

## U.S. Congress takes to YouTube in support of sisters

Joshua J. McElwee | Jul. 3, 2012 NCR Today

Seventy-five members of the U.S. House of Representatives have taken to YouTube to show support for Catholic sisters in the wake of a Vatican's harsh critique of the group which represents the majority of their ranks in the U.S.

Speaking one after another on a video posted on the popular video-sharing service Monday, the Congressional representatives say "thank you" again and again to the sisters for their work, mentioning at times the way they've influenced the country's direction and history.

The video, which was posted on the YouTube account of NETWORK, a Catholic social justice lobby in Washington headed by Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell, comes after news last week that a resolution had been proposed in Congress expressing the "deepest appreciation" for the sisters' work.

That resolution [currently has 174 cosponsors](#) [1].

Among those expressing support for the sisters in the video is Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, a noted civil rights advocate and leader who mentions that it was a sister who cared for him after he was injured during the march from Selma to Montgomery in March, 1965.

Also expressing support is Congressman Joe Courtney from Connecticut who says "thank you for your great work and reminding us that we have to have a conscience as a nation to protect the poor and those in need."

The YouTube video also comes after Campbell and other sisters wrapped up Monday a tour across the nation calling attention to their criticism of Republican Congressman Paul Ryan's proposed federal budget.

That tour, [called "Nuns on the bus,"](#) [2] saw the sisters travel some 3,000 miles from Iowa to Washington to meet with congressional representatives about the budget plan, which they say would unacceptably impact services to the economically impoverished.

In an April 18 order to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), which represents some 80 percent of U.S. sisters, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ordered that the group revise its statutes and programs and place itself under the authority of three bishops.

Statements from LCWR and Vatican officials since have seemed to indicate the two groups are at a standstill of sorts regarding the order. In a June 12 interview with *NCR* following a meeting in Rome on the matter, the then head of the congregation, U.S. Cardinal William Levada, [warned of a possible "dialogue of the deaf" between the group.](#) [3]

Days later, LCWR's president, Franciscan Sr. Pat Farrell, [told \*NCR\* June 18 she's "not sure" of the best way for her group to continue its conversations with Vatican officials](#) [4] as they both "need to get beneath the polarizations out of which we're speaking to one another."

Members of LCWR are expected to address the matter more deeply in their upcoming annual assembly, to be held in St. Louis in August.

Levada, who had served as prefect of the Vatican congregation since 2005, officially retired Monday. He was replaced by German Bishop Gerhard Muller, who is noted for having written more than 400 works on a wide variety of theological topics.

The video from the Congress members appears below.

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