

127 Faith Groups Advocate for Farm Bill that Protects the Wellbeing of People and the Planet

WASHINGTON, DC (September 5th, 2023) – Today, 127 faith-based organizations from Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Unitarian Universalists, and other traditions released a letter calling on Congressional leaders to support a “Faithful Farm Bill” that expands food access and food security, supports agricultural workers, and protects the environment in the U.S. and globally. The letter was addressed to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the House Committee on Agriculture. Read the complete text of the letter here: [\[insert link\]](#).

According to the letter, “Many of our organizations, congregations, and leaders work to feed and serve our struggling friends and neighbors, but we know we cannot do this alone. The Farm Bill’s resources must be effectively targeted for the greatest need. Programs and policies that curb hunger and malnutrition, support vibrant agricultural economies in rural communities, and promote the sustainable use of natural resources must be prioritized as part of a comprehensive Farm Bill, with adequate funding to meet these diverse needs fully.”

The letter goes on to detail specific policy proposals in five areas:

1. Protect, expand, and strengthen programs that reduce hunger, address food insecurity, and improve nutrition in the United States;
2. Strengthen policies and programs that address climate change;
3. Ensure equitable program implementation to remedy historically underserved communities;
4. Provide a fair and effective farm safety net that allows farmers, farmworkers, and producers in the U.S. and around the world to earn economically sustainable livelihoods;
5. Safeguard and improve international food aid in ways that encourage local food security and improve the nutritional quality of food aid.

Congress is currently working on the 2023 Farm Bill, which is authorized every five years and includes over \$400 billion in spending. It determines what food is grown, how it’s grown, and how affordable it is. It funds vital anti-hunger programs that help tens of millions of people every day. And it influences agricultural and food policies with significance in the U.S. and globally. Faith leaders are using this opportunity to advocate for a Farm Bill that is aligned with their faith traditions and nurtures and supports people and the planet. Read the full letter here: [\[insert link again\]](#)

The Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) is a network of over 70 Washington offices of national religious bodies and faith-based organizations, encompassing Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Humanist faiths. WISC offices collaborate on advocacy for U.S. government policies that advance a more just, peaceful and ecologically sustainable world.

Quotes from Faith Communities Responding to the Letter

“As the Jewish community approaches the sacred time of the High Holy Days, we reflect upon injustices in our communities, including the fact that nearly 40 million Americans are facing the pain and indignity of hunger,” said **Abby J. Leibman, President & CEO of [MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger](#)**. “The Farm Bill is one of the most transformational pieces of legislation that Congress regularly reauthorizes, and it presents a critical opportunity to fight against hunger by strengthening SNAP and other vital federal safety net programs. It is essential that Congress approach the Farm Bill reauthorization process by reflecting on our shared values and exploring effective policy solutions. We at MAZON are proud to help lead our partners in the faith community in urging Congress to act with wisdom, compassion, and humanity toward all those in need of assistance — regardless of circumstance.”

“The farm bill is our nation’s most important food systems legislation. It not only affects farmers and food producers – it plays a significant role in addressing hunger in the U.S. and around the world. Bread for the World urges members of Congress to support a ‘faithful’ farm bill that builds healthier, more equitable, and sustainable food systems so that everyone has access to the nutrition they need to thrive.

“‘Open your mouth for those who cannot speak, and for the rights of those who are left without help.’ Proverbs 31:8a (NLV).”

-Rev. Eugene Cho, president and CEO of Bread for the

"Passing a Farm Bill this year is a critical tool to ensure our nation's food and farm policies better reflect God's special concern for all who are experiencing hunger, poverty, and marginalization. Our faith teaches us that we are to treat people in vulnerable situations as we would treat Jesus himself, which is why we will continue to advocate for a Farm Bill that strengthens and improves programs like ` and SNAP, repeals the unjust ban on people convicted of drug felonies from accessing SNAP, and prioritizes equitable access to USDA programs for Black and brown farmers, who have been historically underserved."

– Reverend Adam Russell Taylor World