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# ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS

## FOR GLOBAL PEACE WITH JUSTICE

## 2020 Webinar Ask

Dear Member of Congress:

As a person of faith, I value the preservation of the planet and the protection of all God's children. I am deeply saddened by the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-wealth communities and communities of color, particularly people of African descent, Latinos, and Indigenous peoples. These communities already experience devastating racial health and economic inequities due to climate change and environmental injustice, making them more vulnerable to job loss, debt, wealth loss, illness, and death during this time. These long-standing issues of systemic racism and racial wealth divides that have been highlighted by this pandemic must be addressed. For this reason, each response to this pandemic must employ a racial equity lens that equips policies and programs to eliminate such divides.

Therefore, I urge you to craft both short-term relief and long-term recovery packages that address historic systemic racism and wealth disparities, meet the immediate needs of those most severely affected by COVID-19, and look toward creating a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable society for everyone, both in the United States and around the world. This health and economic crisis is already showing signs of the forecasted devastation in developing countries. By supporting their recovery, we will also support our own.

In particular, I ask that any relief package that Congress enacts:

- Assures that **assistance**—healthcare assistance, access to no cost virus testing and treatment, protection for essential workers, food security, unemployment benefits, and housing—focuses on workers and families of color who are the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic and applies a racial equity lens to ensure each community receives proportionate aid with the expected impact.
- Places a nationwide **moratorium on essential utility shut-offs** such as water, electricity, and heat and ensures that marginalized communities with poor **access to clean water, both in the U.S. and around the world**, are given the assistance they need.
- Authorizes **debt relief for developing countries** so that they can respond to the economic and health crisis. Support their COVID-19 response by providing **poverty-focused foreign assistance** for public health, humanitarian programs, food and nutrition security, and disaster preparedness. If done right, these programs can also promote climate resilience.



For any long-term recovery package that Congress enacts, I ask that it:

- Provide **funding and resources to communities of color** who have been historically impacted by environmental racism to address health risks caused by air and water pollution as well as create more resilience to future disasters.
- Provide for **mine reclamation and toxic site cleanup**.
- **Invest in sustainable infrastructure**, particularly in low-wealth communities and communities of color to provide clean water, renewable energy capacity, clean air, internet broadband, and public transportation in order to spur economic recovery and reduce economic disparities.

We have the opportunity in this moment to forge a sustainable recovery that promotes a healthy environment, allows us to be resilient to new crises, and builds communities centered on principles of justice, fairness, and equity.