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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

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in order of seniority*

His Holiness, Pope Francis PP.
00120 Via del Pellegrino
Citta del Vaticano

December 13, 2013

Your Holiness,

It is with great honor and respect that I write to you on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Since your election, our Members have admired your efforts to bring attention to the many perils facing our world. In a very short period of time, your acts of grace and words of compassion have caused you to be regarded as "the people's Pope," and rightfully so.

In the spirit of democracy, you have appointed eight cardinals from around the world to help guide your decisions; you have personally touched and humbly comforted those who have been violated and mistreated; and you have extended your kindness to those of different faiths. You have sought to balance judgment with mercy, and for that we thank you.

Since the beginning of your service, you have been vocal about the need for elected officials to acknowledge the growing inequality in our world. You have called upon us to look beyond the superficial approach to problem-solving and to dig deeper in addressing the real needs of people in our society. You have asked that we work together to make the structural changes required to close the widening gap between the rich and the poor. For more than 41 years, this has also been the charge of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Though the United States is one of the richest nations on earth, we have the second highest child poverty rate among developed countries. In America, nearly 1 in 4 children go to bed hungry every night. Due to neglect, our neighborhoods are crumbling and millions of individuals who are homeless seek but do not find shelter each day.

In the U.S. Congress, the CBC continues to be a voice for the voiceless, and your compelling calls for economic and social justice reflect our own. You are prompting the world to see that if we do not act with urgency, we will all endure the consequences of an indelibly fractured world.

We stand with you in your appeal against complacency, and we admire your courage in working to make sure the Catholic Church is deeply engaged in the most pressing issues of our time.

Our greatest leaders are known to challenge us, to force us to question the status quo and to improve conditions for ourselves and for those we will never know.

For your leadership and for all who will be touched by your words and your work, we thank you.

With every good wish to Your Excellency, I am, sincerely yours,

Marcia L. Fudge

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Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

