

NHCLC Urges Congress to Extend Food Assistance for Families

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference is urging Congress to extend food assistance for families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a Thursday letter addressed to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, Speaker Nanci Pelosi and House of Representatives Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, the organization said, "Access to nutritious food is not simply a matter of meeting a humanitarian need. It is a matter of ensuring justice—and in our view, biblical justice—for men, women and children who were made in the image of God."

The full letter is included in its entirety below:

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

We write to you as local pastors ministering in Hispanic and minority communities across our nation to urge you to pass legislation to extend food assistance for families in need.

Over the past few months we have witnessed as the COVID-19 pandemic has swept across the United States, bringing immense suffering and hardship to countless families. While our entire nation is reeling from the impact of this crisis, research clearly shows that Hispanic and Black communities are bearing the brunt of the pandemic.

Preexisting inequalities, such as having lower access to health care, gainful employment and quality education, have created the perfect storm for the pandemic to thrive in

Hispanic and Black communities. The result of this is Hispanics and Blacks being disproportionately infected and killed by COVID-19 and suffering higher rates of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity compared to other Americans.

Access to nutritious food is not simply a matter of meeting a humanitarian need. It is a matter of ensuring justice—and in our view, biblical justice—for men, women and children who were made in the image of God.

We are grateful for the efforts Congress has made to provide support for families during this crisis. The CARES Act helped many families stay afloat during one of the worst economic downturns in our nation's history.

We hope the forthcoming HEALS Act will continue to help families in need, yet in its current form, this legislation fails to extend nutritional assistance to families in our communities. Without this assistance, many Hispanic and Black families who are struggling to put food on their tables will face a dire situation. The possibility that schools will not open in the fall will further exacerbate their situation, as many depend on the meals provided during the school year for their sustenance.

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, in accordance with our organizational mandate to promote the sanctity of life and pursue biblical justice, urges Congress to increase food assistance benefits to those in need. Doing so will not only meet the immediate needs of many people in our communities, but it would also be an act of justice that will help our nation move forward beyond this crisis.

Sincerely,

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez

*President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
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