



ACTION ALERT

Tell Congress to Help Poor and Unemployed Families

November 12, 2010

Since the beginning of the recession, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been vocal and steadfast in advocating for the most vulnerable among us. In 2009, during consideration of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, Bishop William F. Murphy urged Congress to “make the lives and dignity of poor families and vulnerable workers central priorities.” Over a year and a half later, and despite the fact that the recession has officially ended:

- Over 14 million people still lack gainful employment
- 39 million Americans live in poverty
- 12.9 million children--over 20%--live in poverty
- Over 3 million homes of American families have been foreclosed, and over 50% of Americans worries about its ability to pay rent or mortgage next month

In *Caritas In Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI affirms:

Being out of work or dependent on public or private assistance for a prolonged period undermines the freedom and creativity of the person and his family and social relationships, causing great psychological and spiritual suffering. . . . the *primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity*. (#25)

Next week, Congress will return to Washington, D.C. to conclude its legislative business for the year. At the very least, Congress must act to safeguard the families that have been ravaged by the recession and create jobs with what the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* calls a family wage: “sufficient to maintain a family and allow it to live decently.”

Call your senators and representative at 1-800-826-3688 (Capitol Switchboard) and tell them before adjourning the 111th Congress, they must protect families and provide them with dignified wages by:

- Extending Unemployment Insurance through 2011;
- Extending the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF), which has allowed states to create over 200,000 jobs for low-income families;
- Extending the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and ensure that they remain refundable; and
- Providing \$1 billion for low-income housing through the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF).

To find your senators and representative, go to www.senate.gov. and www.house.gov

For more information, contact Tom Mulloy, Domestic Policy Advisor, (202) 541-3445 or tmulloy@usccb.org.