



February 10, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

As organizations committed to ending global poverty, we write to urge you to co-sponsor the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation (H.R. 4405). The Jubilee Act safeguards the gains made by debt cancellation to date and expands eligibility for cancellation to countries that need it to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Debt cancellation is a proven way to reduce poverty. The debt cancellation supported by Congress in 1999 and 2005 has reached more than two dozen countries in Africa and Latin America. With the resources saved from debt relief, Tanzania increased its poverty reduction spending by 130% over the past six years. Uganda has used the \$57.9 million freed by debt cancellation to increase spending on primary education, malaria control, health care and infrastructure.

While we are only five years away from the 2015 deadline set to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the global financial crisis and other shocks have created major setbacks to achieving these vital poverty reduction goals, especially in Africa. Debt cancellation should be expanded to include countries that need it to meet the MDGs and to fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The Jubilee Act would make up to 22 additional low-income countries eligible for debt cancellation by the United States, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund provided that they demonstrate their ability to use the money to fight poverty and provide an annual report detailing the use of funds on poverty reduction.

In order to prevent a continual and wasteful debt/forgiveness cycle, it is essential to establish a framework for responsible and transparent lending in the future. The Jubilee Act calls for the United States to positively engage in international efforts to develop an international framework for responsible finance where creditors and aid/loan recipients alike adhere to standards to assure transparency and accountability to citizens, human rights, and the avoidance of odious debt.

In order to learn from past errors and ensure more responsible lending, we must address the problem of odious and unjust debts (debts accrued by undemocratic regimes or that did not benefit the population). The Jubilee Act does this by requiring the Comptroller General of the US to undertake audits of debt portfolios of previous regimes in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa, where there is accepted evidence of odious loans.

The U.S. can lead the way to completing the good work already begun on debt cancellation. We urge you to cosponsor H.R. 4405, the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation.

Sincerely,

ActionAid International USA
AFL-CIO
Africa Action
Africa Faith and Justice Network

Ainsworth United Church of Christ, Portland, Oregon
Alliance for Global Justice
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish World Service
Americans for Informed Democracy
Bread for the World
Capuchin Franciscans, Midwest Province
The Capuchin Province of Mid-America
Center of Concern
Church World Service
Citizens for Global Solutions
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
The Episcopal Church
Essential Action
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends of the Earth US
Gender Action
Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
Jubilee Montana Network
Jubilee Northwest Coalition, Seattle, Washington
Jubilee San Diego
Jubilee USA Network
Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office of the Wheaton Franciscans
Marianists International
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Medical Mission Sisters' Alliance for Justice
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church, Portland, Oregon
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office
Missionary Society of St. Columban (US Region)
Nicaragua Network
Oil Change International
ONE
Oxfam America
Pax Christi USA: National Catholic Peace Movement
Presbyterian Church, (USA), Washington Office
Quixote Center
RESULTS
SHALOM Network, Dallas Unit of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
School Sisters of Notre Dame – Global Justice & Peace Commission
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mankato Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame-St. Louis Mission Effectiveness Office
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Justice and Peace Network
Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, IN
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sojourners
South Bay Jubilee Coalition
St. Francis Xavier Jubilee parish, Missoula, MT
TransAfrica Forum
Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United States Catholic Mission Association
Witness for Peace