

# Faith for Just Lending

a call to end predatory payday lending

March 22, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
Unites States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
Unites States House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
Unites States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
Unites States House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Schumer, House Speaker Pelosi, and House Minority Leader McCarthy,

As our nation responds to this unprecedented crisis, we, the undersigned members of the Faith for Just Lending coalition, write to ask you to protect vulnerable Americans from financial exploitation. We ask for your support for families in the pending stimulus package by extending the Military Lending Act's protections, including its rate cap of 36% APR, to all Americans and all new loans made during the crisis.

In order to secure a payday loan, all that is required is proof of income and a bank account. As many working Americans now find themselves underemployed or unemployed, a 36% rate cap is essential to ensuring that lenders do not withdraw funds that the government has intended for unemployment relief and paid sick and family leave.

Collectively our organizations and denominations represent millions of Christians across the country. Our churches and charities are actively engaged in efforts to end poverty, alleviate suffering and promote opportunities for all people to flourish. We are deeply concerned about how the current crisis will impact the working families and vulnerable communities we serve – in particular, we fear that payday and car title lenders will view the twin health and economic crises as opportunity to exploit borrowers in their time of need.

Over the last several decades, high-cost lending to those in need has increased significantly. Nearly 16,000 payday and car title loan stores operate nationwide. Taking advantage of loopholes and a weakening of traditional usury laws, many of these lenders now offer loans at 300% APR and higher. Far too often, the result is families trapped in a cycle of debt with even less ability to pay the bills, keep food on the table, save for the next emergency, or provide for their children.

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Scripture condemns usury and teaches us to respect the God-given dignity of each person and to love our neighbors rather than exploiting their financial vulnerability. Thus, just lending is a matter of Biblical morality and religious concern. Fairness and dignity are values that should be respected in all human relationships including business and financial relationships.

We thank you for your leadership during this difficult time and respectfully ask that you extend the protections of the Military Lending Act, including a rate cap of 36% APR, to all new loans made as we collectively respond to the current crisis.

Sincerely,

## Faith for Just Lending

Contact: Katie Thompson [info@lendjustly.com](mailto:info@lendjustly.com) 908-472-8820

**Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission**

**National Latino Evangelical Coalition**

**National Association of Evangelicals**

**National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.**

**Faith in Action (Formerly PICO National Network)**

**Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**

**Center for Public Justice**

**The Episcopal Church**

NAE | National Association of  
**Evangelicals**



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY COMMISSION  
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

**NaLEC**  
National Latino Evangelical Coalition

**FAITH IN  
ACTION**

**cbf**

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THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



THE CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC JUSTICE