

June 25, 2010



Dear Members of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform,

As you consider how to address the nation's long-term fiscal imbalance, we urge you to protect poor and low-income families. We believe it is critical that our government remain on solid fiscal ground. We also believe it is critical to consider the human impact of any recommendations the commission considers. We do not wish to leave a legacy of debt to future generations, but additionally, it is part of the call of our faith to see to it that we do not leave our children a legacy of poverty and economic inequality.

The Fiscal Commission provides an opportunity to demonstrate and shape our country's priorities, reflected by how we allocate our national resources. Therefore, the Commission's recommendations are truly moral choices. Reducing our country's long-term deficits and debt will require difficult decisions that provide an honest picture of our nation's values. **Protecting low-income families must be a priority in addition to responsibly bringing down our structural deficits. We urge you to measure any proposal or recommendation according to how it would impact poor and low-income families.**

The United States should be a country where all are afforded the opportunity for a sufficient, sustainable livelihood. Realizing our potential requires investments in the infrastructure for success: education, food and nutrition programs, job training opportunities, work supports, affordable housing, and other human needs programs. We also ought to have a robust social safety net to help those who fall on hard times. While sensible spending reductions in places where waste, fraud, abuse and duplication truly exist will be needed, we are concerned that indiscriminate cuts will be proposed that will not only exact an immediate human toll on vulnerable people but also deny future generations access to opportunity.

**We ask that your recommendations ensure our government has the revenues necessary to meet its responsibilities to all our nation's families.** In Proverbs (31.9) we are reminded of our responsibility to *"Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."* We recognize that you face tremendous pressure to cut spending, and we urge you to do so in areas where waste and inefficiency genuinely exist. At the same time, we ask that you remember the difference between cyclical and structural deficits. Social safety net and human needs programs did not cause, nor can cutting them cure, our nation's long-term fiscal imbalance. As the economy begins to recover, some spending will be necessary. It is critical, especially as the economy remains fragile, to protect these programs and the families who need them. Through human decisions and actions, we believe God is at work in economic life. This makes your task all the more critical. We urge you to remember the needs of the poor and vulnerable as you continue your important task.

For us, it is a moral imperative grounded in our faith. May God continue to bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

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American Friends Service Committee  
Bread for the World  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Council of Churches of Christ, USA  
National Council of Jewish Women  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness  
RESULTS Faith in Action Project  
Union for Reform Judaism  
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society