



May 24, 2010

Representative Sander Levin

Michigan 12th

Longworth House Office Building 1236

Dear Representative,

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby strongly supports *The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act of 2010 (H.R. 4213)*. The increased number of jobs created in April still falls short of the estimated 400,000 new jobs needed each month for approximately 20 months - just to return to the unemployment level of April 2008 (5.0%). Under-employment, long-term unemployment, and general joblessness is still plaguing our country, and we believe that H.R. 4213 has the ability to address some of the problems.

Over 45 percent of people looking for jobs have been without work for over 6 months, the highest percentage in more than six decades. For these jobless individuals facing the catastrophe of ended benefits, the stress is extreme - and likely leads to the health problems and family disharmony. The Extensions in H.R. 4213 of Unemployment Insurance and COBRA through the end of 2010 are critical not only to the long-term unemployed, but to states as well. Each time the end of these benefits approaches there is cost to states for notification and changing their computer records. Clearly, states facing bankruptcy cannot continue to cover these costs which are a result of legislative inaction.

Critical components of the bill also include The TANF Jobs Emergency Fund, The National Housing Trust Fund, Summer Jobs (for Youth) and the Federal Medicaid Matching Rate (FMAP). All of these programs are vital not only for the most vulnerable populations in our nation, but also for U.S. and the states' economies.

NETWORK has worked consistently on The TANF Jobs Emergency Fund and on authorization and capitalization of the National Housing Trust Fund.

TANF recipients head the least economically secure families in our nation. By September 2010, one-hundred-eighty-five thousand jobs (185,000) will have been created under the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund. The fund provides reimbursement to states for increases in TANF-related expenditures in three specified areas, especially subsidized employment. The fund is providing fiscal relief to states, helped small businesses and local economies by providing jobs

with subsidized employment, and has given much needed emergency assistance to families throughout the country. These recipients become less dependent on other government programs and they are able to contribute to state revenues. If this is not continued, there is little likelihood that additional positions will become available.

The National Housing Trust Fund is a response to the absolute insufficiency of housing units available in this nation for people at the extremely-low-income level, defined as at-or-below thirty percent of the area median income. This is a major contributor to the level of homelessness - particularly among families with children - in the U.S. Many of these homeless have moved in with family or friends - often with a dozen or more living in two or three rooms.

Others resort to shelters which are often unsafe and usually open only during the overnight hours. Still others are living in cars, under bridges, in doorways or on heating grates. In this nation, this should not exist.

Catholic Social Teaching compels us to support this bill. Teachings express the right for all households to support themselves to live in dignity. Additionally, being productive is important to the self-respect of each person. Pope John Paul II said that "Human work is the key to the solution ... of the whole 'social question.' To consider work is of decisive importance when trying to make life 'more human.'"

As a legislative leader you have an awesome responsibility. Economic decisions are often driven by circumstances. It is important to stop and consider the moral dimensions of these decisions. Catholic Social Teaching raises the question of the impact of economic decisions.

*The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act of 2010 (H.R. 4213)* is one step toward allowing the most vulnerable persons in our communities to live with dignity. We implore you to do all in your power to bring this bill to a positive vote without delay.