



May 10, 2022

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

We are writing on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty and Catholic Charities USA regarding the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act (H.R. 5129) (the Act).

A crucial element of our nation's fight to eradicate poverty, the Community Services Block Grant program (CSBG) capitalizes on the unique ability of local community groups, including Catholic Charities agencies, to meet their neighbors' needs. To that end, for 24 years, CSBG's charitable choice provisions (42 U.S.C. § 9920) have provided the baseline protections necessary for faith-based organizations to participate in CSBG programs on equal footing.

We strongly support CSBG and Congress's efforts to reauthorize it. CSBG embodies two fundamental concepts of Catholic social teaching: the preferential option for the poor, and the relationship between solidarity and subsidiarity.<sup>1</sup>

However, we are deeply concerned that H.R. 5129 would remove the time-honored charitable choice provisions that have allowed CSBG to flourish. The protections these provisions set out are modest and eminently reasonable, and the Act's abandonment of a successful status quo will only hurt the people that the faith community serves. It is essential that the charitable choice provisions be restored to H.R. 5129.

Please know of our prayers for you as you deliberate over this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan  
Archbishop of New York  
Chairman, Committee for Religious Liberty

Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.  
President and CEO  
Catholic Charities USA

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<sup>1</sup> See U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 50 (“While the common good embraces all, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need deserve preferential concern. A basic moral test for our society is how we treat the most vulnerable in our midst”); Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 351 (“In order to respect both of these fundamental principles [solidarity and subsidiarity], the State's intervention in the economic environment must be neither invasive nor absent, but commensurate with society's real needs”).