



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

As the U.S. Congress prepares to take up a continuing resolution (CR) funding measure in the coming days, I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to address HR. 5525, the House-proposed "Continuing Appropriations and Border Enhancement Act of 2024".

On numerous occasions over the past several decades, the USCCB has called for bipartisan action to avert or bring an end to federal government shutdowns and the hardships that come when Congress and administrations fail to reach agreements on such actions. As the beginning of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 approaches, the nation once again faces the possibility of a government shutdown. As always, the Catholic bishops of the United States stand ready to work with leaders of both parties to address this situation.

With regard to H.R. 5525, several of my brother bishops [wrote to Congress](#) on September 11, 2023, detailing the USCCB's FY 2024 continuing and emergency funding priorities in the areas of enforcement of child labor laws, protection of migrant children, refugee resettlement, domestic assistance, international assistance, humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, the Shelter and Services Program, and other matters. Also in that letter, they underscored our deep concern about calls by some Members of Congress to condition enactment of fiscal year 2024 funding bill on the inclusion of the "Secure the Border Act of 2023" (H.R. 2), a divisive border and immigration bill that the House narrowly passed earlier this year and that we opposed in a [letter sent to the House](#) on May 5, 2023.

Unfortunately, H.R. 5525 contains many counterproductive and harmful provisions from H.R. 2. My brother bishops and I continue to believe that such provisions would severely weaken humanitarian protections long enshrined in U.S. and international law. As my brother bishops wrote earlier this month, Catholic social teaching clearly recognizes a country's right to regulate its borders in accordance with the common good, but "the USCCB opposes measures that seriously contradict our nation's fundamental commitment to humanitarian protection, especially those that would undermine protection for the sanctity of human life." Because many of these provisions from H.R. 2 would do just that, the USCCB urges you to reject their inclusion here. Proceeding with their inclusion would make the measure objectionable and untenable. Immigration reform is long overdue, and compromise is necessary to achieve it, but unjust ultimatums must be rejected.

Finally, the bishops renew our call for bipartisan cooperation on a CR to avoid a government shutdown and [enact a just budget](#) that reduces future unsustainable deficits, protects poor and vulnerable people, advances the common good, and promotes human life and dignity. The Conference remains committed to working with you and the Administration toward these ends.

Thank you for considering these views and for your work in service of the common good.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy P. Broglio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops