



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



July 15, 2008

Urge Senators to Support the Jubilee Act to Relieve the Debt of Poor Countries!

REASON FOR THIS ALERT: Late last month the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations passed the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2008(S. 2166) with bipartisan support. The House of Representatives had previously passed a similar bill. The next step is for the full Senate to consider the bill. Since the fall session of the Senate is expected to be very short because of the upcoming Presidential and Congressional elections, the best—and probably the only—opportunity for getting the bill passed this year would be during the next four weeks, i.e., before the Congress begins its late summer recess.

BACKGROUND: While major progress has been made in reducing poor country debt, a substantial number of the poorest countries continue to shoulder heavy debt burdens that draw precious government resources away from critical investments in health care, education, water and other sectors necessary to improve lives. Many poor countries have seen their debts reduced through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative that was adopted in 1996 and expanded in 1999 in response to successful advocacy by the global Jubilee 2000 movement, in which the Catholic Church played a major role. In the succeeding years, it became apparent that further efforts were required, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) continued its advocacy. USCCB strongly supported the new debt relief program called the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) that was approved under U.S. leadership in 2005. This provided major new debt cancellation for HIPC countries. Nevertheless, more than twenty very poor countries still are unable to benefit from HIPC or MDRI debt relief.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

- If your Senators are not already cosponsors of the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007 (S. 2166), urge them (1) to become cosponsors today and (2) to support bringing the bill to the Senate floor for a vote on final passage as soon as possible.
- If your Senators have already signed on as cosponsors, (1) thank them for their support and (2) urge them to support bringing the bill to the Senate floor for a vote on final passage as soon as possible.

A list of Senators who are cosponsors is provided on the next page.

**Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation
of 2008 (S. 2166) Sponsor and Cosponsors**

Sponsor:

Sen Casey, Robert P., Jr. [PA]

Co-Sponsors:

Sen Biden, Joseph R., Jr. [DE]
Sen Boxer, Barbara [CA]
Sen Brown, Sherrod [OH]
Sen Clinton, Hillary Rodham [NY]
Sen Coleman, Norm [MN]
Sen Collins, Susan M. [ME]
Sen Dodd, Christopher J. [CT]
Sen Durbin, Richard [IL]
Sen Feingold, Russell D. [WI]
Sen Hagel, Chuck [NE]
Sen Isakson, Johnny [GA]
Sen Kerry, John F. [MA]
Sen Klobuchar, Amy [MN]
Sen Leahy, Patrick J. [VT]
Sen Lieberman, Joseph I. [CT]
Sen Lugar, Richard G. [IN]
Sen McCaskill, Claire [MO]
Sen Menendez, Robert [NJ]
Sen Mikulski, Barbara A. [MD]
Sen. Nelson, Bill [FL]
Sen Obama, Barack [IL]
Sen Schumer, Charles E. [NY]
Sen Smith, Gordon H. [OR]
Sen Snowe, Olympia J. [ME]
Sen Sununu, John E. [NH]
Sen Wyden, Ron [OR]

All Senators listed here and those not listed here can be reached by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

RESOURCES: See action alerts and letters on the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty website of USCCB and CRS at www.usccb.org/globalpoverty. For more information contact: Gerry Flood, 202-541-3167 (phone), 202541-3339 (fax); gflood@usccb.org; and Fr. Andrew Small, OMI, 202-541-3153 (phone); asmall@usccb.org.