



CIRCLE *of* PROTECTION

October 21, 2025

To President Trump and Members of Congress,

We write to you as the Circle of Protection, a coalition of national church bodies and related ministries representing the diversity of Christianity in this country. The organizations in the Circle together have 100 million members. Nearly all our churches help people in need, and we work together to protect government programs and policies that help poor and vulnerable people. Jesus urged us to help people who are hungry or sick or in need in other ways (Matthew 25).

We are writing now to urge each of you to do your part to end the government shutdown. It is causing great hardship. Notably, important programs of food and housing assistance may soon run out of funding. Furloughs and RIFS in the civil service will hamper programs and services, including special education programs, low-income housing, and banking services in some of the poorest communities in the country.

Bipartisan compromises will be needed to keep our government in operation. What St. Paul wrote to the divided church in Corinth is relevant to our divided country. We are one nation, with very different parts - just as one body has different parts. Paul wrote, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable" (I Corinthians 12).

Decisions made earlier this year will lead to major reductions in health care and food assistance, and we hope that bipartisan discussions related to FY2026 appropriations will include consideration of how to address these needs moving forward. Specifically, we support efforts to make food and health care available and affordable for all Americans.

The Bible speaks clearly and repeatedly about God's love for all people, and especially for those in need. God calls both individuals and nations to offer care and protection to the vulnerable. We are grateful for the ways our society does provide for those in need. But this vital support has been interrupted and is being eroded by the continuing shutdown. Please come together now for the good of our nation.

We pray for all of you, our nation's leaders - for your spiritual well-being, courage and moral leadership.

Dr. Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Rev. Dr. David Beckmann, Dean's Advisor, Virginia Theological Seminary; Coordinator, Circle of Protection

John Carr, Founder, Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, Georgetown University

Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO, Bread for the World

Rev. Chris Kellerman, S.J., Secretary of Justice and Ecology, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Rev. Dr. Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President, National Council of Churches

Rev. Carlos Malavé, President, Latino Christian National Network

Bridget Moix, General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President and Founder, National Latino Evangelical Coalition

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President, Sojourners

Bishop Julius C. Trimble, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church

Rev. Jim Wallis, Inaugural Chair and Founding Director, Center on Faith and Justice, Georgetown University

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; President, Skinner Leadership Institute