

Dear Colleague on Audience with Pope Francis and Our Work to Build Back Better

October 11, 2021
Press Release

This weekend was one that I will remember with you in mind. I had the opportunity to visit with Pope Francis and extend the greetings of Congress and request his prayers for our Members and families.

It was a joyous occasion with an exchange of gifts – books and mementos from His Holiness, and the Peace Bowl from the House with a request for him to pray for us written on it.

This special occasion occurred during the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit and pre-COP 26 Meeting of Heads of Parliament in Rome. I also brought our greetings in Meetings with the Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Prime Minister Mario Draghi. Those meetings focused on COVID and climate in the context of global security, economic growth and governance.

Today, I had the privilege of joining the bipartisan Congressional delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly under the leadership of its President, our colleague Gerry Connolly in Lisbon where we heard from Portugal's President, Prime Minister and Speaker. It was a joy to see Rep. Connolly preside over the presentations including a report from NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and discussions among member countries.

In all of the meetings in Italy and Portugal, our counterparts were happy that "America Is BACK" as President Biden declared.

During the visit, discussions about the Build Back Better reconciliation legislation continued late into the nights. In order to pass both the Build Back Better Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill on time, it is essential that difficult decisions must be made very soon.

Overwhelmingly, the guidance I am receiving from Members is to do fewer things well so that we can still have a transformative impact on families in the workplace and responsibly address the climate crisis: a Build Back Better agenda for jobs and the planet For The Children!

At the same time, we must lift the debt ceiling and hope that we can have a unanimous Democratic vote and perhaps a bipartisan vote to do so.

As I asked the Pope to pray for us, may we reflect upon the opportunity we have to meet the needs of the American people and our responsibility to do so.

Thank you for your leadership For The People.