

Public Policy/Legislation Update, 11 August 2026

From the NYS Catholic Conference:

Federal Scholarship Tax Credit Program: (Update) - Governor Hochul announced that she intends to opt New York into this program. Taxpayers would receive a 100% tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donations to non-profit Scholarship Granting Organizations. Those donations are then used to provide scholarships for eligible students wherever they attend school, helping families pay for tuition, tutoring, special education services, education technology, academic supplies, etc.

Other NY News:

Empire State Service Corps - With financial support from the Ibis Group, (a Washington, DC-based nonprofit which funds early literacy programs and civic education), college students will be trained in the "science of reading" this year so that New York can send them out to tutor children. Twenty-five students will be matched with local school districts to provide regular tutoring sessions in grades K-12.

Federal Legislation:

Addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults (SILO) Act - (Introduced) - This legislation would combat loneliness in senior and disabled populations by providing \$62.5 million in annual grant funding to support community-based organizations dedicated to fostering social connection in these at-risk groups. The legislation would:

Provide training for staff to combat and prevent social isolation and loneliness; Conduct outreach to at-risk individuals; Develop community-based interventions to mitigate social isolation and loneliness; connect at-risk individuals with social and clinical supports; and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs developed and implemented through the grants.

The Modern WIC Act: (Update) This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce. With this legislation, the WIC qualification methods would be restructured by permitting video or telephone certifications, recertifications, and nutritional risk evaluations. The remote

access amendment would also permit benefit transfer cards to be received electronically, rather than in-person, and would allow applicants who meet the income eligibility standards to be temporarily eligible for immediate program access on an interim basis, bypassing the mandatory nutritional risk assessment.

21st Century Road to Housing Act (Update) - This bi-partisan legislation became law. Here is what it achieves:

Limits Corporate Speculation keeping single-family homes in the hands of everyday families; Expands Affordable Supply by modernizing Housing and Urban Development tools and eases zoning barriers to convert unused spaces into homes; Supports Unhoused Neighbors by codifying permanent disaster relief housing and expands resources for veterans experiencing homelessness.

Older Americans Reauthorization Act (OAA) (Update) - This bipartisan legislation passed the Senate unanimously and now goes to the House. Under this legislation several core programs would be reauthorized through f/y 2030, including:

The national eldercare locator service; regional aging and disability resource centers; grants to support counseling and assistance on pensions and other retirement benefits; grants to support home-delivered nutrition services like Meals on Wheels; programs to facilitate the delivery of supportive services to tribal organizations; and programs to prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The bill also updates existing services to improve oversight, allow more flexibility, and strengthen support for family caregivers and direct care workers.

Clear Labels Act - This legislation passed out of committee in the Senate. It would add country of origin labeling requirements to the US prescription drug supply chain.

Federal Legislation to watch:

Affordable Housing and Area Median Income Fairness Act - A multi-pronged approach to confront some of the core challenges that have led to a severe lack of affordable housing in our nation's urban areas.

Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act - This legislation would accelerate more affordable housing by expanding and strengthening the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

PROKID Act - (Introduced) This legislation would establish essential accountability measures to make sure that children seeking safety are treated with the compassion they deserve.

From CCUSA:

Farm Bill - Congress has not taken action on reauthorizing a Farm Bill. Three main asks by CCUSA are: Delaying newly enacted state cost-sharing requirements for SNAP benefits and administrative expenses by one to two years; Eliminating the felony-based exclusion from SNAP participation, by repealing or substantially modifying the lifetime ban; and Providing Puerto Rico a structured opportunity to transition from the Nutrition Assistance Program to full SNAP participation over a ten-year period.

Office of Management and Budget Notice of Proposed Rulemaking - This proposed rule could significantly increase the burden of administering federal grants, potentially impacting the ability of Catholic Charities agencies to engage in long-term planning, maintain workforce stability, and ensure continuity of services.

From USCCB/JFI:

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians - (Introduced) Senate version of a bill passed by the House in April (H.R.1689) would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to extend TPS for Haitians to 2029.

New Federal Policy Re: Asylum Applicants - As of July 28, U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is permitted to refer certain asylum applicants directly to immigration courts without first interviewing them. The

policy applies to affirmative asylum applications, which are filed within one year of an individual's arrival in the US. Those applications have usually been processed through interviews conducted by USCIS, where applicants explain the persecution or torture underlying their claim for legal asylum. This change will eliminate the only opportunity many asylum seekers have to present their case to a neutral decision-maker.

Thank you for your advocacy.

Marie Copeland, Chair