



July 14, 2021

Dear Senator/Representative:

As organizations representing a broad array of religious beliefs and faith traditions, **we urge you to pass a bold recovery package that makes historic investments towards a more just and sustainable society. We call on you to pay for these investments by making our tax code fairer and more equitable.** We come from a variety of faith perspectives whose moral principles and scriptural teachings all affirm our need for policies that promote a nation where all people can live with dignity, with enough food to eat, a safe place to live and a life that affords them meaningful opportunities.

In Proverbs (31:9) we are reminded of our responsibility to *“Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.”* Yet we repeatedly witness policy decisions that neglect to prioritize individuals and families unable to access basic living standards. Even in the face of a global pandemic, which helped exacerbate the systemic inequities faced by many, there seems to be a lack of urgency or will to make necessary changes to create systems that work for everyone. We know that the underinvestment in programs that lift people out of poverty and create conditions in which people can thrive is endemic and existed long before the pandemic. Relief in the short term is not enough, we must enact a bold recovery that truly addresses the underlying systemic issues laid bare by the pandemic and economic fallout.

This moment requires transformative legislative package, which requires significant revenues to pay for these historic investments. Our outdated tax code was built and operates for wealthy white people and corporations, and we need to implement a fairer system. Tax reforms to build revenue and implement a fairer tax code would help address the racial wealth divide at both ends, in the tax code and also with public investment.

Moreover, our tax code perpetuates our country’s abhorrent racial wealth divide and exacerbating economic inequality. Our tax code does not exist in a vacuum. It is influenced by our society and our history. Wealth in the United States is highly concentrated in white families. Because of the tax code’s treatment of wealth, it continues to reinforce a racist wealth divide. The growing chasm in the distribution of wealth in our country runs counter to our loving God’s intentions for us. Our faiths tell us to care for people in need and objects to extreme concentrations of wealth. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets spoke out about the contrast between luxurious homes and the neglect of people in poverty. Jesus condemned the well-dressed rich man who “dined sumptuously every day” while a poor man named Lazarus languished outside his gate. This is the time to reform the tax code to bring us into a right relationship with one another.

In this next recovery package, we urge you to raise significant revenues in ways that will bring more fairness and equity to our tax code. Specifically, we urge you to consider the following policies:

- Raising the corporate tax rate to 28 percent;
- Restoring the top marginal tax rate to what it was during the Obama presidency;
- Raising the capital gains tax rate to tax wealth like work so wealthy individuals do not get major tax breaks from living off of investment income;
- Prohibiting wealthy families from passing on millions of dollars in income gains completely tax free by eliminated step-up in basis;
- Restoring the estate tax to 2009 levels;
- Closing tax loopholes that allows U.S. corporations to transfer their wealth offshore to avoid paying taxes;
- Establishing a minimum corporate tax rate to prevent large profitable corporations from paying zero in federal income taxes;
- Rolling back many of the tax cuts in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which only benefited the wealthy;
- Invest in IRS enforcement to close the tax divide and crack down on tax evasion by the wealthy.

These are challenging times, and we need leaders in Congress who are willing to make bold choices. The decisions you make now will have a dramatic impact on our nation's ability to recover from the pandemic and also on how we close the racial and gender wealth divide. Congress has a tremendous opportunity to make serious and thoughtful changes to our tax code fairer and more equitable; resulting in an economy and a country where people have a chance to flourish.

Sincerely,

Bread for the World

Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC

Faith in Public Life Action

Friends Committee National Legislation

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces.

National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness

RESULTS

The United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society