



**NETWORK  
CONNECTION**  
SECOND QUARTER 2026

*Inside This Issue*  
NETWORK's Annual Report



**A  
Reckoning  
Grows**



Grounded in Gospel values and the Catholic social justice tradition, NETWORK transforms our society by shaping federal policies that achieve racial, economic, and social justice; serve the common good; and honor the dignity of all.

**NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Alejandra Marroquin
- Alice Gerdeman, CDP
- Amari Verastegui
- Bridget Bearss, RSCJ
- Carrie Hansen
- Catherine Ferguson, SNJM – *Chair*
- Janetta Hammock
- Josita Colbert, SNDdeN
- Kateri Kerwin
- Laura Nettles, FSPA
- Lisa Ramirez
- Maureen McCullough
- Robbie Pentecost, OSF
- Rose Weidenbenner, RSM
- Teresa Kotturan, SCN

**NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Alejandra Marroquin
- Alice Gerdeman, CDP
- Alison Benders – *Chair*
- Amari Verastegui
- Bridget Bearss, RSCJ
- Janetta Hammock
- Josita Colbert, SNDdeN
- Kateri Kerwin
- Laura Nettles, FSPA
- Leslye Colvin
- Maureen McCullough
- Michelle Scott
- Robbie Pentecost, OSF
- Rose Weidenbenner, RSM
- Teresa Kotturan, SCN

**STAFF**

**COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**

- Andrea Clara-Vega, Don Clemmer, Elena Gaona, Joanne Coen, IVC, Virginia Schilder

**DEVELOPMENT & MEMBERSHIP TEAM**

- June Martin, Kristin Schol, Maggie Brevig, William Hawk

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Laurie Carafone, Erin Zubal, OSU

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM**

- Christian Watkins, Drake Starling, Giovana Oaxaca, Jarrett Smith, JoAnn Goedert, IVC, Ralph McCloud, Laura Peralta-Schulte, Margie Clark

**GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION TEAM**

- Catherine Gillette, Chelsea Puckett, Eilis McCulloh, HM, Emily TeKolste, SP, Meg Olson, Jerry Zurek, IVC

Managing Editor: Don Clemmer  
Designer: Maggie Powell



# CONTENTS

**3 ENVISIONING**

**Our Map to a Better World**

*The Common Good Can Guide Us When All Feels Uncertain*

**4 Quotables**

**5 LEAD STORY**

**From Encounter to Accountability**

*With Midterms Looming, Justice-Seekers Hold Lawmakers to Account*

**9 OUR SPIRIT-FILLED NETWORK**

**Meet the 2026 Sr. Carol Coston Fellows**

*Third Cohort of NETWORK’s Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.)*

**12 SPIRITED SISTERS**

**Sink or Climb**

*The Closer We Get to God, the Closer We Get to One Another*

**13 CAPITOL VIEW**

**Courage in the Face of Cruelty**

*We Have the Power To Refuse Fear*

**14 VOICES FOR JUSTICE**

**We Should All Be Like Nuns**

*How Their Example of Justice, Courage, and Joy Keeps Shaping Movements*



**COVER:** Gaurav Ghosh/shutterstock.com

**PAGE 15:** Annie Kachurek, Bob Kloos, Sr. Mary Eileen Boyle, OSU, and Bob Kachurek with staff (*second from right*) of Rep. Shontel Brown (OH-11)

**BACK COVER VOTING RECORD DELIVERIES**

*Top row:* Michaelene Loughlin and Jean and Lou D’Onofrio at the office of Rep. Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05); Gail Roussey and Ed and Krista Zivkovich with staff for Rep. David Joyce (OH-14); Sr. Monica Daniel Madden, SNDdeN, with staff for Rep. Stephen Lynch (MA-08) *Second row:* Martin White with staff for Rep. Jasmine Crockett (TX-30); Laura Bienk, Erin Moore, and Marie Tilden with staff for Rep. Julie Johnson (TX-32); Colleen Donovan with staff for Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14); Sr. Mary Virginia Orna, OSU, Sr. Susan McCarthy, RDC, Sr. Kathleen Finnerty, OSU, and Sr. Theresa Eppridge, OSU, with Rep. George Latimer (NY-16) *Bottom row:* Sr. Fran Small, IHM, with staff for Rep. Dwight Evans (PA-03); presentation to Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-05)

Articles in NETWORK Connection may be reprinted. Please include the following on the reprints: “Reprinted by permission of NETWORK, advocates for justice inspired by Catholic sisters, www.networklobby.org.” Please send us a copy of the reprinted article.

Second Quarter—Vol. 54, No. 2, NETWORK Connection ISSN 0199-5723. Published quarterly by NETWORK, phone: 202-347-9797, fax: 202-347-9864, email: connection@networklobby.org, www.networklobby.org. Annual dues: \$50/\$60 international. Postmaster: Send address changes to NETWORK, 820 First Street NE, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20002-8065.



# Our Map to a Better World

## *The Common Good Can Guide Us When All Feels Uncertain*

**A**s we weather the daily barrage of cruel and chaotic news defining our current politics and culture — war, family separations, economic chaos, and more — it's easy to feel lost, and it can be hard to see a clear path forward. We all yearn to get to a better place.

What will it mean for people of faith and goodwill to engage genuinely and meaningfully with the myriad social and moral issues — some would say crises — as we approach the midterm elections? Listening and dialoguing with NETWORK colleagues, the road that rises to meet our feet is both awe-inspiring and daunting. But we trust it leads to a better place, a future where everyone is caring and cared for.

Catholic Social Justice proclaims a world where every human need is inextricably entwined, weaving a stunning tapestry of human thriving: affordable health care, food, and housing; living wages; a healthy planet; and just and humane treatment of our neighbors. These issues are at the core of NETWORK's "An Economy for All" policy agenda, but many U.S. Catholics aren't fully aware of the rich treasure of the tradition more formally known as Catholic Social Teaching.

---

Catholic Social Justice inspires us to advocate fiercely now and into the coming months as we approach the midterm elections.

---

Some call it a well-kept secret, but this body of teaching offers a map we can use with confidence toward a better world — we can follow its wise tenets to inform how we engage in times like these. How are we called to witness and take action together in the public square? Catholic Social Justice is not a theory or an intellectual exercise, but rather a blessedly simple and clear map of how people of faith are called to live the Gospel in our world — even for those of us who can't read a map! It can save our lives.

When Catholic Social Justice is not centered in political or daily life, even believers may vote like so many of us do: along predictable party lines. Centering Catholic Social Justice helps us pause and consider candidates' positions: will they support laws that alleviate poverty and increase access to health care and housing? Or will the candidate support measures that push

these basic essentials even more out of reach for our families and communities?

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Economic Justice for All," the landmark pastoral letter by the U.S. bishops on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. economy, including poverty, unemployment, and hunger. Reading the signs of their times, the bishops noted:

"Many middle-class Americans feel themselves in the grip of economic demands and cultural pressures that go far beyond the individual family's capacity to cope." (paragraph 23) Revisiting the letter is an opportunity for many people — not just Catholics — to connect anew with the tenets of Catholic Social Justice and how they can guide our actions to ensure the common good.

Forty years after the letter was issued, we know that most families can no longer live on a single income, often struggling even with two. We also recognize that some business and government leaders keep finding more immoral and devastating ways to burden working people, all to line their own pockets and advance corrupt and anti-democratic purposes.

But we can find stillness in this chaos. We have the power to speak the truth: that wealth and profit need not be at the center of our world. Building the common good can and should be.

As we live out these convictions, our spirit-filled field has been busy at work, visiting their legislators with the 2025 NETWORK Voting Record, having hard conversations, and showing lawmakers the powerful map we hold — and asking them to come with us.

These personal encounters are leading to connections, encouragement, and accountability. Catholic Social Justice inspires us to advocate fiercely now and into the coming months as we approach the midterm elections. Through the murky fog of lies, disappointment, cruelty, and corruption, we can follow our map, trust each step, and walk toward the light of that better place.

Together, we will find our way home.

*Laurie Carafone is NETWORK's Executive Director.*



Laurie Carafone

## Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"The only minority destroying this country is the billionaires."

— Congressman, Presbyterian seminarian, and Texas Senate candidate James Talarico

"I believe that wishing for justice is not enough. If one wants justice, they have to be willing to put in the effort to make justice a reality ... ."

Amiyuh Tobias, a NETWORK Sr. Carol Coston Fellow

"The ballot is not a perk for the well-resourced. It is part of the dignity of the human person in public life — a way for our leaders and policies to represent us."

— Min. Christian S. Watkins, NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate, in a Feb. 18 reflection on threats against voting rights, including the SAVE America Act (S.1383) and the Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act (H.R.7300)

"True justice does not defend the humanity of children in one place and ignore it in another."

— Malala Yousafzai, on Instagram

"He was known for his kindness and gentleness to patients. ... So don't, please, pay any attention to the vilification from our national leaders."

— Father Harry Tasto, a priest who worked with Alex Pretti, at a memorial service for the man shot to death by ICE agents on Jan. 24 in Minneapolis

"Let us continue to pray for peace. History teaches us that strategies of economic and military power do not give humanity a future."

— Pope Leo XIV in his Feb. 8 Angelus

"The thought of holding thousands of families in massive warehouses should challenge the conscience of every American. Whatever their immigration status, these are human beings created in the image and likeness of God, and this is a moral inflection point for our country."

— Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, in a Feb. 20 statement

"[W]e are witnessing ... a coordinated effort to weaponize government authority, through agencies, regulatory threats, and merger processes — to coerce corporations into abandoning equity commitments ... ."

— Open Letter on Corporate Accountability, Mergers, and the Defense of Civil Rights, published in the Sept. 8 edition of The New York Times and signed by over 60 organizations, including NETWORK

"May our leaders learn our true lessons of the Bible, to love both neighbor and the stranger. May the lawlessness of ICE also melt away."

— Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, vice president of programs and strategy at Interfaith Alliance

"If the federal government can smash down your door while your children are sleeping without a warrant served by a judge, you do not have a small or limited government."

— Congressman James Walkinshaw, (VA-11)



Laura Peralta-Schulte, Peg Butner, Anne Murphy, Paula Cruickshank, and Nancy McBride present a 100 percent certificate to Rep. Don Beyer (VA-08) for his perfect score on NETWORK's 2025 Voting Record.

## From Encounter to Accountability

*With Midterms Looming, Justice-Seekers Hold Lawmakers to Account*

BY DON CLEMMER

**W**hen Tiffin Franciscan Sisters Marge Eilerman, Angie Keil, and Shirley Shafranek visited the Toledo office of Ohio Senator Jon Husted, they knew they weren't the bearers of good news. But they went all the same.

Senator Husted had received a score of only 17 percent on NETWORK's 2025 Voting Record, meaning he had voted with NETWORK on only one out of six vote recommendations. (This was the "TAKE IT DOWN Act," criminalizing nonconsensual distribution of sexually explicit "deepfake" images online. This bill passed the Senate unanimously and is the reason no Republican Senator scored below a 14 percent.)

The sisters met with Laura Brode, the Senator's office manager in Toledo, and presented the Voting Record, recalls Sr. Marge.

"We spoke to her about immigration issues, the SAVE America Act [a voter suppression bill opposed this year by NETWORK], and addressed the reality that Senator Husted uses the same form letter to respond to every e-mail or letter. I do give her a lot of credit for returning my phone call."

This visit exemplifies the work of accountability that many justice-seekers, Catholics, and other people of goodwill alike, are working diligently to ensure this election cycle. The 2026 midterms come at a turbulent time that could have far-reaching political implications. [See "Catholics in Congress" Sidebar on Page 8.]

"Our country has been repeatedly diminished by this administration's chaos, corruption, and cruelty," said NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone in a memo on Jan. 20, the

*(continued on page 6)*



Rebekah Rivera, Mary Schultz, and Pam Lafflin present a 100 percent certificate to Rep. Sylvia Garcia (TX-29) for her perfect score on NETWORK's 2025 Voting Record.



Stephanie Conley, Kate Wilson, and Elissa Hackerson present a 100 percent certificate to Rep. James Walkinshaw (VA-11) for his perfect score on NETWORK's 2025 Voting Record.

“President Trump has left us—our families, neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and more—worse off.”

NETWORK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAURIE CARAFONE

first anniversary of President Trump’s return to office. “Under his leadership and direction, our health care, food, and public services were ripped away in order to pay for lavish billionaire tax giveaways. He has stoked war and violence abroad and unleashed masked deportation forces in communities across the country, disappearing our neighbors and sowing violence and division. President Trump has left us—our families, neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and more—worse off.”

### Affirmations and obstacles

Against this volatile backdrop, members of NETWORK’s field have been letting their lawmakers know how they measure up on the justice issues that define a Catholic Social Justice approach to politics. Sometimes challenging, these visits have also been described as “very friendly and cordial” and even as a “most wonderful opportunity to build community.” But they also lay the groundwork for the intensive advocacy for accountability that Catholic Social Justice demands this election year.

Michigan advocate Al Weilbaeher visited with staffer Jeremy Blatt in Senator Elissa Slotkin’s office. The Senator was one of 12 Democrats who voted, against NETWORK’s recommendation, for the Laken Riley Act, which mandates the unnecessary apprehension and detention of undocumented immigrants convicted of or only arrested for certain crimes, including low-level misdemeanor offenses. This lone vote kept Senator Slotkin from scoring a 100 percent. (She scored an 86.)

NETWORK Senior Government Relations Manager Giovana Oaxaca has noted the terror of immigration policy under the Trump administration, as “many people feel they cannot safely go to work, school, the doctor, or even church.”

Weilbaeher noted that Blatt was not defensive and shared freely with him.

“I found it helpful to hear from him what the Senator’s thinking is behind the various issues, what the obstacles are

from her point of view, and how she strives to strategize for them,” he said of the encounter. “It was a great opportunity to thank him for what Senator Slotkin has done, to encourage her to continue her many initiatives on our behalf, and to affirm our support verbally in addition to the actual Voting Record.”

## Attuned and advocating

On the House side, the 2025 Voting Record also included recommendations against bills that weakened both voting rights (SAVE Act) and environmental protections (PERMIT Act).

“The SAVE Act would mandate American citizens provide proof-of-citizenship documents that many can’t access—like a passport or certified birth certificate—to register to vote or update their registration, such as after a move,” noted NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate Min. Christian S. Watkins in March of 2025.

Despite the bill’s failure to move forward after passing the House, voter suppression bills have still emerged in both the House (Make Elections Great Again Act) and the Senate (SAVE America Act).

---

“We still need to thank them ...  
and let them know that we’re  
paying attention.”

SIMONE BLANCHARD

---

On environmental protections, NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate Drake Starling asserted the need for accountability with lawmakers: “Members of Congress need to hear clearly: Permitting reform should only move forward if it speeds the clean energy transition — not if it expands fossil fuel infrastructure.”

A particularly powerful encounter between advocates and lawmakers occurred in Maryland, where Simone Blanchard, Director of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for the Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours, accompanied several Sisters to their Congresswoman and both Senators with framed 100 percent certificates.

Blanchard described a welcoming atmosphere with staff interested in learning about NETWORK, getting to know the Sisters, and hearing where the work of their bosses and the advocacy of the Sisters aligned.



Sr. Mary Jo Byrne, LSJ, Colleen Guler, Sr. Anne Boucher, LSJ, Sr. Fran Gorsuch, CBS, and Simone Blanchard present a 100 percent certificate to Kevin Mack, Director of Constituent Services for Maryland Senator Angela Alsobrooks, for the Senator’s perfect score on NETWORK’s 2025 Voting Record.

“We still need to thank them for that and let them know that we’re paying attention,” said Blanchard. She also noted how many of the staffers they met were Catholic “and how encouraged they were to see us representing the Catholic Church in this way.”

Following one such visit, Rep. Sarah Elfreth’s social media lauded the Sisters and their collaborators: “Thank you for being such incredible local partners and for speaking out for our most vulnerable communities!”

Blanchard credited her Catholic faith for drawing her into these encounters. With the other options being to lash out bitterly or tune out completely, she said, “If I can advocate for policies that are going to help those who are suffering, then I’m going to do it — especially now.”

SEE THE FULL 2025 NETWORK VOTING RECORD:  
[networklobby.org/2025-voting-record/](https://networklobby.org/2025-voting-record/)



## Catholics in Congress

### Races and Retirements Going into the 2026 Midterms



Husted

**RACES:** Ohio’s Senator Jon Husted, appointed to the Senate to fill the vacancy created by Vice President J.D. Vance, is one of 11 Republican Catholics in the Senate. (Together with 13 Democrats, Catholics comprise a quarter of the body.)

With his party holding a three-seat (53-47) majority and facing a likely challenge in former U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown, Husted’s prospect to a term of his own is a closely watched race this cycle. Brown, a Lutheran who narrowly lost his bid for a fourth term in the 2024 election, has aligned heavily with the economic justice issues of NETWORK.



Collins

Another notable Senate race this year is the re-election bid of five-term Maine Senate Republican, Susan Collins. Among Catholic Republicans in Congress, she was the only one to vote with NETWORK more than half the time. Her Voting Record score of 57 percent reflects her support for lowering healthcare costs and

her opposition to the Big Bad Budget Bill and a rescission bill that stripped funding for clean energy, student debt relief, foreign aid, and public broadcasting. Her seat is considered another vulnerable one for Republicans.



Anthony Miranda and Chase Tuller, 2026 Sr. Carol Coston Fellows in NETWORK’s Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.) visit the Capitol Hill office of Senator Jon Husted of Ohio on March 9.



Durbin

**RETIREMENTS:** Ten Senate seats occupied by Catholics are up this year, seven held by Republicans and three by Democrats. Of the 10, two are retiring: Democrat Dick Durbin of Illinois and Republican Thom Tillis of North Carolina. Durbin scored 86 percent this year (kept from 100 by his vote to keep the federal government open while not extending Affordable Care Act premium tax credits), while Tillis scored 29 percent — higher than all but five of his Senate GOP colleagues. (He voted with NETWORK to oppose the Big Bad Budget Bill.)

Tillis, not seeking re-election this year, has become a rare GOP critic of the White House on its ICE raids. Many pundits regard former North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, running to succeed Tillis, as the Democratic Party’s best chance to pick up a Senate seat this election cycle.

On the House side, Catholics hold 125 House seats — 68 Democrats and 57 Republicans. Of the 56 Members of the House of Representatives not seeking re-election this fall, only nine are Catholics. Significant Catholic retirements in the House this year include Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (CA-11) and Jesús “Chuy” Garcia (IL-04). Both are longtime supporters of NETWORK, and both scored 100 percent on the 2025 Voting Record.



Garcia

Of the six Catholic House Republicans retiring, the highest profile is probably New York’s Elise Stefanik (NY-21), who was nominated in 2025 to be President Trump’s Ambassador to the United Nations, before her nomination was withdrawn over concerns that it would jeopardize the GOP’s House majority. She received an 11 percent on the 2025 Voting Record.



# NETWORK Annual Report 2025

Founded by Catholic Sisters in 1971, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, NETWORK is an inclusive, national, Catholic advocacy organization open to all who share our values, working to achieve equity and justice for everyone. Grounded in Gospel values and the Catholic social justice tradition, NETWORK transforms our society by shaping federal policies that achieve racial, economic, and social justice; serve the common good; and honor the dignity of all.



Dear NETWORK Community,

On behalf of the NETWORK staff and boards, I thank you for your faithful and prayerful support of and engagement with our social justice ministry. I am incredibly proud of the impact our spirit-filled community of advocates, members, and partners has made — with extraordinary moral clarity, courage and vision — while confronting a rapidly deteriorating political landscape that has harmed so many.

Last year, more individuals, communities, and partners than ever looked to NETWORK for ways to effectively reject extreme policies that further enrich the ultra-wealthy while destabilizing and devastating our communities. Our team met this increased hunger for connection and engagement with webinars, toolkits, trainings, and resources to take our collective energy and care into the streets, community centers, and policymakers' offices.

The NETWORK community made thousands of calls and emails to Members of Congress, hosted local zine-folding parties to effectively share information about the budget law and next steps for action, and spoke out in rallies and vigils to amplify the experiences of our communities and build momentum for policies that honor human dignity. In addition to ongoing grassroots mobilization programs like Advocates Teams in 12 states and our second cohort of 12 Sister Carol Coston, OP Fellows on college campuses, NETWORK launched a monthly National Advocates Call to more fully support justice-seekers across the country.

Throughout all this, the NETWORK community faithfully supported the work with thousands of contributions that collectively make it possible for us to meet the moment nimbly and with the resources necessary to make an impact when we were needed most. Giving to NETWORK Advocates stayed strong in 2025, and revenue exceeded expenses. While NETWORK Lobby's expenses outpaced external revenue, careful stewardship of reserve funds following an extraordinary gift in the previous year enabled us to fully fund our critical lobbying and organizing efforts.

Thank you again for your prayers, participation, and investment in our shared commitment to achieving equity and justice for everyone, no exceptions. I invite you to read more about our impact together and hope you will continue to journey with us in this sacred work.

In Solidarity,

Laurie Carafone, J.D., ThM, Executive Director, NETWORK



(from top to bottom)

Sr. Patty Chappell and Sr. Ann Howard, SNDdeN attend the June 24, 2025 Sisters Speak Out event on Capitol Hill.

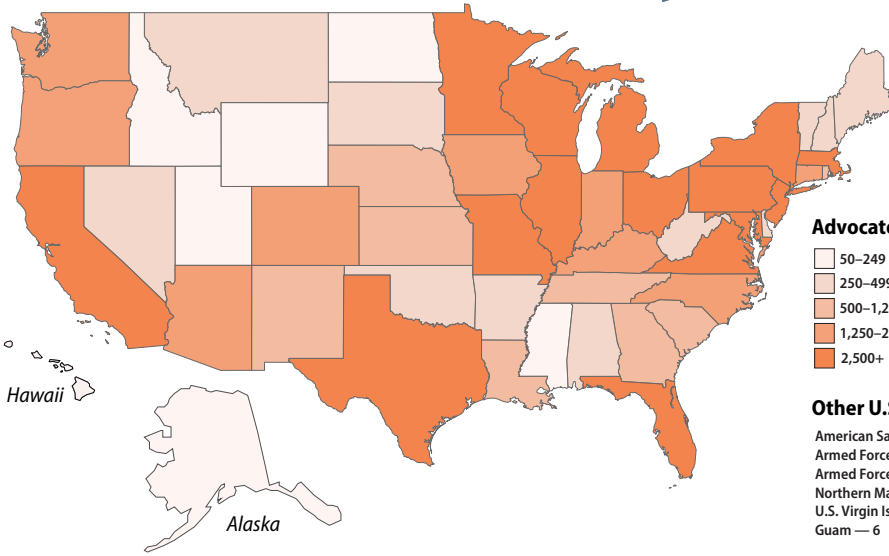
Sr. Eilis McCulloh, HM, of NETWORK's Grassroots Mobilization Team, posts a note outside the office of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14).

Meg Olson, Director of NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization, and Laurie Carafone attend an Aug. 22, 2025 multi-faith vigil in Washington, D.C.

Sisters and NETWORK staff, friends, and partners greet Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) on Capitol Hill on June 24.

NETWORK is two organizations with one mission: NETWORK Advocates is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization and NETWORK Lobby is a 501(c)(4) organization. These two organizations work closely together to further our movement for justice and peace.

# OUR NETWORK Community

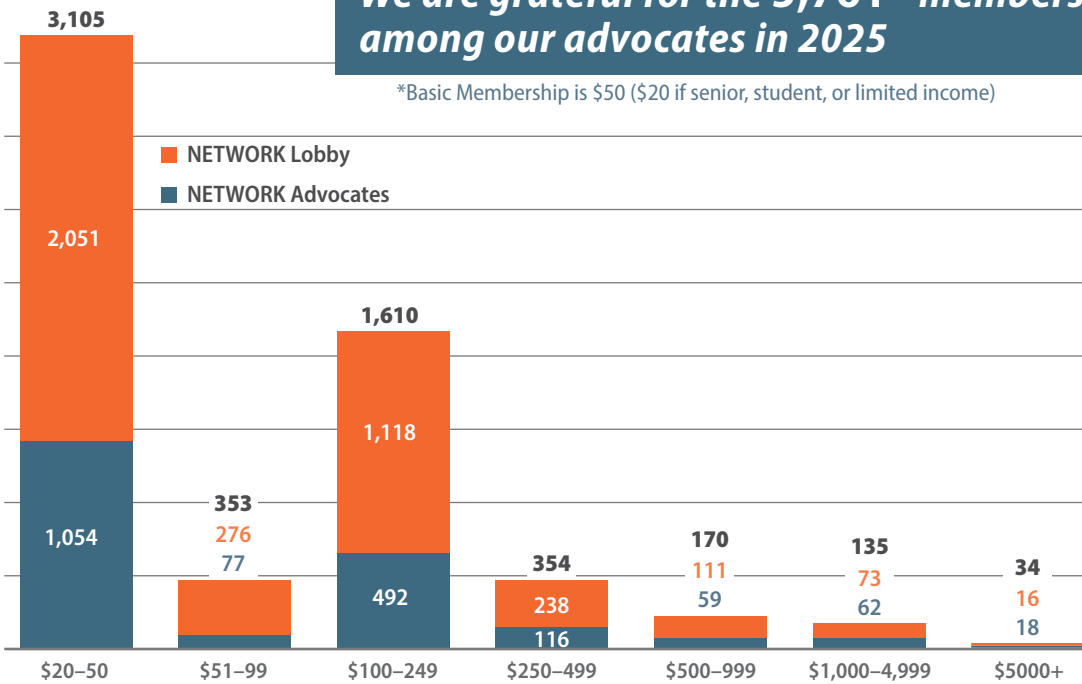


We were honored to have more than **99,000** advocates with us across the country in 2025

We are grateful for the **5,761\*** members among our advocates in 2025

\*Basic Membership is \$50 (\$20 if senior, student, or limited income)

■ NETWORK Lobby  
■ NETWORK Advocates



**1,117** first-time donors

A Sister-Spirit welcome to our newest supporters!

**569** Recurring Donors

People who give at regular intervals throughout the year

**2,221** Loyalty Society

People who have given consecutively for five years or more

## Our Work By The Numbers

**3,307,175** emails sent to NETWORK supporters in **212** broadcasts

**193,177** views of NETWORK websites by **117,027** visitors

**67,047** texts sent to advocates

**7,330** calls to Members of Congress

**21,701** advocates action alerts to Congress and the White House

**36** press releases sent

**10** episodes of the Just Politics podcast released

**54** blog posts published

**23,925** issues of Connection magazine mailed

**40,793** TOTAL FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**2,247** Instagram

**28,494** Facebook

**10,052** Twitter (X)





Members of NETWORK's Bread and Roses Society play a vital role in building the justice movement for many years to come. This society honors the legacy of those who ensure that NETWORK can continue to carry forward our spirit of solidarity — advocating for federal policies that uphold human dignity and support communities to not only survive, but thrive.

For more information on how to make a legacy gift to NETWORK, or if you have included NETWORK in your estate plans, please contact us at [development@networklobby.org](mailto:development@networklobby.org).

Anonymous\*  
Gaea Maeve Aeolus  
Alice and Robert Beezat  
Kim+ and Stephen Benoit  
Margaret Betz  
James Biechler  
Carol Ann+ and Lee J. Breyer  
Dawn Calabia  
Robert H. Cooke  
Susan Doherty  
Gemma Fastiggi+  
Michael J. Grillot  
Jean Hamann  
Jane Houtman  
Irma and Robert Howarth  
Mary and Calbert Hubbard

Betty Kerwin  
Lyn Kirkconnell  
Alice Kitchen+  
Dr. Norma LaSalle  
Derek and Chandra Manning  
Sarah Marin  
Elizabeth Morancy  
Dr. Kevin O'Keefe  
Fr. John Oesterle  
Erin Oliver+  
Rosemarie Pace  
Kenneth J. Peters  
Vincent Petti and Linda Torres  
Suzanne Polen  
Bernadette Powell  
Noraleen Renauer

Linda Rich  
Barbara and Brian Roos  
Jean Sammon  
James R. Stokes+  
Rev. Charles Topper  
Bernadette Tourtual  
Carol Watchler  
Francine Wickes  
Amy and Stephen Zeder  
Dr. Jerome Zurek

+ deceased  
*\* Through their quiet generosity, anonymous planned giving donors have created enduring legacies that will sustain and advance our work for years ahead.*

## IN MEMORIAM

We honor the memory of those whose estates supported NETWORK in 2025. We also recognize those who passed in 2025 and were remembered through gifts from relatives and friends. We are honored to be entrusted with their legacies, which sustain this work for many years to come.

### Estate Gifts

Joan E. Talbert

### In Memory

Rhonda Ballinger  
Donna Clifford  
Phyllis Connerney  
Sr. Stella Maris Craven, OLM  
Ellen Dietschy  
Kathleen Gannon-Briggs\*  
Sr. Susan Gardella, RSHM  
Alice Kitchen\*\*  
Sr. Clare Lawlor, CSA  
Sr. Pat Linehan, SP  
William Marmion  
Mark McCormick  
William C. Mead  
Fr. Terry Moran\*\*  
Sr. Joyelle Proot, SSND  
Sr. Cecile Roeger, OP  
Shawn Schuler  
Sr. Marilyn Trobaugh, SP  
William P. Volk

\* NETWORK Foundress

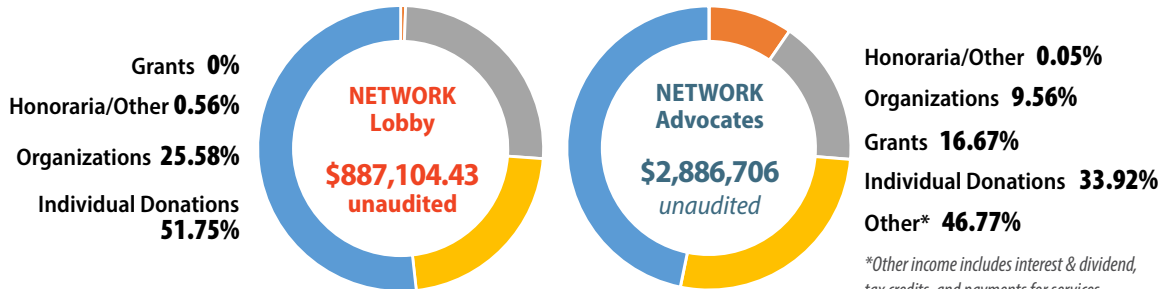
\*\* Served on the Board of Directors for both NETWORK Advocates and NETWORK Lobby

## Financials

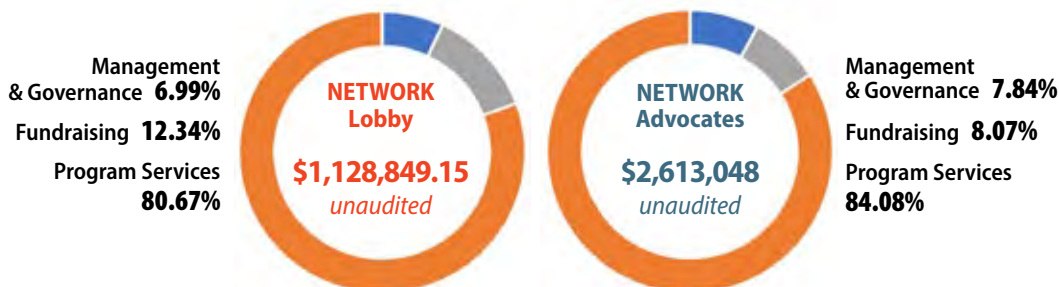
Copies of audited statements as well as IRS 990 documents can be found at:

[networklobby.org/financials](http://networklobby.org/financials) (for NETWORK Lobby) and [networkadvocates.org/financials](http://networkadvocates.org/financials) (for NETWORK Advocates)

### 2025 Revenue



### 2025 Expenses





# 2025 IN PICTURES

1. House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi hugs Sr. Eilis McCulloh, HM after being presented with a budget sign-on letter on June 24.



2. Sr. Barbara Sheehan, SP, protests at a June 14 No Kings Rally in Terra Haute, Indiana.



3. Juliana Macedo do Nascimento and Greisa Martínez Rosas of United We Dream join NETWORK's Giovana Oaxaca at the Dec. 4 introduction of the Dream Act.

4. NETWORK staff join Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas at an event to support immigrant families on February 11 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill.



5. Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati hold a zine party, folding copies of NETWORK's resource on how the Big Bad Budget Law harms communities.

6. Jackalope Labbe, a 2025 Sr. Carol Coston Fellow in NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.), leads an anti-hunger event at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, Massachusetts.



7. Sr. Reg McKillip, OP, (center) visits with NETWORK's Sr. Eilis McCulloh, HM, and Meg Olson at the August LCWR gathering in Atlanta.

8. NETWORK Chief of Staff Sr. Erin Zubal, OSU, distributes ashes at an ecumenical prayer service on Capitol Hill.



9. NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone meets Father Jim Martin, SJ at the August gathering of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in Atlanta.





# Meet the 2026 Sr. Carol Coston Fellows

## Third Cohort of NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.)

NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.) is a leadership and advocacy skills development program for college students. It serves as a training space for faithful young adults to build the skills they need to be advocates for justice. NETWORK has offered training for college students over the years, but Y.A.L.L. offers a deeper level of engagement, seeking to mobilize a diverse national movement of justice-seekers. This spring, NETWORK welcomed its third Y.A.L.L. cohort of Sr. Carol Coston Fellows, 12 students from Catholic colleges across the U.S.

### The Fellowship

The Sr. Carol Coston Fellowship brings together a learning community of young justice-seekers working to advance NET-

WORK's advocacy at the federal level and achieve an inclusive, multiracial, multi-faith democracy. In 2026, we are thrilled to be joined by 12 Coston Fellows organizing on NETWORK's "An Economy for All" agenda at their Catholic colleges and universities in Louisiana, Ohio, New York, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, California, Texas, and Florida.

Over the course of the year, Coston Fellows will study the principles of Catholic Social Justice and policy issues through the lived experiences of real people; engage in coalition-building with peers, faculty, staff, and community social service organizations; coordinate action on NETWORK's Action Alerts; and organize and lead virtual, in-district, and Washington lobby visits with representatives and senators.



### SR. CAROL COSTON, OP

The Sr. Carol Coston Fellowship is named for Sr. Carol Coston, OP. An Adrian Dominican, Coston was one of the 47 Catholic Sisters who founded NETWORK in Washington, D.C. in 1971. She served as the first executive director of NETWORK from the organization's beginning in April 1972 through its first 10 years of existence.



**Amiyuh Tobias**  
SCHOOL: Loyola University New Orleans  
LOCATION: New Orleans, LA  
STUDYING: English



**Lydia Nelson**  
SCHOOL: Loras College  
LOCATION: Dubuque, IA  
STUDYING: English and Politics



**Steven Perez**  
SCHOOL: Barry University  
LOCATION: Miami, FL  
STUDYING: Finance and Sports Management



**Anthony Miranda**  
SCHOOL: John Carroll University  
LOCATION: Cleveland, OH  
STUDYING: English and Peace, Justice, and Human Rights



**Mia Isabel Lazo**  
SCHOOL: Mount Saint Mary's University  
LOCATION: Los Angeles, CA  
STUDYING: Environmental Studies



**Robbie McCoy**  
SCHOOL: University of the Incarnate Word  
LOCATION: San Antonio, TX  
STUDYING: Business Administration



**Brooke Johnson**  
SCHOOL: Manhattan University  
LOCATION: Bronx, NY  
STUDYING: Political Science



**Leslie Gracia**  
SCHOOL: DePaul University  
LOCATION: Chicago, IL  
STUDYING: Astrophysics



**Chase Tuller**  
SCHOOL: John Carroll University  
LOCATION: Cleveland, OH  
STUDYING: Political Science



**Sabrina Huynh**  
SCHOOL: Loyola University New Orleans  
LOCATION: New Orleans, LA  
STUDYING: Political Science and Philosophy



**Jonathan Alcantara**  
SCHOOL: Marquette University  
LOCATION: Milwaukee, WI  
STUDYING: Finance and Accelerated Ingenuity in Markets



**Erica Walden**  
SCHOOL: Xavier University of Louisiana  
LOCATION: New Orleans, LA  
STUDYING: Political Science

For more information, visit: [networkadvocates.org/yall](http://networkadvocates.org/yall)





(above) NETWORK field members, including the Sisters of Charity of New York and University of Mount Saint Vincent students, decorate paper dolls with messages to deliver to lawmakers, urging them to help children detained under the immigration enforcement policies of the Trump administration. The project was a national initiative by the National Coalition to End Family and Child Detention.



(above) NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone and Haitian Bridge Alliance Co-Founder and Executive Director Guerline Jozef speak to a gathering of faith leaders in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on March 17 to call on Congress and the Administration to protect Haitian families and extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The Supreme Court has indicated that it will likely wait until April to consider the case affecting TPS for Haitians.



(left) Sr. Mary Beth Moore, SC, holds the full page ad in the Sunday, March 8 edition of The New York Times featuring "An Open Letter on Corporate Accountability, Mergers, and the Defense of Civil Rights," which had NETWORK among its signers.



(above) Sr. Bridget Bearss, RSCJ, NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone, and Sr. Deirdre Griffin, SSJ, gather for the Capitol Hill event of "Praying With Our Feet," a Jan. 28 national day of action to protest the presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in U.S. communities. Sr. Deirdre was among those arrested for civil disobedience at the Hart Senate Office Building later that day.



(above) Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Min. Robin Tanner, NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone, and Bishop Dwayne Royster of Faith in Action gather Feb. 12 calling on Congress to block funding for ICE and CBP without significant reforms to ICE.



(above) NETWORK Executive Director Laurie Carafone prays at the Ash Wednesday event "A Call to Christians in a Crisis of Faith and Democracy," led by Rev. Jim Wallis of Georgetown's Center for Faith and Justice on Feb. 18.



(above) The 2026 Carol Coston Fellows of NETWORK's Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.) gather at NETWORK's headquarters in Washington for days of training and lobby visits in early March.



(left) Brooke Johnson, a Sr. Carol Coston Fellow from Manhattan University in the Bronx, visits the office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand during the Fellows' lobby visits on Capitol Hill on March 9.



(above) Minnesota Imam Salah Mohamed speaks at the Feb. 12 call on Congress not to fund ICE. He was part of a delegation of some 50 faith leaders from Minnesota who traveled to Washington for the event, which included prayer, protests, and lobby visits to Members of Congress.



(left) Rev. Dr. Stacey Cole Wilson, Executive Minister of Beloved Community for the Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Min. Christian S. Watkins of the NETWORK Government Relations team, participate in "Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice," which brought over a thousand United Methodist clergy and partners to Washington on Feb. 25.

## Sink or Climb

*The Closer We Get to God, the Closer We Get to One Another*

Earlier this year, my fellow Ohioan and Vice President of the United States J.D. Vance said of the direction of our country: “You don’t turn the Titanic around overnight.”

I believe the term for this is “telling on yourself.” After all, watching the direction of our country over the last year and a half has certainly produced “that sinking feeling.” It should remind all of us that, in times such as these, we should seek authentic spiritual grounding, caring community, and meaningful, Spirit-filled action.

For many Catholics, spiritual grounding in large part can mean tapping into the Gospel via the “new Pentecost” of the Second Vatican Council. The reception of the council in this country sparked the founding of NETWORK with Pope Paul VI declaring involvement in politics a “constitutive dimension” of spreading the Gospel.

We must also hold each other close in community. Vatican II urged us to form bonds of relationship and cooperation with all believers. NETWORK carries this forward as well in our ministry as we educate, organize, and lobby for social, economic, and racial justice and equity in our world.

---

When we embrace the idea of scaling a holy mountain rather than succumb to the despairing image of a sinking ship, we equip ourselves for the justice journey ahead.

---

Growing up in the Midwest, I witnessed these values lived out a different way. When Catholics got involved in politics, it was to champion one or two issues that made it very easy for them to see themselves as naturally fitting in with a political agenda. And the most visible witness of Catholics joining with other Christians was to lobby for those same issues, whether in local marches or by the busload in Washington, D.C.

Now many Catholics—including our Vice President—cheer on the Trump administration as masked and hooded figures terrify and murder people in the street in broad daylight; gut access to affordable health care and food for millions of people; defy the last two popes; and mock the values of charity, justice, mercy, humility, and practically every other sign of Christ lived out in the world.



The Transfiguration by Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, c. 1530

I am rarely hopeless; it is not how I am wired. But lately, even I have questioned what the future holds and how will we, as a country, be able to right the ship.

In ecumenical dialogues, there’s a famous image of a mountain with Jesus at the top and different Christian denominations scaling up the sides. The closer we get to the top, the closer we are to one another. With the divisive politics of our country, we might question if our fellow believers and Americans have sunk to the bottom of the mountain — or are perhaps scaling another mountain altogether, one of cultural dominance, Christian nationalism, and earthly power.

As we strive for political accountability, an end to the horrors of oppression and inequity, and a future reflective of the common good, we too must be grounded in our source of unity, peace, and universal belonging. There’s no way around the challenges that face us in this country, but we can go up. We must go up.

When we embrace the idea of scaling a holy mountain rather than succumb to the despairing image of a sinking ship, we equip ourselves for the justice journey ahead. When we draw nearer to the God who sustains us, we can call with confidence on the gifts of the Spirit who fills our hearts and guides our actions.



*Sr. Erin Zubal, OSU, is an Ursuline Sister of Cleveland and NETWORK’s Chief of Staff.*

# Courage in the Face of Cruelty

## *We Have the Power To Refuse Fear*

Our society is living through what many view as a deep moral crisis. In an era when armed and masked agents employ aggressive tactics to arrest people in and at their homes and neighborhoods — even resulting in the fatal shootings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good — the stakes for our shared future could not be higher.

The tendency to justify state-sanctioned violence — whether through harsh detention practices, excessive force, or sweeping mass deportation policies that uproot families — stands in direct contradiction to the common good. Courage in the face of cruelty is becoming central to the moral and spiritual lives of people across many traditions, and faith-rooted solidarity movements are catalyzing a kind of social and spiritual renewal, offering spaces for grief, hope, and action.

Organizing programs, advocacy campaigns, and in-person gatherings have become essential outlets for people seeking to engage in nonviolent resistance. The Catholic-led Season of Faithful Witness vigils and the secular No Kings Day, to name two examples, have generated sustained opportunities for solidarity and deeper engagement, with historic turnout.

We are witnessing responses that challenge the flawed assumption that societies must be governed through fear. Instead, these movements reflect a conviction that pluralistic governance — not intimidation — is the surest way to build a society where the gifts of God’s creation are shared among all for the thriving of all.

Yet fear persists. Some politicians count on the brutalization of both citizens and non-citizens to suppress dissent and quicken the end-goal of mass deportations. Families with legal immigration uncertainty have gone deeper into hiding.

A plethora of cruel policies utilize fear to make their point. They include messaging campaigns that threaten families with harsh consequences for not self-deporting (i.e. Project Homecoming); degrading and inhumane treatment in detention centers; practices that strip immigrants of lawful temporary status; and bureaucratic delays that prevent people from sustaining their livelihoods. They send one harmful message: cruelty is an acceptable tool. When online trolling by official government accounts, dehumanizing rhetoric, and the invocation of wartime legal powers are added to that mix, the effect is to further normalize authoritarian impulses and diminish the dignity owed to every person.

Faith leaders, institutions, and organizations have long urged a balance between legitimate public safety and compassion for individuals and communities. This is one of three central principles of Catholic Social Teaching on immigration.

St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; [and] justice without mercy is cruelty.” History shows that when enforcement operates without checks, the risks of abuse rise. The current overreach is straight out of the Authoritarian Playbook and is fundamentally incompatible with Catholic teaching.

Fear is antithetical to a free and open society. When it becomes a widespread political tool, public discourse is distorted by misinformation, panic, and sensational claims. These distract from pressing issues such as affordable housing, accessible health care, and long-term solutions for undocumented people living in the shadows.

Fear of immigrants is a flimsy excuse to propose legislation to threaten Americans’ freedoms further. Bills such as the SAVE America Act and Make Elections Great Again Act would prevent millions of eligible U.S. citizens from voting. This is a sign of how fear is poisoning the discourse around actual solutions to repair broken trust in elections.

As a Catholic and person of conscience, I lament systems that harm families, weaken civil rights, or undermine community life. Yet “lament” is not the final word. Across traditions, faith teaches that people possess agency. We have the power to refuse fear, reject cruelty, to stand together, and to insist on the inherent dignity of every person.

Ultimately, our collective power, guided by moral conviction, has always been the force that bends societies back toward justice. Fear holds only as much power as we grant it.

*Giovana Oaxaca is NETWORK’s Senior Government Relations Manager.*



Giovana Oaxaca holds a paper doll calling attention to the plight of children in detention.

# We Should All Be Like Nuns

## How Their Example of Justice, Courage, and Joy Keeps Shaping Movements

One evening after my Anglican Missions class, I shared with a friend how much I'd been learning about the history of the Anglican Church, the connections between the Catholic Church and missionaries, and, most importantly, how excited I was to be learning directly from a nun. Not that it was new to me. I grew up in Catholic school and spent most of my education around nuns.

I found myself questioning, "Should I become a nun? Is this the call? What is it exactly that makes me fascinated with our sisters?" I concluded that I do want to be like nuns, and everyone else should, too. I don't necessarily mean you should sell all your belongings and join the local order. I mean that nuns have been and continue to be a vital part of social movements, and we need their inspiration now more than ever to shape a better world.

They're not usually at the forefront making it a point to be seen, but they're always present with ideas, devotion, discipline, and a willingness to serve. They operate without needing applause. We should strive to be like these sisters who support movements that improve people's lives because their faith compels them to show up.

Outside of the orders that shaped much of my upbringing in Boston, the Sisters of Charity of Halifax and the Sisters of St. Joseph, I later learned about Sister Corita Kent, who as Chair of the Art Department at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, turned pop art into theology and protest.

Sr. Corita used advertising slogans, scripture, and bold color to critique capitalism, racism, and the Vietnam War. In the 1960s, her classroom became a hub of creative dissent. She believed art should disturb the comfortable and comfort the disturbed, and she embodied that belief through printmaking that was unapologetically political and joyful.

One of her most notable pieces is one I'm familiar with as a native Bostonian: the Rainbow Swash, a design painted on a large gas tank. Commissioned in 1971, the sweeping bands of color are often interpreted as a subtle commentary on the Vietnam War and are widely recognized as the world's largest copyrighted work of art. What most people drive past without a second thought is actually a massive piece of public art rooted in faith, resistance, and imagination. Sister Corita shows us that being like a nun can look like creative defiance, disciplined enough to master craft and bold enough to color a skyline.

Then there's Sister Mary Antona Ebo of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary in St. Louis, one of the first Black women to enter her order. She marched in Selma after Bloody Sunday in 1965 and explained her presence by saying, "I am a Negro, a nun, a Catholic, and I want to bear witness." Holding theology, politics, and identity together, she refused to separate her race from her vocation or her faith from her fight for justice.

After Selma, Ebo served as a hospital administrator and spoke openly about racism within the church. She models embodied witness at the intersection of race and faith. Being like a nun, in her case, meant public moral clarity and reform from within, even when the institution was slow to change.

Most recently, I learned about Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration who became one of the most influential Black Catholic voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1989, while terminally ill, she addressed the U.S. bishops and challenged them to confront racism within the Church. She did so with clarity, humor, and song, even inviting them to sing "We Shall Overcome."

Sister Thea brought Black spirituals and call and response traditions into Catholic liturgy and advocated for inculturation, faith expressed through Black cultural forms. It gave me joy to see her affirm experiences and music I grew up with in Haitian Catholic services. She shows that being like a nun can look like prophetic joy and telling the truth while still singing.

There are many more examples, but I want to be like the sisters who came before us and who are still working among us. They choose community, purpose, and conviction over comfort, ego and popularity. If what it means to be a sister is creative resistance, visible justice, and joyful reform, then we should all strive to be like nuns. The world needs it.

*Franceska Bruny is a Master of Arts in Social Justice student at Union Theological Seminary and a multidisciplinary artist and storyteller. She served as an Advocacy Intern with NETWORK, supporting policy research and advocacy on immigration and economic justice. Franceska's work explores how storytelling, theology, and creative practice can foster community dialogue and collective liberation.*



Franceska Bruny



# MAKE A LASTING IMPACT!

## *Become a Recurring Donor Today*

We invite you to support the critical work you have read about in this issue of Connection by joining the Recurring Gift Program. A gift each month of any size adds up to make a real difference for our social justice ministry. Your faithful recurring gift provides a reliable, steady financial base that allows us to plan strategically and make room for new opportunities that increase our reach and impact.

### *Our Pledge*

We will always be good stewards of the funds you entrust to us. We thank you for your support and for continuing to put your trust in us as we work for a more just and equitable society.



### ***Our Recurring Donors are***

- Loyal supporters
- From all income backgrounds, and
- Integral to our mission!

### ***Benefits of becoming a Recurring Donor***

- ✓ **NETWORK Membership:** Your recurring gift entitles you to NETWORK membership, and you will receive quarterly issues of Connection magazine. Your support every month (or quarterly, semi-annually, or yearly) equips thousands of activists with the resources and tools they need to engage with elected officials and promote the common good.
- ✓ **Convenience:** You may use the enclosed envelope to enroll with a credit card or check. You can sign up online at [networklobby.org/recurring](http://networklobby.org/recurring) or call our Development Team at 202-601-7866 to donate via Electronic Funds Transfer (direct donation from your bank account). Once set up, you will make regular, automatic contributions, and receive an email acknowledgement of your donation each time with the date of your next gift. Your NETWORK membership will be automatically renewed every year you're enrolled in the program.
- ✓ **Reduced paperwork and administrative expenses:** Automatic recurring payments mean no more membership renewal reminders, and more of your donation goes to where it is needed most.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** If for any reason you wish to change or discontinue your gifts, or update the credit card being charged, just contact us at [development@networklobby.org](mailto:development@networklobby.org) or call June Martin, Annual Giving Manager at (202) 601-7873, and she will gladly assist you.

**Become a NETWORK Recurring Donor Today!**



820 First Street NE, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20002  
phone: 202-347-9797  
fax: 202-347-9864  
[www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)  
[www.networkadvocates.org](http://www.networkadvocates.org)

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 6962  
WASHINGTON, DC

