



CIRCLE *of* PROTECTION

September 9, 2026

To Members of Congress,

We write to you as the Circle of Protection, a coalition of national church bodies and ministries representing a diverse spectrum of Christianity. The organizations in the Circle collectively include more than 100 million members. Our churches help people in need, and need is increasing all across the country.

Jesus identified with the hungry, the thirsty, and the stranger. Matthew 25:10 reads, “As you did to one of the least of these, you did to me.” We believe that we should, as individuals and as a nation, give priority to people in need. In this context, we offer four comments on current issues of importance to people in need.

First, we commend this Congress for working together to approve an appropriations continuing resolution, thus avoiding another government shutdown. We especially appreciate the provision in the continuing resolution that will restrain the politicization of federal grant-making.

Second, the President has requested and recent House legislation proposes large increases in military spending. This is in the wake of a \$1.2 trillion cut in food and health assistance to families in last year’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). We urge you to moderate proposed military spending and help bring an end to the Iran war.

Third, one way that OBBBA reduced planned federal spending on food assistance was to mandate a shift in funding responsibility for SNAP to state governments. As state governments have rushed to adjust, more than 4.5 million people, about a third of them children, have already lost SNAP benefits. The states need more time to deal with this substantial new budget burden. We urge a two-year delay to avoid a further surge in hunger. If Congress provides emergency assistance to farmers, it should be paired with a two-year delay in the SNAP cost-shift that will protect all families, including farmers.

Finally, Congress plays a vital role in supporting free and fair elections. The Circle supports measures to help poor and vulnerable people participate fully in our democratic process and opposes measures that would diminish their participation in public life.

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. Heather Taylor, Interim 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

Kerry Alys Robinson, President and CEO, Catholic Charities USA

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

Dr. Monica Schaap Pierce, Executive Director, Christian Churches Together

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network

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