

Catholic bishops urge House against steep budget cuts

by [David Gibson](#)

July 28, 2011

(RNS) The nation's Roman Catholic bishops are urging the GOP-led House to reject a cuts-only approach to the budget as Washington tries to avert an unprecedented government default on its multi-trillion-dollar debts.

"A just framework for future budgets cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor persons," wrote Bishop Stephen Blaire of Stockton, Calif., and Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., in a Tuesday (July 26) letter to House members.

The bishops said balancing the budget "requires shared sacrifice by all," and called for raising revenues, eliminating unneeded military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.

Blaire heads the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Hubbard the Committee on International Justice and Peace. The bishops' call for balancing spending cuts with new revenues tends to echo the approach of President Obama and other Democrats.

That stance has been rejected by the House, including Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Budget Committee Chair Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., both of whom are Catholic.

In their two-page letter, the bishops also write that the bill being considered by the House requires "massive cuts" in international assistance to the poor that they find unacceptable.

The bishops say they recognize "the difficult challenges" of getting the nation's financial house in order, but they echo the arguments of

many other religious groups by declaring that the budget is a moral document.

"The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or in poverty should come first," the bishops said.