

An Open Letter from Catholic State Legislators To Our Colleagues in the US Congress

These are difficult times; difficult for our country, difficult for our constituents, and difficult for us, those privileged to serve as legislators, entrusted to make sure that our government does its best for our people. Right now **we are facing some very tough choices that will have serious consequences** for the people who elected us to represent them.

As Catholic state representatives from across the country, we are compelled to speak out against policies that unfairly target the least among us. **Our Catholic commitment to social justice obliges us to write to you today,** urging you to oppose such efforts at every turn.

We are deeply troubled by current legislative efforts to defund Title X, which, as you know, is a vital source of funding for clinics that provide essential health services to millions of people from all walks of life, including many Catholics. **These clinics are on the front lines of promoting reproductive and sexual health** by helping people prevent unintended pregnancies, providing education about sexual health

and avoiding sexually transmitted diseases. They also ensure that people who want to have children get the information they need for a healthy pregnancy.

Like you, we represent people from different economic conditions with a range of faith beliefs or no religious belief. However, **as Catholics, we believe we have a special responsibility to speak for those who have little or no voice in the political process. Especially in these difficult economic times, women, men and their families rely on clinics with Title X funding to receive basic healthcare.** Recent legislative efforts have not put the needs of poor men and women first. Families in our states and yours are counting on us, the people they elected, to do the right thing.

We know state and federal budgets are tight. Compassionate cost-cutting is a necessary reality. Spending for families who need Title X, however, did not cause the current strain on the federal government. In fact, **preventative care like that provided by Title X clinics saves federal and state safety net programs millions of dollars.**

Without funding for Title X, too many people of limited economic means will be left without the basic preventative healthcare and family planning services they need. **It is unfair and just wrong to attempt to balance the budget on the backs of families in greatest need.** We are your fellow legislators and your constituents. We urge you to **oppose these drastic cuts to Title X funds** and to listen to Catholics—and indeed all Americans—who want meaningful, comprehensive healthcare choices that include a wide range of affordable family planning services. We are committed to doing the hard work in our states. **We urge you, our colleagues in the US Congress, not to make our choices more difficult or the hardships our constituents face more arduous.**

We stand with you as you **work to find real solutions** to our economic concerns while also protecting those who most need us to represent their interests. In the end, this should not be a difficult choice at all. **Preserve Title X. It's good for our constituents and good for the economy.** In the short and long term, it will benefit us all.

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