



NETWORK CONNECTION

SECOND QUARTER 2025

We Need an

ECONOMY FOR ALL



Inside This Issue

NETWORK's New Policy Agenda
Meet the Sr. Carol Coston Fellows

Grounded in Gospel values and the Catholic social justice tradition, NETWORK transforms our society by shaping federal policies that achieve racial, economic, and social justice; serve the common good; and honor the dignity of all.

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NETWORK'S 2024
Annual Report

ON THE COVER

In March, NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.) Coston Fellows convened in D.C. to visit with local service organizations and make lobby visits. The college students visited the offices of their Members of Congress, asking them to protect SNAP and Medicaid—instead of giving tax cuts to the ultra-wealthy and funding detention and deportation—in the budget reconciliation bill.

Back row from L to R: Jackalope Labbe, Baylee Fingerhut, Taylor Demby, Axl Mensah, Leslie Gracia, Aaron John, and Theresa Lindberg. Front row L to R: Steven Perez, Jonathan Alcantara, JC Clay. Not pictured: Coston Fellows Mia Isabel Lazo and Ben Dickison.

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Smash and Grab

The Destruction of Our System Makes Thriving Impossible



Joan F. Neal

Across our political leanings, our faiths, and where we live, all of us want to afford our groceries, earn a just wage, have access to good health care, send our kids to good schools, and live our daily lives in peace and security within our communities. But what many of us fail to realize — even the ardent justice-seekers among us — is how much we all stand to lose at this moment in history, and not just from the stubbornly high price of groceries.

President Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans in Congress are effectively replacing our government with a dictatorship led by a small handful of super-wealthy tech giants who control how we get our information and distract us from their selfish hoarding of nearly all our resources. This makes the rest of us poorer, sicker, and less able to care for ourselves and those we love. They want to divide and distract us by sowing fear and threats of violence, as well as militarizing our communities. They want to build a nightmare future without freedom, where no one can live their lives in peace and without fear. It's also a vision that's the total opposite of what our tradition of Catholic Social Justice teaches. And it's a future that nobody wants.

With each passing day, this grows clearer, and more intrusive: the cutting of funding for teachers, Head Start, and school lunches; the firing of personnel who assist veterans; the cancelling of phone lines that help seniors access Social Security; the firing of medical researchers who help prevent pandemics; the rolling back of gun safety laws; gutting the services that our communities need for health care, food, education, public health and safety, and so much more! It's essential that justice-seekers connect the dots, speak out, and make clear to everyone what is actually happening and why!

The budget cuts (as proposed in Congress and backed by the Trump-Vance administration) are immoral and are designed to give trillions of dollars in tax cuts to the ultra-wealthy, fund the militarization of our country's immigrant detention and deportation efforts, and leave more and more people with more hunger, higher medical bills, and more instability.

Putting people out of work, making it acceptable to engage in racist behavior, denying climate change and vaccines, abandoning life-saving aid for millions of people around the world — these are not Catholic values. Vice President J.D. Vance said that Christians should care about the people

around them first—an assertion quickly debunked by the pope himself. The Vice President has it backwards. The circles of community closest to us—family, neighborhood, friends, local community—rely on the safety and stability of the wider circles around them. And this Administration, in a matter of weeks, has set in motion events that will disrupt safety and stability at every level, that will destroy the conditions we need for all to thrive.

The circles of community closest to us —
family, neighborhood, friends, local
community — rely on the safety and stability
of the wider circles around them.

Elections have consequences, yes. But the hoped for outcome should be the greater thriving of all people, not the systematic scapegoating and deliberate destruction of society. This Administration's actions make clear that we have no choice but to turn to one another in community and strive harder than ever before to resist the calculated efforts to pit one against the other, turn our society backwards, and push us off a cliff.

We must move forward. We must bend the moral arc of history *toward* justice, not away from it. At this critical inflection point in history, when all we value—our families, our freedoms, our place in the universe, even the unprecedented stability the Western world has known since the end of World War II—is being shattered, we must press onward in the sure and certain hope of a brighter future ahead.

Our Catholic faith tells us that God's realm is already in our midst, and it is up to us to cooperate with the Spirit to build a world that is peaceful, just, and equitable. In the face of the profound setbacks of the last few months, we still believe in Beloved Community. We still know that it's possible to build a better world where everyone, without exception, can live, grow, and thrive. ☀️

Joan F. Neal is NETWORK's Interim Executive Director.

Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"I exhort all not to give in to narratives that discriminate against and cause unnecessary suffering to our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters."

— Pope Francis in his Feb. 10 letter to the U.S. bishops

"Jesus went into the temple and flipped the tables over. Our job is not to sit by silently."

— Rev. Dr. Cassandra Gould of Faith in Action at a Lent prayer service, March 5

"Show me your checkbook and I will tell you what your values are. The checkbook of the United States declares who we are. ... To talk about cutting Medicaid is a sin and an insult to the God who lets us walk around and breathe."

— Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5) at a Lent prayer service on March 5

"History, including U.S. history, is filled with examples of brave everyday people coming together, organizing, and resisting efforts by governments to destroy their freedom and safety. Now it is our turn to do the same. Now is the time to take action against this direct attack on our democracy."

— Joan F. Neal in a Feb. 11 NETWORK statement

"The existence of billionaires is immoral because they detract from our society's ability to feed, house, clothe, educate, and provide health care for all of us."

— Sr. Emily TeKolste, SP, NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization Coordinator, in a Global Sisters Report column, Feb. 21

"Today, for us, it is not Satan in the desert but the talking heads ... who lure us with empty promises of security, control, and self-preservation."

— Virginia Schilder, NETWORK Communications Coordinator, in a Mar. 9 reflection on the First Sunday of Lent with the Just Word Commentary

"In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now."

— Bishop Mariann Budde to President Trump and Vice President Vance at the Inauguration Prayer Service, Jan. 21

"We know that the Black community has served as a democratizing force throughout our nation's history, forcing us to live up to the full promise of our creed of liberty and justice for all."

— Rev. Adam Russell Taylor of Sojourners in a Feb. 10 Black History Month reflection

"NETWORK is putting out a call to protect workers of all ethnicities, all creeds, and all income levels, by working against the current threats in our politics to erode and eliminate our earned Social Security benefits."

— NETWORK Fellow Ralph McCloud in a Black History Month reflection, Feb. 3

Why We Need An Economy for All

*Despite Major Setbacks Under the Trump Administration,
the Vision of a Better Tomorrow is Clear as Ever*

BY JANE SUTTER

Just five days before the inauguration of President Trump, NETWORK unveiled its “An Economy for All” policy agenda in a webinar that attracted more than 2,100 registrants.

The agenda demands that elected leaders deliver what our communities need to thrive:

- Jobs with paid leave and wages that cover our bills, retirement, and more
- Affordable housing, food, and health care
- Safe and welcoming neighborhoods
- Clean air and water
- A just tax code that ensures the wealthy pay their fair share
- A just and humane immigration system
- A politics responsive to the people, not the money

In introducing the agenda, NETWORK Interim Executive Director Joan F. Neal noted: “We all recognize that these are challenging times for our country. Our democracy, our vision of a free, diverse, inclusive, pluralistic country is on the line, starting now.”

The challenging times became even more apparent as Trump enacted his “shock and awe” campaign and the House of Representatives narrowly passed its budget plan on Feb. 25, a plan that extends previous tax cuts to billionaires and threatens to undo important safety net programs.

As the drama unfolded in Washington, NETWORK friends and collaborators witnessed the implications for their work on the ground.

Politics responsive to the people

When Rev. Dr. Gregory Edwards, Executive Director of POWER Interfaith, talks about activism, he quotes Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s exhortation of “the fierce urgency of now.”

A multi-regional, multi-faith, multi-class, multi-generational movement, building politically progressive organizations and working with more than 400 congregations in the Philadelphia area, the Lehigh Valley and Central Pennsylvania, POWER’s focus is on local and state issues (wages, equitable school funding, renewable energy, and more). However, Edwards calls



Joan F. Neal, NETWORK Interim Executive Director, speaks at an Ash Wednesday prayer service calling for a compassionate federal budget, March 5 on Capitol Hill. Photo: Catherine Gillette

proposals at the federal level “disastrous, (and) at the same time it’s also a distraction because people are panicking.”

What citizens need from the federal government, said Edwards, is a higher minimum wage and access to quality and affordable health care, housing, and schools.

“What we know to be true is that things only change when people, ordinary people, actually begin to organize and lift up their voices and not only vote but are able to, by the thousands, move their legislators ... to a position that is in their own best interests, regardless of who’s in the White House.”

A just tax code

Tax policy expert Sarah Christopherson traveled with Nuns on the Bus & Friends “Vote Our Future” tour this past fall. She delivered a strong message: “Never let anyone tell you that we can’t afford to take care of our people, that we can’t afford to feed the

(continued on page 6)

hungry, that we can't afford to have a good education for our children, that we can't afford to get homes and have living wages, because there is so much money untaxed right now, and some of it will never go taxed, among the billionaire class."

Christopherson points out that there are 815 people in the U.S. who are billionaires (according to an analysis of *Forbes* magazine data). "They are collectively worth six trillion dollars. You could tax them and still leave each one of them with a billion dollars and simultaneously have universal pre-K, have free school lunch, have full Medicaid coverage. ... It's phenomenal what you could do, and they would still be billionaires."

Christopherson describes how Republicans in Congress seek to renew tax for the ultra-rich and pay for them with cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, education, and health care subsidies and the threat of not curtailing the excess hoarding of wealth.

Protect people seeking asylum

At the Kino Border Initiative's (KBI) Migrant Outreach Center in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, staff and asylum seekers quickly saw the effects of the Trump administration's restrictive immigration measures. About 270,000 people who had registered for appointments at a Port of Entry to the United States were stranded in Mexico, according to statistics compiled by the Washington Office on Latin America, a human rights advocacy organization.



Sr. Maria Engracia Robles, ME, of Kino Border Institute signs the Bus during the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends site visit to the U.S.-Mexico Border.



Rev. Dr. Gregory Edwards, Executive Director of POWER Interfaith, participates in an Oct. 1 roundtable discussion in Allentown, Pa. During the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.

KBI offers meals, shelter, clothing, legal and psychological assistance, and more. KBI Feedback Coordinator Sr. Maria Engracia Robles, ME, said through an interpreter, "All those Americans who have a good heart should understand the migrants in the U.S. are not criminals." They are working in jobs such as agriculture, jobs that American citizens don't want to do. "They are people of faith, they are working people."

The reasons for migration have changed in recent years, Sr. Engracia said. Formerly, most migrants were seeking employment in the U.S. In recent years, migrants are families fleeing from violence or persecution. Despite recent events, the center's clients remain hopeful, Sr. Engracia said. "They are hopefully waiting that God improves their lives," and waiting patiently. "They are very sad but very strong at the same time."

Jobs with fair wages

With the new Administration and Congress, Ani Halasz is greatly concerned that workers will struggle even more to make ends meet. Halasz is executive director at Long Island Jobs with Justice (LIJWJ), which works with labor unions, faith-based and other organizations, and activists to create living wage jobs, support worker organizing, and demand corporate accountability. The group's mission aligns with NETWORK's 2025 agenda – building an economy that works for all.

A top concern for Halasz is the status of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). In January, Trump fired the only female board member, leaving the board without a quorum. In February, Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) announced the shuttering of regional NLRB offices. The move will

“make it almost impossible for us to protect the rights of workers in the future,” Halasz said. “It will be increasingly hard for workers to organize labor unions, because there won’t be an agency overseeing that, there won’t be a federal act protecting workers’ rights to organize.”

Other threats include a chilling effect on workers coming forward about wage theft and other exploitation, as well as Medicaid requirements that impose work requirements and exclude many immigrants.

“What we’re seeing happening right now in this country is the rolling back of almost every protection in this country that we fought for.”

Clean air and water

When Curtis Da’Von meets with citizens, his goal is to help them understand how things are connected between our environment and our everyday experiences. As part of his work as Southwest Pennsylvania Organizing



Curtis Da’Von of Clean Water Action gets a selfie with the Bus at the Oct. 5, 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends rally in Pittsburgh.

“We’ve known for a really long time that wealth inequality was destabilizing for democracies, but it didn’t feel urgent. ... Now we’re to the point that you can’t deny it anymore.”



Sarah Christopherson is a tax justice advocate, seen here on the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour..

Director for Clean Water Action, a national organization, he educates the community—including who have lost a loved one to violence—about the dangers of environmental lead on children and its connection to behavioral and developmental problems.

“So often in communities of color, there’s issues of high violence and crime. So you can start to connect the dots,” he says. “You can literally look at a map and areas that are high in lead are high in crime.”

The Pittsburgh area, where Da’Von works, already lacks enough government funding to cover the needs to remove lead from homes. Funding cuts at the Environmental Protection Agency further jeopardize their work.

Staying hopeful

Pope Francis’s exhortation that people be “Pilgrims of Hope” in this jubilee year has become a rallying cry for NETWORK and its volunteers. As Neal expressed to webinar attendees, “Let us be inspired to move to action, and as we do, let us call upon the God we know we can depend upon to carry us through today, tomorrow, and however long it takes.”

Jane Sutter is a freelance journalist based in Rochester, N.Y. and is part of the NETWORK Advocates Team in New York State.

Photos on pages 6-7: Jacob Schatz, CCR Studios

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CLEAN WATER ACTION > cleanwater.org

KINO BORDER INITIATIVE > kinoborderinitiative.org

LONG ISLAND JOBS WITH JUSTICE > longislandjwj.org

POWER Interfaith > powerinterfaith.org

SARAH CHRISTOPHERSON > www.scgchristopherson.com

AN ECONOMY FOR ALL



A justice agenda for all of us.

Whether we are nurses or farm workers, welders or coders, students or retirees, we are resilient, and we take care of each other. When money is tight, we find a way to get by. But we deserve more than that. We are made in God's image, and we deserve to thrive, not just survive.

But time and time again, some greedy politicians side with the ultra-wealthy, letting them influence our politics, pollute our neighborhoods, and get rich off our hard work — allowing CEOs to make 290 times more than the average workers' pay. To distract us from the problems the powerful few create, they blame low-wage workers, hardworking immigrant families, and our transgender neighbors. Instead of making the ultra-wealthy pay what they owe in taxes, these lawmakers seek to cut our health care and take food off of our tables. This is immoral.

"Today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion."

— Pope Francis

But it doesn't have to be this way. For decades, Catholic Sisters and faith-filled justice-seekers have chosen solidarity with workers and love of neighbor. When we live out these values together, we win — like when we secured worker protections in the Civil Rights Era, monthly checks and other relief during COVID with the American Rescue Plan Act, and health care to millions of people with the Affordable Care Act.

An Economy for All Policy Areas

Today, we carry this Spirit forward with all who care about the common good. We recognize that our economy touches on all aspects of our lives and are demanding federal policies that reflect our dignity and deliver what we need and deserve: an Economy For All.

- Jobs with paid leave and wages that cover our bills, retirement, and more
- Affordable housing, food, and health care
- Safe and welcoming neighborhoods
- Clean air and water
- A tax code that ensures the wealthy pay their fair share
- A just and humane immigration system
- A politics responsive to the people, not the money

Together, we are building an economy for all, and we demand that our elected leaders make policy choices that allow all of us to thrive.

NETWORK Annual Report 2024

Founded by Catholic Sisters in 1972, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, NETWORK is an inclusive, national, Catholic advocacy organization open to all who share our values, working to achieve equity and justice for everyone. Grounded in Gospel values and the Catholic social justice tradition, NETWORK transforms our society by shaping federal policies that achieve racial, economic, and social justice; serve the common good; and honor the dignity of all.



Dear NETWORK Supporters,

In 2024, NETWORK staff coordinated a multi-faceted campaign to equip justice-seekers for engagement in the most polarized and contentious U.S. election year of our lives. With Christian nationalism taking center stage in Congress and on the campaign trail, advocates across the country sought resources for how to meaningfully and productively engage with their communities. NETWORK answered that call with our “Vote Our Future” campaign, rolling out the 2024 Equally Sacred Checklist to help voters understand candidate policy positions through the lens of six freedoms necessary for a thriving democracy.

We equipped more than 3,500 advocates across the country with nonpartisan voter education and engagement resources through in-person and virtual trainings. The Nuns on the Bus & Friends “Vote Our Future” tour, our first in-person bus tour in six years, reached communities in 20 cities across 18 states. Through the inaugural year of our Young Advocates Leadership Lab, nine Sr. Carol Coston Fellows registered more than 1,200 voters across their college campuses and trained 450 students on multi-issue voting, GOTV mobilization, and how to advocate with policymakers. Through these successes, we demonstrate our conviction that our political ministry is needed now more than ever to sustain our communities as we confront the destructive, immoral, and harmful actions of the new presidential Administration and Congress.

We at NETWORK are humbled by the generous financial support from this community. Contributions to NETWORK Advocates’ 2024 projects and general operations (not restricted to the Endowment Fund) were the second highest in our history, and while expenses outpaced external revenue, our reserve resources enabled us to fully fund the Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour as well as our expanded elections work. Meanwhile 2024 was NETWORK Lobby’s best fundraising year ever, with total revenue exceeding expenses and enabling us to meet mission as well as plan for future work in this challenging time for our political ministry.

Thank you for your prayers, participation, and investment in our mission and shared vision of justice in 2024. Your faithful support enables us to adapt to these unprecedented and difficult times, while staying grounded in our commitment to building a society where everyone can thrive, no exceptions.

In Solidarity,



Joan F. Neal
Interim Executive Director



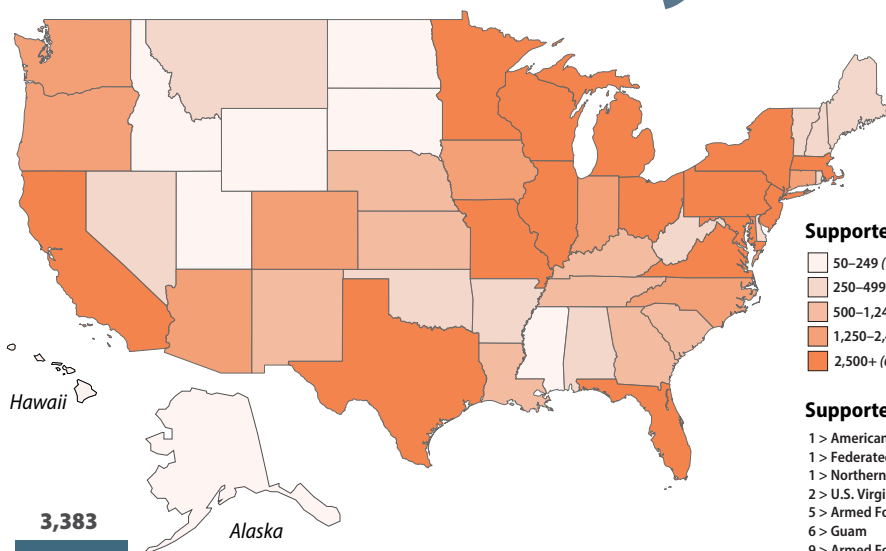
(top) Chelsea Puckett, Sr. Mumbi Kigutha, CPPS, and Margie Clarke stand together during the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends “Vote Our Future” tour.

(middle) Drake Starling of NETWORK Government Relations meets Rep. Prima Jayapal (WA-07).

(bottom) Sr. Marilu Covani, SP, and Diana Fajardo of Kino Border Institute tour the U.S.-Mexico border fence during the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.

NETWORK is two organizations with one mission: NETWORK Advocates is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization and NETWORK Lobby is a 501(c)(4) organization. These two organizations work closely together to further our movement for justice and peace.

OUR NETWORK Community



We were
honored
to have
more than
94,000
supporters
across the
country in
2024

Our Work By The Numbers

2,866,112 emails sent
to NETWORK supporters in

189 email blasts

353,462 views of NETWORK

websites by **140,629** visitors

73,811 texts sent to advocates

1,049 calls to Members of Congress

2,077 advocates action alerts to
Congress and the White House

23 press releases

7 episodes of the Just Politics podcast

57 blog posts published on the
NETWORK and Nuns on the Bus & Friends
websites

40,292 TOTAL FOLLOWERS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1,536 Instagram

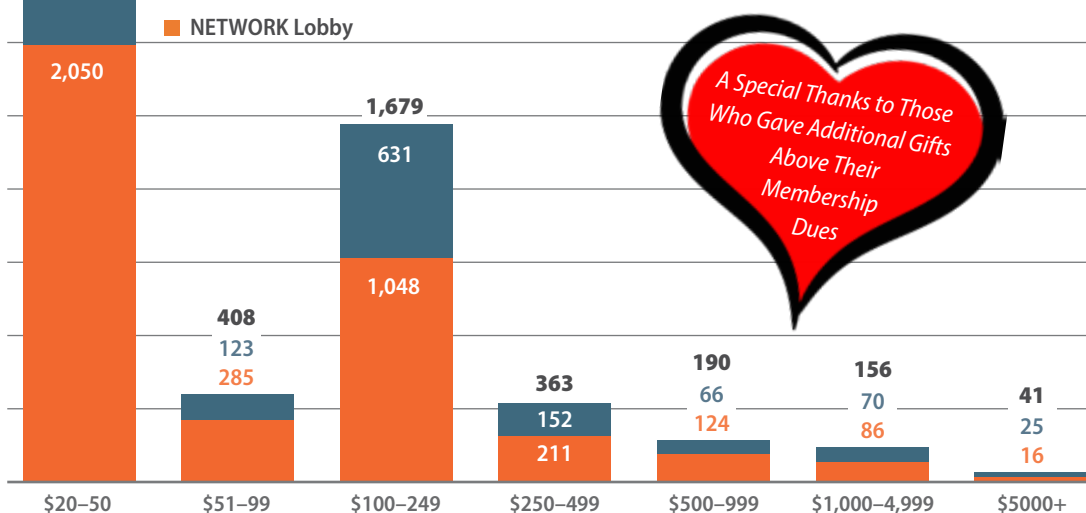
28,366 Facebook

10,400 Twitter (X)

Thanks to our 5,684* members in 2024

*Basic Membership is \$50 (\$20 if senior, student, or limited income)

■ NETWORK Advocates
■ NETWORK Lobby



1,258 first-time donors

A Sister-Spirit welcome to our newest supporters!

426 GEMs

People who participated in the Giving Every Month program

2,428 Loyalty Society

People who have given consecutively for five years or more



Bread & Roses

~ SOCIETY ~

Members of NETWORK's Bread and Roses Society play a vital role in building the justice movement for many years to come. By planning to remember NETWORK in their will or estate plans, members will make substantial, enduring commitments to our community's long-term work to create a society that promotes justice and the dignity of all in the shared abundance of God's creation.

For more information on how to make a legacy gift to NETWORK, please contact us at development@networklobby.org.

Gaea Maeve Aeolus
Alice and Robert Beezat
Kim+ and Stephen Benoit
Margaret Betz
James Biechler
Carol Ann+ and Lee J. Breyer
Dawn Calabia
Susan Doherty
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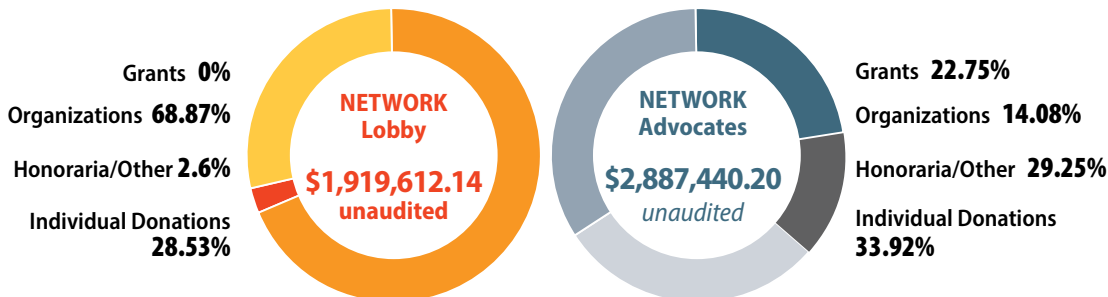
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Financials

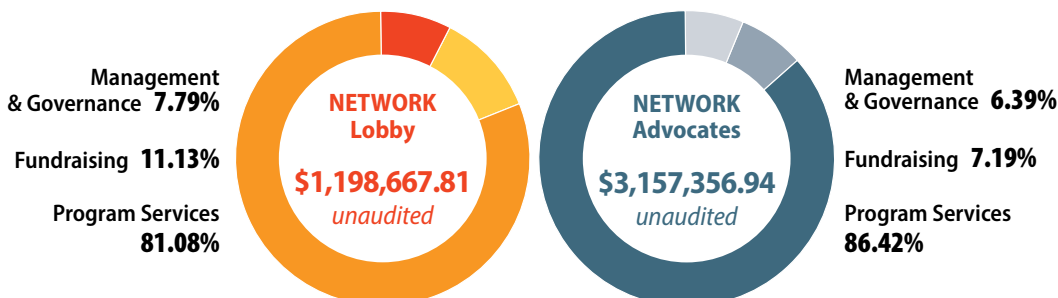
Copies of audited statements as well as IRS 990 documents can be found at:

networklobby.org/financials (for NETWORK Lobby) and networkadvocates.org/financials (for NETWORK Advocates)

2024 Revenue



2024 Expenses



IN MEMORIAM

We honor the memory of those whose estates supported NETWORK in 2024. We also recognize those who passed in 2024 and were remembered through gifts from relatives and friends.

We are honored to be entrusted with their legacies, which sustain this work for many years to come.

Estate Gifts

Joan E. Talbert

In Memory

Sr. Laurette Bellamy, SP
Dorothy Bond
Sr. Cele Breen, SCL
Joseph P. Crowe, MD
Mary Dinnen
Mary Ann Dudas
Marsha Erickson
Dorothy Kelly Evanson
Sr. Grace Mary Flickinger, SBS
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Sr. Carole Riley, CDP
Joseph Rosica
Kathleen Gillespie Sanders
Kathy Shaffer
Bonnie J. Squires
Mary A. Sullivan
JoAnn Valaske
Bob Wilson

1. Imani McClammy of Barry University in Miami was among the first cohort of NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.).

2. Laura Peralta-Schulte of the NETWORK Government Relations team speaks at the closing rally of the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour in San Francisco.



- 3. Bridget O'Brien, Director of Ministry at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago, listens during a town hall at the church on the Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.
- 4. Jane Sutter (right) and a friend hold a NETWORK Multi Issue Voter sign at an event in Rochester, N.Y.
- 5. Alicia Contreras Alas of the group Corazon Arizona in Phoenix on the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.
- 6. Sr. Deirdre Griffin, SSJ, listens to Yesenia Lacayo, Operations Director at Mission Action in San Francisco, during the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.



7. Participants join in a town hall meeting in Detroit during the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends tour.

8. Kate Young, Executive Director of the St. Francis Center in Redwood, Ca. shares about her work during the visit of the Nuns on the Bus & Friends.

9. Rep. John Larson (CT-01) speaks at the July announcement of the 2024 Nuns on the Bus & Friends "Vote Our Future" tour. Photo: Larry French (AP Content Services)

Top and bottom photos on page i and photos 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8: Jacob Schatz, CCR Studios

Stay Rooted for Action

In Community With One Another, We Can Endure These Scary Times

Over the past few months, I've spent some time with people across the country who *really care*. They are outraged and frustrated by the things they see every day from the Trump administration and Elon Musk — as they attack the funding our communities rely on, send ICE to raid our towns, give our data to private interests, and more.

NETWORK Advocates and others across the country want to make a difference. Many also express feeling overwhelmed and struggling to find hope. Many of us want to call for more from those who are supposed to represent us — from our elected officials to leaders in the church. Amidst what feels like a daily onslaught of bad news, what is ours to do? Here are some practices and reminders for staying rooted and active:

Ground yourself

This Administration *wants* us to feel overwhelmed and discouraged so that we won't be motivated to push back against their power-grabs. That's precisely why they are pushing their agenda forward with such speed.

Take a moment each day to ground yourself. Take a deep breath. Remind yourself that *in this moment* you are safe. Staying grounded and in a parasympathetic emotional state will enable you to be more effective in the work you are doing. Recognize that you are part of a bigger whole. At the same time, you are one person. One person doesn't change the world alone. By trying to do it all, you will burn yourself out, and we can't afford that!

Act from where you are

Maybe you're surrounded by people who feel very differently than you. Perhaps your job is to build authentic connections with them, learn from them, and sow small seeds of relationship that might open up something new. Or maybe you're mostly in relationship with people who share your perspective. Invite them to join you in taking action. Thinking together doesn't change things; acting together does.

Set realistic expectations

We don't have to look for big actions that will have big results. Focus on small actions that will have small results — and then do them regularly. As Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) said, "There is no action too small because when we all act together, even in small ways, it adds up to something huge."

Do your part and nobody else's

You are not alone. You are part of a wide community of people working to make this country a place where everyone can thrive. Our faith assures us that our work today is part of a bigger picture of God's justice.

We have to share the workload. Each person doing their own part well allows us together to do great things well. It could be going to a lobby visit, writing a letter to the editor, donating your time or money, or distributing Know Your Rights pamphlets at your parish. Start by looking for one concrete thing you feel called to do and focus on that. Trust that other people also *really care* and are doing their parts as best they can.

Focus on action, not fear

What is happening in our country is scary. But autocrats rely on fear. Their power is built on illusion and intimidation. They have no power if we refuse to be intimidated. At the end of the day, we have to choose compassion and solidarity over fear. As the first letter of John says, "Perfect love casts out fear!"

Find joy, celebrate successes

Though there will be setbacks along the way, there will also be successes. For example, our collective pressure recently forced the Trump administration to roll back their devastating federal funding freeze. Even if temporary, these wins matter! No matter how small, celebrate those successes. Find joy in the community you're building. These are the things that will sustain us.

Find compassion

The Administration's actions are hateful, and we must answer with compassion. Find compassion, including for yourself and those around you. Reach out and check in on neighbors. We don't need people showing up perfectly. We just need to show up.

Collaborate

Connect with other groups in your local area. Attend their events and build relationships there. And then invite folks you meet there (and folks you already know) to join you for NETWORK events. That's how we keep growing and stay connected and effective! Friends, when we act together, we have enormous power. Our pressure is working, so we must keep it up. Together.



Sr. Emily TeKolste, SP is NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization Coordinator.



Welcome back, Y.A.L.L.

NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab Returns with Second Cohort of Coston Fellows

NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.) is a leadership and advocacy skills development program for college students. It serves as a training space for Spirit-filled young adults to build the skills they need to be advocates for justice. NETWORK has offered training for college students over the years, but Y.A.L.L. offers a deeper level of engagement, seeking to mobilize a diverse national movement of justice-seekers. This spring, NETWORK welcomed its second Y.A.L.L. cohort of Sr. Carol Coston Fellows, 12 students from Catholic colleges across the U.S.

The Fellowship

The Sr. Carol Coston Fellowship brings together a learning community of young justice-seekers working to advance NETWORK's advocacy at the federal level and achieve an inclusive, multiracial, multi-faith democracy. In 2025, we are thrilled to be joined by 12 Coston Fellows organizing on NETWORK's

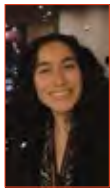
"An Economy for All" agenda at their Catholic colleges and universities in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, California, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and Massachusetts.

Over the course of the year, Coston Fellows will study the principles of Catholic Social Justice and policy issues through the lived experiences of real people; engage in coalition-building with peers, faculty, staff, and community social service organizations; coordinate action on NETWORK's Action Alerts; and organize and lead virtual, in-district, and Washington lobby visits with representatives and senators.

This year, the Fellows will be centering their efforts on policies related to immigration, food security, and health care. They will gather in D.C. twice during the Fellowship; once in March for a weekend of service and lobbying, and then again in November to make a second visit to the Hill and participate in the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice.

Meet the 2025 Sr. Carol Coston Fellows

Leslie Gracia, she/her



HOMETOWN: Elgin, IL
SCHOOL: DePaul University,
class of 2027
MAJOR: Astrophysics
FOCUS ISSUE: A just and humane
immigration system

"As a survivor and as a person of color who has experienced racism, I am passionate about fighting for people whose voices are not heard."

JC Clay, he/him



HOMETOWN: Atlanta, GA
SCHOOL: Saint Vincent College,
class of 2026
MAJOR: Business Administration
FOCUS ISSUE: Safe and welcoming
neighborhoods

"This year, I am excited for another opportunity to be a young advocate and help voices fighting for justice be heard."

Aaron John, he/him



HOMETOWN: Halifax, Nova Scotia
SCHOOL: Manhattan University,
class of 2028
MAJOR: Psychology
FOCUS ISSUE: Food and health care
for all

"While I am Canadian, my extensive international experience and my heritage of being born in Botswana has given me a unique perspective on immigration and health care that I believe will be invaluable for this fellowship's focus in 2025."

Mia Isabel Lazo, she/her



HOMETOWN: Venice, CA
SCHOOL: Mount Saint Mary's
University, Los Angeles,
class of 2028
MAJOR: Environmental Studies
FOCUS ISSUE: Clean air and water

"Justice goes beyond merely addressing symptoms of inequity; it calls us to look at the structures and root causes that create these imbalances."

Jonathan Alcantara, he/him



HOMETOWN: Atlanta, GA
SCHOOL: Marquette University,
class of 2027
MAJOR: Finance and Accelerated
Ingenuity in Markets
FOCUS ISSUE: A just and humane
immigration system

"I am excited for the fellowship this year because I'll be able to interact with folks from different communities and again work towards creating impactful change."

Ben Dickison, he/him



HOMETOWN: Louisville, KY
SCHOOL: Xavier University,
class of 2026
MAJOR: Social Work
FOCUS ISSUE: Food and health care
for all

"Americans are hungry for righteousness in the face of grave, widespread injustices throughout our country. There is no better time for the loving principles of Catholic Social Teaching to meet the moment."



SR. CAROL COSTON, OP

The Sr. Carol Coston Fellowship is named after one of NETWORK's foundresses. An Adrian Dominican, Coston is one of the 47 Catholic Sisters who gathered in Washington, D.C. in December 1971 and made the decision to begin a network of sisters advocating for social justice on Capitol Hill. She served as the first executive director of NETWORK from the organization's beginning in April 1972 through its first 10 years of existence. In January 2001, President Bill Clinton honored Coston with the second highest civilian award, the Presidential Citizens Medal. She was the first Catholic Sister to receive this award.



Axl Mensah, she/her



HOMETOWN: Bronx, NY
SCHOOL: University of Mount Saint Vincent, class of 2027
MAJOR: Biology
FOCUS ISSUE: Food and health care for all

"For this semester, I am most looking forward to organizing on campus and connecting with my peers concerning social justice. I had a lot of fun organizing during election season, and I am excited to see what [organizing] looks like now. I am also looking forward to meeting like-minded individuals my age because I find it a little hard to meet peers my age who are willing to engage in serious conversations about such topics."

Jackalope Labbe, he/him



HOMETOWN: Wilbraham, MA
SCHOOL: College of Our Lady of the Elms, class of 2026
MAJOR: Social Work, History
FOCUS ISSUE: A just and humane immigration system

"I'm looking at paths in law or public policy once I graduate, and I hope to apply the advocacy skills I'm learning to constituent work and civil rights defense I see in my future."

Baylee Fingerhut, she/her



HOMETOWN: Niskayuna, NY
SCHOOL: Saint Joseph's University, class of Dec. 2025
MAJOR: Public Policy
FOCUS ISSUE: Food and health care for all

"This year, I cannot wait to continue to provide my campus with information on advocacy and the importance of democratic participation. Just because the election is over does not mean college students should turn their back on government, it is important now more than ever that students stay engaged and informed!"

Steven Perez, he/him



HOMETOWN: Miami, FL
SCHOOL: Barry University, class of 2028
MAJOR: Finance and Sports Management
FOCUS ISSUE: A just and humane immigration system

"Justice begins with empathy, understanding, and sustained advocacy, and I am deeply passionate about serving as a voice for the most marginalized groups within my community."

Taylor Demby, she/her



HOMETOWN: San Antonio, TX
SCHOOL: University of the Incarnate Word, class of Dec. 2025
MAJOR: Sociology
FOCUS ISSUE: A politics responsive to the people, not the money

"Through NETWORK's community of young leaders, I hope to gain a stronger understanding of policy work at the federal level, ultimately using this experience to influence positive change in my local and campus communities."

Theresa Lindberg, she/her



HOMETOWN: Temple, TX
SCHOOL: Mount Mary University, Milwaukee, class of 2027
MAJOR: English Literature, Spanish
FOCUS ISSUE: A politics responsive to the people, not the money

"The best part of being a Coston Fellow last year was having the opportunity to share a friend's story with my senators during a lobby visit in D.C. Regardless of whether or not the story led to change, it felt important for her story to be told."



Tax Injustice in the Republican Budget

What We Could Do if Billionaires Paid What They Owe

Annexing Greenland, renaming the Gulf of Mexico, selling Teslas on the front lawn of the White House — all are examples of gaslighting the American people so as not to address the real issues at hand: Republicans in Congress want to make devastating cuts to essential public programs for working people to fund tax cuts to billionaires. These executive actions are deliberate attempts to shift the focus away from the critical need for a fairer tax system.

The faithful must pick a side. Our decision will have ramifications for future generations. We can continue to support enriching the wealthiest individuals, who already have an outsized influence on our economy and politics, or we can start looking at ways to make the wealthiest pay what they owe in taxes.

One of the most egregious aspects of the Republicans' current Budget Reconciliation proposal is its emphasis on reviving the disastrous Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which gives tax cuts to billionaires and large corporations. These tax giveaways are not only unjust, they're also economically irresponsible. Take, for example, the harm done to by eliminating vital regulations that protect workers, consumers, and the environment. When the richest handful of people continue to pay lower tax rates than working-class families, it sets a dangerous precedent — one that perpetuates wealth inequality, destabilizes the economy, and weakens our democracy.

Tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy are also rarely used to invest in innovation, job creation, or social good. Instead, they often lead to increased stock buybacks, executive bonuses, and dividends — actions that enrich a small group of individuals at the detriment of the rest of society.

If we redirected just a fraction of the wealth accumulated by the top 1%, we could significantly improve the quality of life for millions of people. Here is what the federal government could fund if we made billionaires pay what they owe in taxes:

- **Universal health care:** A fully funded, universal health care system would ensure access to quality care for all, regardless of income. We would be free of devastating medical bills and denials of needed treatments. We would never have to worry about getting the care we need, for ourselves or our loved ones.
- **Affordable housing:** We could combat the growing crisis of housing insecurity and homelessness, and ensure that everyone has access to safe, stable living conditions. This



Jarrett Smith (front in red tie) stands on a balcony of the U.S. Capitol with NETWORK's second cohort of Carol Coston Fellows during their visit to Washington in early March.

would alleviate the strain on emergency shelters and reduce the financial strain on low-income families.

- **Education for all:** We could ensure that all children have access to a high-quality education from early childhood through higher education. Investing in education is one of the most powerful ways to break the cycle of poverty and create a more equitable society.
- **Clean air and water for our neighborhoods:** We could address the climate crisis by investing in renewable energy, green jobs, and sustainable infrastructure. This would protect our planet and create jobs in the process.
- **Social safety nets:** Expanding programs like Social Security, unemployment insurance, and food assistance would help us to retire with dignity and provide critical support for when we go through hard times.

New federal tax policy focus would unleash so many possibilities to help our communities can thrive. Join NETWORK in calling for a fairer tax code, more funding for public programs, and an end to the disproportionate tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. Together, we can create a system that works for everyone, not just the billionaires and mega-corporations.

Jarrett Smith is NETWORK's Senior Government Relations Advocate.

Tracking the Trump Administration's Executive Orders and Actions

Since taking office, the second Trump administration has attacked nearly all of our freedoms, public services and protections, and the programs on which our communities rely. At NETWORK, we are committed to keeping our communities informed and to telling the truth about how the Trump administration is harming us all. As part of that effort, NETWORK has created an “Executive Action Tracker” resource, to track the Trump administration’s executive orders (EOs) and other major executive actions.

Head to our website at www.networkadvocates.org/issues/executive-order-analysis for our complete Executive Action Tracker resource, which we update regularly.

On the tracker resource, you will find tables that list many of the Trump administration’s executive orders and executive actions, their impacts, and the litigation (legal action) challenging them—as it is important to uplift the wide-ranging efforts to resist these actions and to protect our communities. The tables are organized in sections according to how the executive actions undermine our “An Economy for All” agenda areas. The tracker resource also includes a growing list of litigation that NETWORK is supporting.

Here is a sample from NETWORK’s Executive Action Tracker, highlighting some of the Trump administration’s most vicious and damaging executive orders and actions to date:

Stopping federal grant payments: Shuts down all federal grant funding, imperiling the lives and livelihood of our neighbors and the non-profits that provide life-saving support to those in need in our communities. This action would endanger millions of people by decimating the non-profit providers who feed, clothe, educate, house and care for our communities.

Litigation: A lawsuit was immediately filed to block the funding halt. **The Trump administration backed down 24 hours later and restored funding, but the case remains,** with plaintiffs asking for an injunction against the Administration’s future efforts to cut off funding. Update: On Feb. 25, 2025, the court enjoined the Trump administration from implementing the funding freeze. Issues remain with some funding yet to be released. **NETWORK sent an email to Democracy Forward in support of their litigation.**

Ending diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs: Numerous executive orders and actions will severely limit opportunities for education and workforce development, especially for people with disabilities, Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, and other individuals who have historically had fewer opportunities to be

considered for jobs, and if chosen, to be supported in their workplaces.

Litigation: Multiple lawsuits, stating the ban is unconstitutional and unlawful, are moving through the courts with different results. **NETWORK has reached out to Democracy Forward voicing support for their lawsuits. On Mar. 10, 2025, the court issued a temporary restraining order, temporarily barring the Trump administration from implementing the action. The Administration has appealed.**

Dismantling USAID: Eliminating US-AID will increase conflict around the world, discourage democratic processes, increase suffering from disease and death, discourage sustainable economic growth, accelerate environmental destruction, and exacerbate climate change around the world. **This action also marks the Trump administration’s first blatant usurpation of Congress’s mandate in establishing a federal agency.**

Litigation: Multiple lawsuits allege pause is unlawful and unconstitutional and seek declaratory and injunctive relief. After the Administration lost the SCOTUS appeal, a lower court ordered \$2 billion in funding to be paid by Mar. 10, 2025.

Ending measures to lower prescription drug costs: Rescinds the Biden Executive Order on lowering prescription drug costs. Ends drug price negotiations and other Biden administration measures to lower drug costs.

Litigation: *Rescinding an executive order from a previous administration cannot be challenged in the courts.*

Establishing DOGE: Establishes programs to “modernize” federal government by slashing federal jobs and cutting off funding to vital programs. DOGE has been granted further access to the sensitive personal information of private citizens. DOGE leadership has promised to eliminate programs and benefits that serve persons living in or near poverty and to rescind regulations that protect vulnerable communities.

Litigation: Multiple lawsuits challenging the legality of DOGE, DOGE’s access to confidential agency data, and DOGE’s refusal to comply with FOIA requests. **NETWORK has reached out to Public Citizen voicing support for their lawsuit.**

(continued on page 14)

Reducing funding for research: These actions threaten the nation's ability to continue high level research in science and medicine, imperiling the health and safety of our country and progress towards future innovation.

Litigation: 22 states whose public research institutions will face hardship on the policy, as well as universities, hospitals, and health care associations across the country, seek injunctive relief. **On Feb. 10, 2025, the court issued a nationwide temporary restraining order, pausing the implementation of this executive action.**

Revoking federal policing and safety reforms: Eliminates requirements that aimed to advance accountable federal policing and criminal justice practices, such as: limiting home entries without knocking and the use of chokeholds; mandating body cameras; limiting transfer of military equipment to state and local law enforcement; requiring a national federal police misconduct database; and establishing grants for state and local policing reforms. Revokes critical federal policing reforms put in place after the murder of George Floyd.

Repealing 31 regulations and changing the purpose of the Environmental Protection Agency to "lowering energy costs." This action threatens to reverse decades of progress on clean air, clean water, combating greenhouse gas emissions, and protecting lands. This action also eliminates enforcement efforts that prioritize protecting neighborhoods that corporations have historically polluted, particularly low-income neighborhoods and Black and Brown communities.

Expanding mining of fossil fuels: Expands oil energy production and mining on federal lands and water. Promotes massive fossil fuel production, accelerating the pollution of air, water, and soil and destruction of land that comes with mining.

Tariffs: President Trump has imposed broad tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China. These blanket tariff programs will increase costs to consumers, especially for food and gas. Already, these tariff measures have created instability in the nation's food, energy, and manufacturing markets and triggered a trade war with our largest trading partners.

Targeting immigrants and communities who help them: Greatly expands immigrant detention facilities. Orders the hiring of more border patrol agents; cuts off federal funds to sanctuary states and cities; and denies public benefits to undocumented immigrants. Potential massive increases to migrant detention capacity and ICE workforce. Threatens to dismantle sanctuary protections by cutting off federal funding to sanctuary states and cities.

Litigation: Multiple cities and counties have sued, seeking a declaration that the EO is unconstitutional and a permanent injunction on any effort to enforce the provisions withholding funding. **NETWORK has reached out to Democracy Forward expressing support for their lawsuit.**

Fast-track deportations memo: A DHS directive that authorizes fast-track deportations for people who cannot prove they have been in the U.S. for two years. Authorizes ICE raids on "sensitive locations" including schools, churches, and hospitals. Establishes quotas for daily ICE arrests.

Litigation: On expedited removal: Plaintiff brought a lawsuit arguing that summary deportation without adequate procedural safeguards is unconstitutional. **On sensitive locations:** Multiple lawsuits are seeking to enjoin ICE and CBP from conducting enforcement actions in "sensitive places" such as houses of worship, schools and hospitals. **A temporary restraining order (TRO) has been issued in one case, preventing enforcement actions at places of worship.** Courts are considering TRO requests in the other cases.

Firing federal employees: Federal workers have been fired, seen their jobs eliminated, or been placed on administrative leave at agencies across the government. These employees include federal employees who are not "faithful" to Trump administration policies. These firings threaten the health, safety, education, and welfare of all people in the U.S. by weakening the government's ability to meet current needs and respond to future crises through established federal programs.

Litigation: Multiple lawsuits brought on behalf of federal workers allege the mass firings are unlawful and unconstitutional and seek reinstatement. **On Mar. 11, 2025, Five thousand probationary employees reinstated to the USDA. On Mar. 13, 2025, court orders thousands of probationary employees to be reinstated at various agencies.**

Bringing regulatory agencies under Trump's control: Establishes a series of measures to control the policies and operations of the nation's independent regulatory agencies to ensure consistency with President Trump's priorities. Strips independent regulatory agencies of much of their independence from White House political control.

Litigation: Multiple lawsuits brought by the fired leaders of independent agencies who seek to be restored to their roles.

Visit NETWORK's online tracker of the Trump-Vance administration's executive orders and other actions:

www.networkadvocates.org/issues/executive-order-analysis

This will be updated regularly!



NETWORK staff gather on Capitol Hill on March 5 for the event "Ash Wednesday: A Call to Action for a Compassionate Budget," at which religious leaders and Members of Congress prayed and lamented the harms of cutting vital health, food programs to fund tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy and militarized immigration enforcement.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE for **JUSTICE** and **PEACE!**

Help us in our work in building NETWORK's *An Economy For All* agenda by joining the NETWORK GEM (Give Every Month) Program. A small gift each month adds up and makes a huge difference for justice and peace all year round. Your faithful monthly giving provides a reliable, steady financial base that allows us to plan ahead more strategically and make room for new opportunities that increase our reach and impact.

Our GEMs are:

- Loyal Supporters
- From All Income Backgrounds, and
- Integral to Our Mission!

Benefits of becoming a GEM

- **Satisfaction:** You'll know that your support every month (or quarter, semi-annual, or yearly) equips thousands of advocates with the resources and tools they need to engage with elected officials and promote the common good. We will know that we can count on your support and will be able to plan ahead more effectively.
- **Convenience:** You may use the enclosed envelope to enroll with a credit card or check. You can sign up online at www.networklobby.org/GEM. Or you can call our Development Team at 202-601-7866 to donate via Electronic Funds Transfer (direct donation from your bank account). Once you set up your recurring gift, you'll make regular, automatic contributions each month, and your NETWORK membership will be automatically renewed every year you're in the program.
- **Reduced paperwork and administrative expenses:** Automatic monthly payments mean no more membership renewal reminders, and more of your donation goes to where it is needed most.
- **Flexibility:** If for any reason you wish to change or discontinue your gifts, or the credit card being charged, just contact us at development@networklobby.org or call us at (202) 601-7866, and we will gladly accommodate you.

BECOME A NETWORK GEM TODAY!



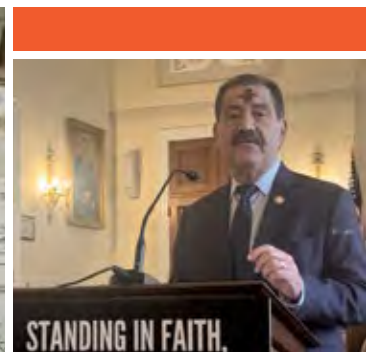
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Left: Victory Noll Sisters Beatrice Haines, Lucille Martinez, Clarita Trujillo, and Rita Musante visit the office of Rep. Marlin Stutzman (IN-03), a member of the House Budget Committee.

Middle: Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago held a postcard party to protest anti-immigrant legislation.

Right: Rep. Chuy Garcia (IL-04) speaks at the Ash Wednesday prayer service for a humane budget on Capitol Hill.



Left: NETWORK's Laura Peralta-Schulte, Sr. Ellis McCulloh, HM, Meg Olson, and Joan F. Neal join Bishop Mark Seitz at the Faith in Action DC Day of Action.

Middle: Sr. Erin Zubal, OSU, distributes ashes at the Ash Wednesday prayer service for a humane budget.

Right: Sr. Carren Herring, RSM, visits Cameron Crum, district intern for Rep. Greg Landsman (OH-01).

Left: Carol Coston Fellows visit the office of Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15).

Middle: Bob and Annie Kachurek, Katy Shunter, Bob Kloos, and Eileen Svajger visit Rep. Shontel Brown (OH-11) staffer Jasmine Butler (third from right).



Above: Luis Watanabe visits the office of Rep. Judy Chu (CA-28).