

CRS Talking Points: Protect International Assistance

FRAMING

Begin with gratitude.

Thank you for the opportunity to get to know each other and discuss how U.S. international humanitarian and development assistance contributes to global and domestic safety, security and prosperity.

Express gratitude for a recent action related to global poverty or for the member's service in Congress.

Introduce who you are and why you requested a meeting.

- As people of faith committed to justice and compassion, we believe the Catholic Church and its members have a moral responsibility to respond to the needs of our global neighbors. Moreover, we believe that governments must work alongside the Church for the common good by protecting lives and recognizing the dignity of all members of our human family.
- We are constituents from across the [district/state]. Our group consists of [X] amount of people from the following [counties/cities]: _____. We are a part of [X] [dioceses, parishes, universities, high schools, communities]. We have dedicated ourselves to learning about and acting on global issues through our engagement as supporters of Catholic Relief Services and members and leaders of [CRS Chapters/Clubs/Coalitions/Group Name].

Include a personal story of why you support CRS' international humanitarian and development work, including your concern about our human family and why addressing global poverty matters to you.

DISCUSSION

Use the following talking points in your discussion, if they are helpful.

- During this Jubilee Year, the late Pope Francis asked the faithful to be signs of hope for all, especially people experiencing need or hardship. For CRS and its supporters, the Jubilee is a renewed opportunity to address challenges that impact our global sisters and brothers.
- As Catholics, we believe the words of Pope Benedict XVI when he said that charity is an "indispensable expression of [the Church's] very being" and that "anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbor."
- A Catholic pro-life approach to U.S. international assistance goes beyond charity. It is a strategic investment that has a profound impact on human life, dignity and global stability.
- Making up less than 1% of the annual federal budget, poverty-reducing international assistance is a small yet smart investment to accomplish Church priorities and advance U.S. interests concerning worldwide and domestic safety, security and prosperity.
- As people of faith, we are proud to support Catholic Relief Services, the international humanitarian aid and development agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S. It stands ready to build on a strong history of successful collaboration with the U.S. government and enhance the Church's expression of charity and the foundational American values of leadership and service.

Make the Ask.

As your constituents and CRS supporters, and on behalf of our vulnerable sisters and brothers, we urge you to protect lifesaving and life-affirming international humanitarian and development assistance by:

- Telling the administration to reverse terminations of CRS programs,
- Opposing rescissions of all lifesaving and life-affirming programs and
- Robustly funding poverty-reducing budget lines in the fiscal year 2026 appropriations.

Here is a chart of accounts that detail the priorities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and CRS to address global poverty. (Share the [CRS/USCCB appropriations chart](#).)

Share a story about the importance and impact of CRS' programs funded by the U.S. government. Consider including details or stories found in [Bill O'Keefe's April testimony](#).

QUESTIONS

Ask questions and gather information.

- Will the [Senator/Representative's name] oppose requested rescissions to previously appropriated lifesaving international humanitarian and development assistance funds?
 - *If yes: Based on your relationship and knowledge of your member, continue with one of the following:*

Thank you for your willingness to oppose rescissions to international assistance. Can I/we count on you to protect lifesaving humanitarian and development assistance by...

 - ...talking to members within your party about opposing related rescissions?
 - ...making a public statement to the media about your opposition to related rescissions?
 - ...opposing related rescissions while the request is being considered by the appropriations committee? [for committee members]
 - *If no:*

I/we understand that you have decided on your stance, but I/we ask that you consider the views of your constituency, which I/we have just shared, when the time comes to make decisions that have the potential to impact global and domestic security, stability, and prosperity.
- Does [Senator/Representative's name] support maintaining funding levels for poverty-reducing international humanitarian and development assistance in fiscal year 2026?
 - *If yes:* What are their priorities? Do they plan on prioritizing issues of global poverty?
 - *If no:* Can you share why they do not support these initiatives?
- What information about international assistance and the work of CRS would be helpful to have as you consider these issues during the 119th Congress?
- What can I do, as a constituent, to continue to work with you/your office on this important issue?
- What are [Senator/Representative's name]'s current priorities?
- Do you have any questions for us and/or would you like to speak with a CRS staff member about the issues we raised?
 - I/we—along with CRS—can serve as a resource both in Washington, D.C. and back home in the state/district. I/we look forward to continuing to dialogue with the [Senator/Representative] on these and other issues of mutual interest.
 - *If requested:* David Cronin is the CRS Government Relations manager on budget and appropriations and his contact information will be provided in a follow-up email.

Note: Contact information is listed in the thank you email template found on the CRS Congressional Visits webpage. Be sure to include any questions raised by your member's office or any follow-up needed in the meeting notes you submit to CRS.