



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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October 25, 2005

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

We understand that the House of Representatives could vote as early as this week to increase from \$35 billion to \$50 billion the amount of reconciliation cuts to mandatory spending programs. At the same time, House committees are proceeding to write reconciliation measures that exceed their assigned targets for spending cuts.

Should the House proceed with these increased reconciliation cuts, we strongly urge that there be no additional cuts to essential services for the poor, both here and abroad. As Bishop William Skylstad, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote to the House of Representatives in February concerning the budget process, "Congress should structure a budget that guarantees adequate funding to assist those trying to escape joblessness or move beyond welfare, educate their children, gain access to health care, or overcome hunger and homelessness," and that allows our nation to respond to "relief, development, and health needs in Africa and other underdeveloped parts of the world ..." (A copy of the letter is enclosed.)

According to some reports, the effort to increase the cuts to spending programs is at least in part a response to the unanticipated costs of recovery and rebuilding in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We will oppose any effort to pay for the costs of Katrina and Rita by cutting services in essential programs that serve the basic needs of low-income or vulnerable people.

In these difficult times, Congress and the nation face tough decisions and must make hard choices. Be assured you have our ongoing help and prayers as you face the responsibility before you.

Sincerely yours,

Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio
Bishop of Brooklyn
Chairman
Domestic Policy Committee

Most Rev. John H. Ricard SSJ
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee
Chairman
International Policy Committee