part of SNAP and receives a capped nutrition block grant, every year food assistance falls short of needs in the island, where nearly 60% of children live in poverty. The shortfall becomes more pronounced in times where disasters or other emergencies hit.

Our Jubilee religious traditions call for us to take and seek action that realizes a world where there is enough for everybody.

It is in this spirit that we request your legislative actions this year ensure Puerto Rico transitions as soon as possible into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that all states benefit from.

We continue to hold you and your public service in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Monsignor Roberto O. González Nieves OFM
Metropolitan Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Juan in Puerto Rico

Monsignor Rubén González Medina CMF
Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ponce in Puerto Rico

Monsignor Eusebio Ramos Morales
Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Caguas in Puerto Rico

Reverend Idalia Negrón Caamaño
Bishop of the Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Lizzette Gabriel Montalvo
Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Hilda Robles Florán
General Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico

Reverend Zodet Zambrana
Moderator Boriquén Synod of the Presbyterian Church USA in Puerto Rico

Reverend Eunice Santana Melecio
Director of the Caribbean Ecumenical Institute of Action and Formation

Reverend Edgardo Caraballo Marin
Executive Minister Baptist of the Churches of Puerto Rico

Reverend Edward Rivera Santiago
General Pastor United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Felipe Lozada Montañez
Emeritus Bishop of the Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Héctor Soto Vélez
Executive Director of the Council of Churches of Puerto Rico

Reverend Esteban González Dobles
Former General Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico

Reverend Héctor F. Ortiz Vidal
Emeritus Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Rafael Moreno Rivas
Emeritus Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Juan A. Vera Méndez
Emeritus Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Heriberto Martínez Rivera
General Secretary of the Puerto Rico Bible Society

Reverend Enrique Camacho
Executive Director of Cáritas (Catholic Charities) of Puerto Rico

Endorsements

Most Rev. Borys Gudziak
Archbishop of Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Reverend Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson
General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

Reverend Marco Cable
President, Disciples Overseas Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Co-Executive,
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Dr. Peter Makari
Transitional Executive, Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ and Co-Executive,
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Reverend Bronwen Boswell
Acting Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA)

John Hill, Interim General Secretary, The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
General Secretary/President, National Council of Churches

Reverend Dr. Gabriel Salguero
President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NALEC) and Pastor, The Gathering Place

Eric LeCompte
Executive Director, Jubilee USA Network