

On November 9, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote a powerful letter to our members of congress concerning the tax bills now being considered.

“Decisions about taxation involve fundamental concerns of “justice and equity”, with the goal of taxes and public spending “becoming an instrument of development and solidarity” (Mater et Magistra, 132; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 355). On October 27, the USCCB offered six moral principles to guide debate on tax reform, centered on care for the poor and concern for families. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 contains many fundamental structural flaws that must be corrected. As currently written, the proposal is unacceptable.”

The letter goes on to detail concerns about care for the poor, strengthening families, progressivity of the tax code, and incentives for charitable giving and development. The letter concludes:

“Because tax policy is far-reaching, Congress must provide ample time for Americans to discuss the complexities of these reforms and fully understand their effects. The current timetable does not provide adequate time for that discussion. In many ways, this legislation is unacceptable in its present form and requires amendment. It must be changed for the sake of families—the bedrock of our country—and for those struggling on the peripheries of society who have a claim on our national conscience.”

We at Justice and Peace at St. John Fisher applaud the bishops for this letter, and urge everyone to contact their representatives and senators and ask them to listen to our bishops, giving all of us “ample time for discussion” on this important legislation.

For the full text of this letter, go to <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/federal-budget/upload/Tax-Cuts-and-Jobs-Act-Letter-11-9-2017.pdf>

Barb Staniszewski, Justice and Peace