

One Right Way to Fight Poverty

By Jason D. Hall

American political debates can focus on any number of things, from abortion to religious freedom to foreign policy. On some issues there are great differences between the parties, and on others there seems to be a broad consensus, at least among the political class if not the American electorate. Few policy areas have attracted more disagreement and debate in recent years than efforts to reduce poverty.

The year 2014 is being celebrated in some quarters as the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the “War on Poverty,” launched in 1964 by the Johnson Administration, with



Jason D. Hall

significant leadership from Sargent Shriver, a prominent Catholic who would later run for Vice President on the Democratic ticket in 1972. The legacy of the War on Poverty is hotly disputed, and in truth the results have been mixed. Any approach to build on this legacy that fails to carefully evaluate what has worked and what has not will be doomed to fail.

As always, Catholic Social Teaching cuts through much of the political fog, gets at the heart of the matter, and provides a healthy balance of legitimate concerns. On the one hand, the Church cautions against exalting the market as an end in itself. Measures like GDP growth, raw numbers of jobs created, or stock market prices do not a just economy make. If large segments of the population are left out of a growing economy, or if the basic dignity of each human person is not respected, economic growth is simply not enough.

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Bits and Pieces: Many Parts of One Body

By Mark Bouchard

I am always amazed when I look around and see all that is going on in the Catholic world of social justice.

Seeing church members engaged in such an active and visible way in living out their faith speaks loudly about a sense of mission, a desire to witness to God’s love for everyone. I rejoice in this reality.

Available to all peoples, the Catholic Church is necessarily diverse. The mission to evangelize and bring the Gospel invitation to all results in a profoundly diverse population in a nation like our own, where immigrants from around the world now mingle with the native people of America.

Our ministry of social justice always starts by recognizing that human life is sacred and that human dignity is a gift of God never to be violated by others. We value all life from conception to natural death. This leads us



Photo: The Record

to minister to others in ways that honor human life and dignity regardless of any particular ethnic, cultural, national, physical, or mental characteristics of those we serve. Our call is to serve all in need in order to respect their lives and human dignity.

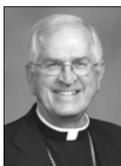
Does this mean that we will “all” agree with one another as to how to approach the work of social justice within such a large global church? Probably not.

However, the advantage of our diversity, the collective social and faith-filled assets of our membership, creates an opportunity to pursue social justice with a strength of experience, a strength of knowledge, and a presence of spirit that is needed when we come together to act on specific situations in our local communities, our state, nation, and indeed, our world. After all, we’ve “been around” for 2,000 years.

I contend that bringing our assets of diverse cultures, diverse approaches and diverse opinions into the arena of Catholic Social Teaching provides the kind of strength needed that results in appropriate social change in our world. This strength can be one of the

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The Catholic Conference of Kentucky was created in 1984 by the Roman Catholic bishops of Kentucky. Its mission is to represent the Church and the state's four Roman Catholic dioceses in public policy matters on both the state and federal level.

Bringing the Catholic Voice to the Public Square

By Rev. Patrick Delahanty



By the time readers see this I will no longer be the Executive Director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, which explains why my name no longer ap-

pears in the box to the left.

Our four Kentucky bishops have appointed Jason Hall to represent them as the new Executive Director of the Conference. Having worked closely with him over the past several years, I am confident they have chosen a man of deep faith who will serve them well. In addition, he is bright, intelligent, and a person with whom I have enjoyed working and getting to know.

I also want to thank publicly Karen Chambers, our administrative assistant. She has had a role in achieving any success I may have had in promoting public policy guided by Gospel values. Our office simply could not function as efficiently as it does without her presence.

Since 1988 I have had an opportunity to work with the Conference even though I was not yet on the staff. I fondly remember Ken Dupre, then the executive director, as we smoked our way through the capitol tunnels pushing for racial justice in death penalty prosecutions.

Later I had the privilege of working with Jane Chiles, Vince Senior, Ed Monahan, and Bob Castagna — all of whom taught me valuable lessons. Through many of these years Scott Wegenast provided input on policy development, implementation, and advocacy.

Harry Borders served during all these years as director of KLEA, the Kentucky League of Educational Alternatives, and advocated successfully for safe transportation for non-public school students. He



Water fountain for disabled persons in Shawnee Park in west Louisville on Easter Sunday, 2014.

also advocated for the establishment of educational tax credits to help both public and non-public school students in their pursuit of quality education.

Thanks are also in order to all those appointed by the bishops to serve on the various committees of the Conference. They carve time out of their busy schedules to come together and discuss issues of importance to the Church and to Kentucky. They have contributed their ideas generously and I thank them for this.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the wonderful support of our Board of Directors. I am grateful to Archbishop Thomas Kelly now deceased and to Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, his successor, for their trust. In addition, I appreciate the trust and confidence of Bishop John McRaith, now retired, as well as Bishop Roger Foys, Bishop William Medley, and Bishop Ronald Gainer now serving in the diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He seems destined to serve in dioceses encompassing state capitols.

As I leave the Conference I am very struck by how powerful our collective voice can be. With almost half a million Catholics in Kentucky the Church can have an impact on promoting public policies that consider human life and dignity first when passing laws or establishing regulations.



Water fountain for disabled persons in Shawnee Park in west Louisville on June 14.

But that collective voice is made up of thousands of individual voices. Though this individual voice is powerful, often the one who possesses it does not believe that. Many people, frustrated by the legislative process, or discouraged by the lack of progress on particular legislative proposals, quit raising that important voice which can make a difference.

Consider these two photographs of a water fountain found in west Louisville's Shawnee Park.

On the opposite page the fountain is seen as found on Easter Sunday, April 20. I was walking my dog, Skippy, who wanted a drink. Water fountains in other city parks were working, but not this one. To complicate the matter, this one is meant to serve disabled persons who could not possibly reach it due to the debris and mud that surrounds it.

So when I got home I posted the following on Facebook:

@louisvillemayor This water fountain in #ShawneePark in #WestLouisville and another one on the South end near Broadway had no flowing water on #Easter morning. I have been drinking water from fountains in #CentralPark and #CherokeePark. This fountain near the #basketball courts is supposed to be accessible, but though nothing comes out of the spigot, it seems to ooze water at the base. There is rutted

mud, sticks, and a piece of broken plastic covering that precludes anyone in a wheelchair from using this. Needs a solid base of concrete or asphalt. Clear violation of #ADA

The Facebook post attracted some attention and apparently played at least a small role in action being taken to correct this situation.

Several months later when, once again, Skippy was enjoying another romping walk in Shawnee Park, I came across the same water fountain, now on a concrete base, closer to the roadway, and free of any hindrance to someone using a wheelchair.

I took to Facebook again and posted the following message:

I am happy to report that I was back at Shawnee Park early this morning and this water fountain is now closer to the walking path, on a solid concrete foundation easily accessible by ALL. @louisvillemayor ... - I encourage all #Louisville residents to report problems like this. #CityHall is listening. ... Thank you to all who got this done.

I don't know if others also reported this problem or not. But I do know at least one voice was raised on behalf of disabled persons who should have access to water when they come to enjoy themselves in local parks.

There are important issues facing lawmakers in Frankfort that touch on matters of human life and dignity. The individual and collective voice of the Catholic community must continue to cry out on behalf of our brothers and sisters whose basic human needs go unmet or ignored.

Whether it is the matter of informed consent for women considering abortion, abolition of the death penalty, the restoration of voting rights for former offenders, or the passage of legislation allowing business tax credits for education, the fact we have not yet succeeded in bringing about these policy changes is surely disappointing, but should be cause for us to give up and quit raising our individual and collective voices on these and other issues affecting human life and dignity,

I leave the Conference full of hope. Over the past several years, hundreds of Catholic faithful have participated in Catholics @ the Capitol, responded to legislative alerts, and took the time to urge lawmakers to craft policies that reflect Gospel values.

To all of these faithful citizens, I say thank you and may God bless those you love and serve.

Governor's Task Force Recommendations Largely

After taking office for his first term, a burgeoning Kentucky budget prompted Gov. Steve Beshear to review the increasing corrections costs and submit them for study and analysis by both legislative and executive branches of government. In October 2008 the Legislative Research Commission published "Reentry Programs for Felons Should Be Improved and Outcome Measures Should Be Developed." (Find it here: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/RR357.pdf>.) It recommended there be more reentry resources for persons who have been convicted and incarcerated for felonies and set out the challenges of successful reentry.

FINDINGS

- Persons being released from incarceration face a number of challenges, such as finding a job and paying for basic living expenses. Convicted felons often face additional challenges related to finding available community substance abuse and mental health treatment; finding a place to live; and paying child support arrearages and court-ordered restitution, fees, and fines.
- The reentry process itself may be difficult for persons who have been incarcerated for a number of years and may be estranged from their families and friends. Some challenges relate specifically to the type of felony conviction. Compounding the problems, the department has no statewide system for easing the transition from prison to the community. A probation and parole officer may help individuals, but with an average caseload of 94 persons, the amount and quality of that help varies.
- A person may not be able to obtain substance abuse and mental health treatment in the community. The community mental health system's capacity to expand services or serve larger populations is questionable.
- A person who has been convicted of any federal or state law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance is ineligible for federal higher education aid until a certain period of time has passed since the conviction or the person completes drug treatment.
- An ex-felon who has enough money to rent an apartment may not find a landlord willing or able to rent. Many restrictions are imposed on assisted housing, particularly for persons convicted of drug-related activity and sex crimes. In Kentucky, registered sex offenders cannot reside within 1,000 feet of a school, publicly owned playground, or licensed daycare facility.
- Employers often exclude convicted felons from consideration. A few statutes preclude convicted felons from holding occupational licenses or certificates. Several statutes permit but do not require revocation or suspension of licenses and certificates. Other statutes address situations in which convicted felons may lose or be denied employment.
- Transportation can be difficult for convicted felons. Obtaining an operator's license after incarceration can be difficult without adequate personal documentation, which some released felons may not have. Some problems with operators' licenses relate to the felony conviction itself. Statutes require revocation or suspension of licenses for various reasons, such as being convicted of manslaughter while operating a motor vehicle, multiple convictions for driving under the influence, and child support arrearages.
- A convicted felon is not eligible to vote until civil rights are restored by the governor.

In April 2009 Governor Beshear "develop recommendations to assist for and reduce the likelihood that they will After four years of study, task force m Kentucky General Assembly for consider

Housing

- Remove housing barriers to enable options, halfway house facilities and
- Create tax incentives for those who courage increased access to affor access to supportive community pla sonal care homes.
- Provide additional funding to support Pilot Program with an additional ru assistance.

Treatment

- Reinvest savings in future fiscal year
- Mandate that substance abuse treat (Public) benefits as the Affordable C
- Create an intensive case management with treatment needs.
- Ensure Adequate Community Treat securing benefits through the Afford
- Review child support obligations (in incarceration and post-incarceration of feasible child support payment du
- Support licensure of clinical alcohol als to secure an independent practi ceive reimbursement.

Employment

- Create a simplified process with re and misdemeanor offenses as allow
- Remove/modify permanent employ status upon reentry.
- Promote federal Work Opportunity portunity Tax Credit mirroring the offenders.
- Create and fund pre-release and returning offenders to be provided offenders to become active volunteers

Other Needs

- Provide automatic restoration of voti
- Expand Department of Public Advoca
- Eliminate loss of public assistance a
- Remove barriers to enable returnir faith-based treatment, housing and the Commonwealth and throughout

ely Ignored by State Lawmakers

established a Reentry Task Force to
mer inmates re-enter their communities
re-offend.” (Executive Order 2009-366).
members sent Recommendations to the
ation and action as soon as possible:

offenders access to affordable housing
other supportive placements.

o provide housing to ex-offenders to en-
rdable housing, to include incentives/
ncement, nursing care facilities and per-

rt and expand the Homeless Prevention
ural and urban site to support housing

rs for treatment services.

atment services be included in Medicaid
are Act is implemented.

ent system for justice involved persons

ment Services, including assistance in
able Care Act.

cluding the criminal process of) during
n treatment to consider implementation
uring treatment/incarceration.

and drug counselors to enable individu-
ce license to provide treatment and re-

duced cost for expungement of felony
ed by law.

ment restrictions based solely on felony

Tax Credit and create a state Work Op-
e federal tax credit targeted for ex-

community-based life skills training for
by volunteers and enable returning of-
s in their communities.

ing rights for ex-felons.

cy’s (DPA) Social Work Program.

and food stamps.

ng offenders the opportunity to access
d employment opportunities located in
the nation.

The General Assembly ended with a mixed response to these recommenda-
tions. Overall this was a session consumed by budget concerns and proposals
calling for substantial policy changes received little attention. As a result, rec-
ommendations offered by the Governor’s Reentry Task Force garnered minimal
support. There remains much to accomplish in future sessions.

Housing

There was no progress made in the area of housing recommendations.

Treatment

The number of outpatient slots available to the Department of Corrections
for treatment services did increase. This is progress.

There was an amendment to the Medicaid Plan that now includes coverage
for single males and applies to the treatment of those abusing substances and
for those who suffer from mental illness. This is progress.

While there was no legislative progress in the area of intensive case man-
agement services, the Courier-Journal reported on an Assertive Community
Treatment (ACT) program begun in Jefferson County that begins to treat the
needs of mentally ill persons who have contact with that local justice system.
For more details readers can access the story here: <http://cjky.it/1ncvotn>.

There was no progress in the other recommended treatment areas.

Employment

Some progress did occur in this category of recommendations. House Bill 64
regarding expungement did make it out of the House, but did not pass the Sen-
ate. This provides some hope that next session will see it gain more traction.

Senate Bill 184 became law. It follows up on legislation passed in 2013 and
will allow a victim of human trafficking to have criminal convictions expunged
and to raise an affirmative defense in pending cases, **if it can be shown that the
offenses were direct results of the human trafficking**. Both the expungement
and the available defense apply broadly to all offenses which are not violent
offenses as defined in KRS 17.165. This means, for the first time in Kentucky,
felony convictions, some as serious as Class B felonies, will be able to be ex-
punged, even by a prisoner who is still serving his or her sentence at the time of
the application.

Other Needs

The budget passed does allow for the expansion of the Department of Public
Advocacy’s Social Work Program by allocating \$1.2 million for 15 new alterna-
tive sentencing social workers over the two-year budget period. These social
workers develop alternative sentencing plans for individuals with substance
abuse or who are mental ill who would otherwise be sent to prison.

The legislation to change Kentucky’s Constitution to allow automatic restora-
tion of voting rights, House Bill 70, did advance this year, but still failed to pass.
It was returned to the House by the Senate after the Senate amended it to the
point of making it meaningless. Senate leaders then failed to appoint a Confer-
ence committee so differences between the two chambers could be resolved
and a compromise reached. They ignored the pleas of U. S. Senator Rand Paul
who testified in support in a Senate Committee and thousands of Kentuckians
who rallied on the Capitol steps calling for passage of HB 70.

Fighting Poverty A Right Way

Continued from page 1.

Conversely, a system which simply tries to meet the basic needs of individuals and families without offering them the opportunity to work and contribute to their own prosperity and to the common good likewise falls short of Catholic principles. Work is a great good, and in producing goods and services of value to others we participate in the creative work of God. A system which tends to foster dependency must be avoided.

Are there policies which can effectively balance these principles? A comprehensive and effective series of programs requires a lot of expertise, trial and error, and humility when it comes to the effectiveness of any program. But, there are proven examples of programs that do balance these principles and achieve very encouraging results. One example is the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Originally signed into law by President Gerald Ford, the EITC was greatly expanded during the administration of President Ronald Reagan and has been further expanded on numerous occasions since then. Quite simply, the EITC provides a refundable tax credit (meaning it can be claimed not just to offset taxes owed, but can actually result in a negative tax liability and a refund greater than the amount paid in by the taxpayer) which supplements the income of people who work and yet earn too little to rise out of poverty. The income thresholds for eligibility rise for people with children.

One of the recurring arguments about welfare programs involves the possibility that benefits can discourage work. The EITC directly encourages work by making entry-level jobs

more financially advantageous. It is also proven to reduce poverty. According to a 2005 study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the number of children living in poverty would be as much as 25% higher if not for the EITC.

Another advantage to the EITC is that most recipients need it only temporarily. It helps to ease the transition back into the workforce, after which many workers tend to move up the economic ladder. This is in contrast to the growing support on both the right and the left for wage subsidies, in which the government would in effect subsidize employers who do not pay their workers just wages, making true self-sufficiency even more difficult to achieve.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States have been strong proponents of the Earned Income Tax Credit and similar programs for many years, and rightly so. The Catholic Conference of Kentucky is supporting an effort to implement an Earned Income Tax Credit in Kentucky's income tax code, especially if progress is made on tax reform generally. Many of the proposed reforms to our tax system are good for the state or for business interests, but are often not as beneficial to those struggling to rise out of poverty. An Earned Income Tax Credit would help make any tax reform plan more balanced and more beneficial to all.

There is room for prudential disagreement on matters of government spending and poverty reduction, but the Earned Income Tax Credit is a proven and effective program that reduces poverty, encourages work, and leads to a more just economy.

Plight of Vulnerable Migrants Focus of Conference

By Jason Hall

Amid raging public debate about the fate of tens of thousands of unaccompanied children arriving at the southern border of the United States from Central America, over 800 immigration legal experts, service providers, and advocates assembled in Washington, DC, July 7-10, for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Migration Conference.

After a beautiful opening Mass celebrated by His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington and a stirring keynote address from Óscar Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras and President of Caritas Internationalis, attendees spent two days in sessions and workshops covering the entire range of migration-related issues: the current border situation, prospects for comprehensive immigration reform, ending child labor and human trafficking, among many others.

On the final day, attendees visited Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress. Along with Jill Gerschutz-Bell from Catholic Relief Services, I had very substantive discussions



with U.S. Representatives from Kentucky, Andy Barr (pictured above) and Brett Guthrie, as well as with members of the staffs of Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul.

All of these members of Congress are clearly sensitive to

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BOUCHARD

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most poignant examples of how we take the invitation of liturgy to our communities.

On the local level, we are involved as parishes and schools in carrying out the social mission. By teaching, by action driven by a desire for justice and charity toward all, we minister to those in need, those who are sick, without a home, without enough food or medical care. Our reach into local communities is consistent and measurable.

Of the many examples that I could mention, I will focus on an event that took place last February in the Archdiocese of Louisville. It demonstrates how various components of our church can come together for the cause of charity and justice for our brothers and sisters, both in our local community and around the world.

On February 19, Catholic Charities of Louisville, partnering with the Southeast Regional Office of Catholic Relief Services, held the third annual CRS Rice Bowl Luncheon. The purpose of this day was to promote the efforts of the official Lenten program of the Catholic Church, "CRS Rice Bowl". This Rice Bowl program combines prayer, education, awareness, and almsgiving for parish and school involvement.

Various school administrators, teachers and students from 25 archdiocesan schools gathered at Holy Cross High School. They were joined by staff members of several archdiocesan offices. Also attending were refugees living in Louisville, who have been resettled by

Catholic Charities. They sat at each school table for conversation with students.

School officials along with staff from both the national office of CRS which is in Baltimore and from the regional office in Atlanta greeted everyone.

Deacon Lucio Caruso, Director of Mission Integration for Catholic Charities, read a letter from Archbishop Kurtz, who spoke of the wonderful work of parishes from the archdiocese who have outreach programs during Lent for CRS. Archbishop Kurtz' letter also spoke of the important relief and development work of CRS in the aftermath of disasters.

Leisa Schultz, Superintendent of Schools, also welcomed participants to the day, and spoke of the important role of schools in the work of our church.

Matt Burkhart, the CRS Program Officer from Atlanta, presented the mission of CRS and how the Rice Bowl program contributes to implementing it.

Thomas Awiapo, CRS Ghana, was the keynote speaker for the event who described how over the years he and others from his country have personally benefited from this ministry.

Ed Harpring, Pro-Life Coordinator from the Family Ministries Office of the Archdiocese of Louisville, closed the day with prayer. This is one of the many ways our church can bring us together both for the good of individual faith development, and also for the common good of many.

Bringing together education, prolife, and social concerns interests demonstrates how connected we all are in this ministry of charity and justice.

New Lodge Named to Honor Sister Joseph Angela Boone

By Ben Warrell



Eight years ago, the Diocese of Owensboro went out on a limb and purchased 170 acres northwest of Bowling Green, Kentucky that became Gaspar River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center.

Two persons turned this dream into reality. The first was Bishop Emeritus John McRaith, who allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him when many others weren't willing to take a risk.

The other was Sr. Joseph Angela Boone, the former diocesan Chancellor. Her keen business sense, her ability to save money and her deep faith secured the funding necessary to purchase the property. A large lodge building is named after Bishop McRaith to honor him and his commitment to this ministry.

Fast forward eight years. Exciting things are going on at Gaspar River. In each of the past seven summers the number of participants increased.

After reaching its capacity of 500 campers in 2013, the need for new construction was clear. Two new projects were approved by the diocese:

- a new dining hall to increase efficiency in serving meals and to be able to offer food service all year; and
- a new lodge to increase the capacity for summer camp and for retreat groups.

This new lodge, named to honor Sister Joseph Angela Boone, will sleep 50 to 60 campers and counselors. It has a storm shelter on one end and a chapel on the other. The building also has a large meeting space and overlooks the beautiful Gaspar river.

This addition enhances a ministry that results in vocations and strong Catholic families whose youth are active in practicing their faith. We are grateful to Bishop McRaith and Sr. Joseph Angela Boone for their faith.

Ben Warrell is the Director of Operations for the Gaspar River Retreat



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NATIONAL MIGRATION CONFERENCE

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the widespread anxiety about the security of our borders, and there is clearly the will, at least among those with whom we spoke, to take some action to address those concerns. In our discussions, we tried to move the conversation beyond that question to the fate of those children already in the custody of the Border Patrol, as well as those who may need safe haven in the months ahead.

Contrary to what many in the media assert, the U.S. bishops do not support a porous border, with no concern for national security or the rule of law. In fact, the bishops have been among very few consistent voices on the need for Congress and the Obama Administration to act to address these challenges in a realistic and comprehensive way.

Such measures would include ensuring that each child claiming asylum, refugee status, or other authorized entry under the law be given a hearing with full due process and representation. The flow of immigrants is mixed, and those with legitimate claims should not be put in the same basket with those who do not in a blanket solution. According to United Nations estimates, over 55% likely have a valid legal claim.

In addition, the United States should provide for refugee visas for El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, and increase the staff at our embassies and consulates to allow future claims to be processed in the sending countries. This would address the very serious concerns about the “coyotes” who are paid to transport children from Central American to the U.S. border, often abusing and sexually assaulting them along the way.

Most crucially, we must address the root causes of this wave of migration, particularly the destabilization of the sending countries. As part of this effort, the U.S. should work with the stable countries in the region, such as Mexico, Belize, and Costa Rica, to comprehen-

sively address this crisis and share the burden.

Finally, Congress needs to act on reforming our legal immigration system, prioritizing cases involving escape from violence or extreme poverty and family reunification. Our system, which operates around arbitrary statutorily-limited visa quotas, very often puts families in the impossible choice of many years, even decades, of separation or living with an undocumented status while hoping for a future path to legalization.

Beyond these hot-button issues, the conference also included a workshop on ending slavery and child labor in global supply chains. I was impressed with the work that non-profit organizations are doing to shed light on these continuing offenses against human dignity. Some of these organizations have even created a corporate certification process, whereby large businesses can be certified as having eliminated slavery and child labor from their supply chains. I was a bit surprised, but very pleased, to learn that McDonalds has been a global leader in this effort.

Along these lines, we also discussed with Reps. Barr and Guthrie a new piece of bipartisan legislation, HR 4842, the Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2014. The bill would simply require American corporations to publicly report what efforts, if any, they are making toward the eradication of slave and child labor in their supply chains. Such information would then be publicly available for consumers to access.

With the headlines informing us daily of refugees fleeing dire conditions, including the Christian community in Mosul, Iraq, we must never think that the United States is beyond concern for the plight of the migrant. Despite the depressing nature of these problems, it is encouraging to see so many people bring great passion and expertise to the aid of our brothers and sisters in need.