

Faithful Witness Wednesday Faith Leaders

Letter to Congress

April 30th, 2025

We write to you as faith leaders who have held Faithful Witness vigils at the U.S. Capitol every Wednesday from March through April organized by Sojourners in partnership with 29 co-sponsors from The Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC). Through these vigils, we have been calling on Congress to exercise greater moral courage in this increasingly perilous moment for our country and democracy by upholding your Article I powers and stopping Executive branch overreach and abuse of power.

Our denominations and faith-based organizations represent millions of Americans who are deeply dismayed by the actions of the current administration. Our multi-faith traditions share a deep commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, affirm the equal dignity of everyone, and advance the common good. We believe preserving a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” requires preventing the abuse and overreach of executive power. This is an issue that transcends loyalty to any party or particular politician and is critical for the future of our democracy. In this dire moment, we must heed the timeless words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who said, “There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.” We believe the current threats to our Constitution and democratic system represent special circumstances that require just such courage from all of Congress.

As the new Trump Administration crosses the threshold of its first 100 days in office, the executive branch has expanded its powers well beyond its constitutional mandate, often at the expense of the powers afforded to Congress such as the power of the purse and the responsibility to provide oversight over the executive branch. Checks and balances represent a cornerstone of our Constitutional system and a healthy democracy. Our founders intentionally conferred oversight and budgetary powers to Congress to prevent the President from becoming a monarch or an autocrat.

We are particularly alarmed by the following actions taken by the administration:

- Illegally freezing Congressionally authorized spending, including recent efforts to impound spending authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act;
- Seeking to dismantle agencies that were established by Congress such as the US Agency for International Development and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau;
- Abusing the Alien Enemies Act to deport immigrants and green card holders without due process and suggesting the same for citizens and permanent residents, as well as attempting to end birthright citizenship;

- Coercing law firms and universities by threatening to strip away their security clearances and Federal grant funding respectively;
- Banning “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” programs across the Federal government;
- Firing thousands of skilled and dedicated Federal employees while ignoring Federal government labor protections;
- Abusing authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to declare a state of emergency and impose reckless tariffs on countries across the world—destabilizing the global economy and significantly increasing the likelihood of a US recession.

These and other actions are much greater than simple disagreements over policy. Rather, they erode and threaten our democratic norms and system, pushing our nation further toward an autocratic and authoritarian government devoid of the checks and balances our founders intended. Many of these actions also disproportionately harm vulnerable communities that our faiths call on us to protect.

In the days and weeks ahead, we urge you to act on your conscience and your pledged oath to our Constitution to:

- Demand an end to the administration’s defiance of court orders and injunctions, including the recent one by the Supreme Court calling on the administration to “facilitate” the safe return of Kilmar Abrego García from a Salvadoran prison.
- Provide greater Congressional oversight over the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and take Congressional action to end DOGE’s interference with citizen data and dismantling of Federal government agencies.
- Block the administration’s potential attempt to invoke the Insurrection Act (and/or declaration of martial law) to further militarize the border and misuse the military to support mass deportations.
- Support bipartisan legislation to assert Congressional authority to prevent the reckless and destructive misuse of international tariffs by the administration.
- Block any attempts by the administration to ask or force the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of Harvard University and other tax-exempt organizations based on their DEI policies or other political disagreements with the administration.

In addition to these urgent issues tied to the overreach and abuse of executive power, we call on you to safeguard SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, FEMA, and other programs that care for the most vulnerable in our nation in the budget reconciliation package that Congress is currently negotiating.

On behalf of our members and supporters we implore you to fulfill your Constitutional duty and exercise your power to stop the administration from violating the Constitution and further undermining our democracy.