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FOR GLOBAL PEACE WITH JUSTICE

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TALKING POINTS – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People Congressional Advocacy Day -- Monday, April 23, 2018

Our world is experiencing massive upheaval and displacement due to violent conflicts, our changing climate, and corruption. We call on Congress to act to help the world's uprooted peoples, the majority of whom are children and women. Congress must:

- Implement just and compassionate immigration policies; and
- Confront root causes of forced displacement in light of U.S. policy.

We live in a time of upheaval and uprootedness – a world in which each year millions of people cross borders in search of more secure and sustainable lives, while white supremacist ideologies continue to impede the fight for justice and peace for all of God's people. As we witness historically high levels of migration, we also find that racism, sexism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination are also on the rise in our communities and used for political gain. At the root of this global upheaval and migration are the push factors of violent conflict, climate change, and corruption which often intersect with one another.

At a time when there is such need around the world, we grieve that the U.S. has greatly reduced its refugee admittance numbers while smaller, poorer countries are stepping up to welcome and provide refuge for those in need. As people of faith, we know we can do more.

We believe that God is with Dreamers, refugees, immigrants, outcasts and people struggling to overcome poverty. God calls us to offer hospitality to the immigrant and the sojourner, and to break down the dividing walls that separate us. Our faith teaches us the importance of keeping families together, welcoming newcomers with compassion and dignity and aiding our neighbors in need across the world.

We call on Congress to act humanely and responsibly in addressing the worlds uprooted peoples. To do so, Congress must: (I) Redirect funding used for deportations, detention and border militarization, and (II) Invest instead in our communities, support refugees, while increasing poverty-focused and peacebuilding international assistance, which addresses the root causes of forced migration.

Speak from your faith values and from your experience of how refugees and immigrants are vital to your community, and from your international travel and mission work about how America's aiding our neighbors around the world addresses the root causes of migration and is important to you personally and to our common values as a nation. Our well-being as a nation is intimately connected with the well-being of our most vulnerable neighbors here at home and with our neighbors in need around the world.



I. Urge Congress to act humanely and be responsible with tax-payer dollars by redirecting funds away from deportations, detention and border militarization:

- **Congress should uphold the values of family unity and show compassion to the most vulnerable among us (Matt. 25:31-40) by redirecting funding away from the Department of Homeland Security for carrying out deportations** that are separating families and sweeping up Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders.
 - No matter where someone came from or how they arrived, their life is of value and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect — free to live without fear of being separated from their loved ones or displaced from their home.
 - Arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have increased dramatically, including for individuals whose only offense is being undocumented.
 - ICE agents are not exercising discretion but are targeting anyone who is undocumented.
- **Congress should act humanely and responsibly by redirecting funding away from immigrant detention and end mandatory detention**, particularly for asylum seekers, children, the elderly, the disabled and pregnant women.
 - Every day, tens of thousands of people — including asylum seekers and those whose only offense is being undocumented — are detained by ICE though they pose no flight risk or threat to public safety.
 - Congress appropriates enough money to maintain 34,000 detention beds. ICE is now detaining an average of 41,000 people per day. The administration wants to increase this to 51,000 beds.
 - Each adult detention bed costs an average of \$126.46 per day and family beds cost \$161.36. The total annual cost for detention is more than \$2 billion.
 - Alternatives to detention, such as community-based release, are more humane and also more cost effective.
- **Congress should redirect unnecessary and wasteful funding away from border enforcement and refuse to approve additional funds for the border wall** that would cut through wildlife refuges, require the seizing of privately property, infringe on the sovereignty of native lands and further militarize already over-militarized border communities.
 - Statistics show that unauthorized crossings are at their lowest level in 45 years, making such funding unwarranted.
 - The U.S. spends more than \$18 billion per year on immigration enforcement, more than all other federal law enforcement agencies combined.
 - The southern border region is home to some 15 million people and is among the safest communities in the country, with crime rates well below the national average.
 - The dramatic militarization of the region has already stifled the economic vitality and overall well-being of U.S. border communities.



II. Urge Congress to support refugee resettlement in U.S. communities and help people remain in their home countries and communities by robustly funding humanitarian, peacebuilding and poverty-focused foreign assistance, which address the root causes of migration.

An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home. 22.5 million are refugees who have fled to other countries--the highest number in recorded history. Between 75 and 80 percent of refugees and internally displaced people are women and children. The major root causes of forced displacement are violent conflicts, the changing climate, and economic injustices and corruption that deepen poverty and deprive people of work. The United States should lead the world by example by both resettling more refugees within our country and helping refugees abroad.

It is also important for long-term American policy interests to help people stay in their own communities and countries by funding poverty-focused international aid, peacebuilding and humanitarian relief as a priority above providing more money for the Pentagon. Less than 1 percent of the U.S. federal budget goes for development and humanitarian relief, but these funds have an enormous impact on the lives of tens of millions of people in developing countries.

- Congress should **invest in refugee resettlement in our own country, hold the administration accountable to resettling its goal of 45,000 refugees this year, and urge the administration to set a goal of at least 75,000 refugees** to be resettled in fiscal year 2019.
 - The fiscal year 2018 admissions goal is a record-low 45,000 and the administration is on track to resettle only 20,000 refugees this year - not even meeting its own goal.
 - By resettling refugees, the U.S. is able to convince other countries to keep their doors open to refugees which helps advance our goals for regional stability and global security.
 - Refugees contribute meaningfully to the U.S. economy as earners and taxpayers, including adding more than \$56 billion in spending power annually.
- **Invest in in poverty-focused development assistance and agricultural aid for low-income countries, which will help enable people to stay in their own communities and countries.**
 - Community-based development aid produces cost-effective and reliable clean water and sanitation facilities; improves health; and makes primary education possible for tens of millions of people; and improves small-scale and women farmers access to inputs, technology, credit, knowledge, bringing jobs and hope to tens of millions of our neighbors in need.
 - These investments help people remain at home instead of being driven by hunger and extreme poverty to seek survival elsewhere.
 - Investing in development today reduces the much higher costs of emergency relief and crisis intervention tomorrow.
- **Fully fund efforts to support communities around the world who suffer the negative effects of extreme weather and natural disasters.**
 - Extreme weather events, flooding, sea level rise, prolonged droughts and wildfires lead to violent conflict, food shortages and migration.
 - Vulnerable populations, including women and children, are more likely to be displaced.



- Such funding enables more people to remain in their home areas by helping communities build resilient infrastructure and ecosystems to adapt to and prepare for severe weather events, decreased water availability and shifting seasons.
- **Fund programs to reduce violent conflict.**
 - According to the World Bank, violence and violent conflict are now the leading causes of displacement worldwide.
 - The U.S. should develop and fund programs that address underlying causes of violence and seek lasting solutions, including programs that build cultures of peace, heal trauma, strengthen the rule of law, support human rights, protect marginalized communities and peaceful political dissent, and strengthen judicial independence and anti-corruption mechanisms.
 - Do not fund the training of police and armed forces implicated in human rights abuses and endemic corruption.
- **Fully fund humanitarian relief efforts, including disaster relief and refugee assistance.** Sixty-five million people have already been uprooted and live outside their home areas either within their own countries or in host countries. Humanitarian aid can sustain them while they wait to return to their homes or integrate into new communities.