



CIRCLE *of* PROTECTION

May 6, 2026

To Members of Congress,

We write to you as the Circle of Protection, a coalition of national denominations and ministries representing a diverse spectrum of Christianity across this country. The organizations in the Circle collectively represent more than 100 million members. Our churches help people in need, and we work together to protect and strengthen programs and policies that help those in our communities and congregations who are struggling to put food on the table and provide for their families.

The President's budget proposes the highest level of military spending in our country's history, \$1.5 trillion. This includes funding for war in the Middle East and production of a panoply of weapons, with significant potential for waste. The budget also proposes a 10 percent cut in non-defense discretionary spending, including health, housing, and education programs that serve low-income people.

These cuts would be in addition to the deep cuts enacted in poverty-focused programs last year. The Administration reduced development and humanitarian aid by 50%, weakening US soft power. Congress cut Medicaid by nearly \$1 trillion and couldn't find the funds to extend the expanded ACA health subsidies. Congress also cut SNAP food assistance by the largest amount ever (\$186 billion). SNAP participation declined by more than three million people already in 2025, and our food pantries face soaring demands for help.

The proposed budget priorities do not reflect the values of our faith. Again and again, the Bible teaches that a nation's well-being depends on faithfulness and morality, including care for vulnerable people (Deuteronomy 28:1-8, Psalm 20: 7-9, Isaiah 1:17, 19-20, Jeremiah 22:1-7, Matthew 25, Revelation 18).

As Congress considers funding issues over the course of this year, we urge you to prioritize programs such as nutrition assistance, health care, low-income housing, and international aid while avoiding further cuts to life lines for poor children and families such as SNAP, Medicaid, EITC, and CTC.

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

Rev. Carlos Malavé, President, Latino Christian National Network

Bridget Moix, General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President, National Council of Churches

**Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ) in the United States and Canada**

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

**Rev. Lori Tapia, National Pastor and President, Obra Hispana, Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada**

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President, Sojourners

**Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President/Chief
Executive Officer, United Church of Christ, National Ministries**

**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**