



A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



Take Action!

Urge Senators to Support Senate Version of the *Jubilee Act*, to Relieve the Debt of Poor Countries!

REASON FOR THIS ALERT: Last week during Pope Benedict XVI's visit, the House of Representatives passed the *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007* (H.R. 2634) with strong bipartisan support. On Thursday, April 24, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will have a hearing on debt relief before beginning a review of the Senate version of the bill (S. 2166). The *Jubilee Act* represents an essential next step in alleviating the burdens of debt that plague many developing countries.

TAKE ACTION NOW! If your Senators are not already cosponsors of the *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007* (S. 2166), urge them to become cosponsors today. If they have already signed on as cosponsors, thank them for their sponsorship of this important legislation. To find out whether your Senators are cosponsors, see the list on the next page.

BACKGROUND: While major progress has been made in reducing poor country debt, a substantial number of the poorest countries continue to shoulder heavy debt burdens that draw precious government resources away from critical investments in health care, education, water and other sectors necessary to improve lives.

Many poor countries have seen their debts reduced through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative that was adopted in 1996 and expanded in 1999 in response to successful advocacy by the global Jubilee 2000 movement, in which the Catholic Church played a major role. In the succeeding years, it became apparent that further efforts were required, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has continued to make important contributions to the debt cancellation effort that offers new hope to some of the world's poorest and most forgotten people. USCCB strongly supported the new debt relief program called the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) that was approved under U.S. leadership in 2005. This provided major new debt cancellation for HIPC countries. Also, in 2007, USCCB supported and encouraged the expansion of MDRI to include cancellation of debt owed to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) by Latin American and Caribbean HIPC countries. Nevertheless, more than twenty very poor countries still are unable to benefit from HIPC or MDRI debt relief.

FINISHING THE JOB: Now that the *Jubilee Act* was passed by the House of Representatives on April 16, it must also be approved by the Senate. The *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007* (S. 2166), will be discussed during a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, reviewed subsequently by the Foreign Relations Committee, and then must be sent to the Senate floor for a vote. If passed in its current form, the legislation would extend debt cancellation to virtually all very poor countries that have, or develop, financial management systems to assure that debt relief savings are used to reduce poverty.

ACTION REQUESTED: Encourage your Senators to become cosponsors of the *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007* (S. 2166), if they have not already, and thank Senators who are current cosponsors for their support. A list of Senators who are cosponsors is provided on the next page.

RESOURCES: See action alerts and letters on the *Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty* website of USCCB and CRS at www.usccb.org/globalpoverty. For more information contact: Gerry Flood, 202-541-3167 (phone), 202-541-3339 (fax); gfflood@usccb.org; and Fr. Andrew Small, OMI, 202-541-3153 (phone); asmall@usccb.org.



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Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007 (S. 2166) Sponsor and Cosponsors

Sponsor:

Sen Casey, Robert P., Jr. [PA]

Co-Sponsors:

Sen Biden, Joseph R., Jr. [DE]

Sen Boxer, Barbara [CA]

Sen Brown, Sherrod [OH]

Sen Clinton, Hillary Rodham [NY]

Sen Coleman, Norm [MN]

Sen Collins, Susan M. [ME]

Sen Dodd, Christopher J. [CT]

Sen Durbin, Richard [IL]

Sen Feingold, Russell D. [WI]

Sen Hagel, Chuck [NE]

Sen Isakson, Johnny [GA]

Sen Kerry, John F. [MA]

Sen Klobuchar, Amy [MN]

Sen Leahy, Patrick J. [VT]

Sen Lieberman, Joseph I. [CT]

Sen Lugar, Richard G. [IN]

Sen McCaskill, Claire [MO]

Sen Menendez, Robert [NJ]

Sen Mikulski, Barbara A. [MD]

Sen Obama, Barack [IL]

Sen Schumer, Charles E. [NY]

Sen Smith, Gordon H. [OR]

Sen Snowe, Olympia J. [ME]

Sen Sununu, John E. [NH]

Sen Wyden, Ron [OR]

All Senators listed here and those not listed here can be reached by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121.