

Jubilee USA Network
110 Maryland Ave. NE, Ste 210
Washington, D.C. 20002

Via E-mail

February 16th, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

"They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations." - Isaiah 61:4

President Biden,

You and your administration are in our prayers. We look forward to working with you to address the challenges facing Puerto Rico's people.

Thank you for releasing urgently needed hurricane recovery funds. As religious leaders who advocate for the needs of Puerto Rico's people, we respectfully request you move forward the following actions:

- Please immediately instruct the Department of Justice to withdraw the suit, filed by the previous administration, that blocks \$2.3 billion in annual Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. About 300,000 poor and vulnerable US citizens with disabilities are critically impacted. In the US vs. Vaello-Madero, the US First Circuit Court of Appeals granted SSI access to all Puerto Ricans. When the Justice Department withdraws the appeal, the Appellate Court's decision stands.
- Through Executive or support of Congressional Action, please implement measures to return manufacturing jobs to Puerto Rico that encourage pharmaceuticals to spur economic recovery and job creation in areas of high unemployment and poverty. Puerto Rico has skilled labor, the capacity, and the facilities to immediately take up additional pharmaceutical and personal protective equipment manufacturing, to aid in the fight against COVID-19 and increase supplies in the United States.
- Expand and fully fund the Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicare, Medicaid, Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. Nearly 60% of Puerto Rico's children, US citizens, live in poverty and would benefit from these measures.

- Support Congressional action to move forward additional disaster recovery monies for Puerto Rico. The devastating impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, earthquakes and the coronavirus impact US citizens on the island. Conservative estimates note that Puerto Rico needs an additional \$50 billion in recovery aid.

President Biden, thank you for your support and solidarity for the people of Puerto Rico. Now, we look forward to working with you so Puerto Rico can emerge with renewed resilience from our debt and child poverty crises, challenges with ongoing natural disasters and the impacts of the pandemic. We hold you in prayer and invite your daily prayers for the people of Puerto Rico.

Respectfully,

Roberto O. González Nieves, OFM
Metropolitan Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Juan de Puerto Rico

Rubén González Medina CMF
Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ponce

Reverend Idalia Negrón Caamaño
Bishop of the Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Felipe Lozada Montañez
President of the Puerto Rico Council of Churches and Emeritus Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran in Puerto Rico

Reverend Miguel A. Morales Castro
General Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico

Reverend Héctor F. Ortiz Vidal
Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Edward Rivera Santiago
General Pastor of the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Esteban González Dobles
Former General Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico

Reverend Rafael Moreno Rivas
Emeritus Bishop of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Reverend Heriberto Martínez Rivera
General Secretary of the Puerto Rico Bible Society

Reverend Enrique Camacho
Executive Director of Cáritas (Catholic Charities) of Puerto Rico

Reverend Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Dr. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

Reverend Teresa Hord Owens
General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Reverend Julia Brown Karimu
President, Division of Overseas Ministries and Co-executive, Global Ministries of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Reverend Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson
Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and Operations, Co-executive,
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of
Christ

James Winkler
President and General Secretary of the National Council of Churches

Reverend Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe
General Secretary, The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and
Society

Donna J. Markham OP, PhD, ABPP
President & CEO, Catholic Charities USA

Eric LeCompte
Executive Director, Jubilee USA Network

CC: The Honorable Monty Wilkinson
Acting Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice
The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Treasury
The Honorable Pedro Pierluisi
Governor of Puerto Rico
The Honorable Jose Luis Dalmau
President of the Senate of Puerto Rico
The Honorable Rafael Hernández Montañez
Speaker of the Puerto Rico House of Representatives
The Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón
Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico
David Skeel
President, Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico
Natalie Jaresko
Executive Director, Financial Oversight and Management Board for
Puerto Rico
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader of the United States Senate
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader of the United States Senate
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives