

Join people of faith around the U.S. Tell Congress not to cut life-saving foreign assistance

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. —Matthew 25:35-36

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus sets a standard for how we should greet those who have been cast on the side of the road by poverty and violence. The famine and drought that continues to devastate the Sahel and Horn of Africa is just one stark reminder that we must support those in need of life-sustaining food and support.

We can act on behalf of those in need. Advocates across the U.S. are contacting their members of Congress with the message: Protect funding for life-saving poverty-focused foreign assistance.

U.S. poverty-focused foreign assistance helps save and sustain millions of lives around the world, including ELCA global mission partners and members of our companion synods in need of basic food, water, and medical care. Jesus calls us to support and walk with our impoverished sisters and brothers around the world, and advocating against deep cuts to federal poverty-focused foreign assistance is one important way for us to heed that call.

Poverty-focused foreign assistance currently represents a good deal less than 1% of the U.S. federal budget, but has a huge impact on the world's most vulnerable communities, including:

- ❖ Feeding 46.5 million of the world's most vulnerable people and children through P.L. 480 Food Aid, and 5 million school children through the McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program;
- ❖ Preventing more than 114,000 infants from being born with HIV;
- ❖ Delivering life-saving antiretroviral treatment to nearly 4 million Africans, mostly through PEPFAR and Global Fund;
- ❖ Saving 3 million lives through USAID's immunization programs;
- ❖ Providing 1.3 billion people with safe drinking water sources over the last decade.

Poverty-focused foreign assistance also enhances our own national security by supporting economic growth, protecting vulnerable people, and helping curtail desperation that often leads to violence. As Christians, we are connected, both theologically and economically, to our global sisters and brothers.

Despite the small proportion of the federal budget and huge life-saving and security outcomes offered, poverty-focused foreign assistance is often the target for disproportionate cuts. Today, these programs again face the possibility of cuts at a time when they should be expanded.

Support this effort by calling your Senators and Representative this week. For more information, see www.Lutheranpeace.org, www.elca.org/advocacy and www.bread.org for news, resources and updates.