

January 21, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write as national faith-based bodies and organizations requesting that you re-establish a robust White House faith-based office. We deeply appreciate the outreach of your Biden-Harris transition teams over the past two months—truly validating that your Administration sees faith partners across a range of faith traditions as important for both policy and outreach with people across the country.

The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in the Obama-Biden Administration was extremely helpful to both the faith community and policy makers. A fully functioning faith-based office (whatever the name) with appropriate funding is critically important to facilitate fruitful partnerships with faith and civil society organizations, and to ensure that members of your Administration have substantial and timely communication with the faith community.

The voice of the faith community provides an important component in the deliverance, planning and implementation of policy and can inform the writing of legislation. People of faith see engagement with government as a fundamental part of the workings of democracy. The work of government must be wise and compassionate as it pursues policies for the common good. Engagement with the faith community enhances the work of government and enables it to be better informed on decisions to be made.

Faith-based organizations are often the advocates and allies of last resort for the most disenfranchised Americans and issues of deepest moral complexity in our national dialogue, such as health, immigration, racial justice, climate, poverty, peacemaking and other issues. As such, we are often positioned to provide an important avenue for bi-partisanship and healing in helping to build consensus and the willingness to act.

We ask that these vital functions be included in a restored and reinvigorated high-level, fully functioning White House faith-based and community partnerships office.

- Coordinate outreach to and input from faith-based and civil society organizations, serving as a liaison office for faith traditions and religious denominations across the United States.
- Oversee and coordinate the departmental faith-based offices across the rest of governmental agencies, providing wide access for faith organizations to the policy staff of your Administration.

- Play a strong role in U.S. domestic policy, since faith-based groups will be critical for a number of planned programs. A revitalized Office of Religion and Global Affairs at State should have a similar role for faith-based input into U.S. foreign policy.
- Facilitate financial partnerships with faith-based and community organizations with the purpose of enhancing the lives of people who are vulnerable, marginalized and subject to racial discrimination.
- Connect faith-based volunteers and leaders with national initiatives either of the Administration as a whole or faith-specific programs that come directly out of the faith-based office.
- Serve as a point of contact for faith organizations to get answers and insights when grassroots faith leaders across the country have questions, or input, on various Administration policy or programmatic initiatives.
- Serve as a conduit for us to share messaging with the Administration that best communicates with people of faith throughout the country on key policy goals and initiatives.
- Provide an effective channel of communication for your Administration to get its voice out in the national faith community in cities and rural areas, featuring a representative of the White House faith office speaking directly with our grassroots on policy, special initiatives, and even points of national crisis or disaster should they emerge.

We look forward to a close and productive collaboration in the years ahead. One way to ensure excellent communication and build relationships is for the Director or staff of the White House faith-based office to meet periodically with gatherings of the Washington office staff of our organizations who participate in the Washington Inter-religious Staff Community (WISC) and WISC Heads of Washington Offices.

Please know that you, Vice President Harris, your families and the members of your Administration are very much in our prayers.

American Friends Service Committee
 American Hindu World Service
 Bread for the World
 Catholic Labor Network
 Center on Conscience & War
 Christian Connections for International Health
 Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice (OSJ)
 Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
 Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
 Church World Service
 Churches for Middle East Peace
 Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
 Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces.
 Creation Justice Ministries
 Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)

Disciples Justice Action Network
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
The Episcopal Church
Faith in Public Life
Friends Committee on National Legislation
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Interfaith Worker Justice
Islamic Relief USA
Islamic Society of North America
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jubilee USA Network
Justice Revival
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NETWORK, Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Shoulder to Shoulder
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI-USA)
United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries