

THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURE

November 1, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairperson
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairperson Cochran, and Ranking Member Leahy,

The Children's Budget Coalition is made of up 66 children-focused organizations who collectively are committed to ensuring that our nation's leaders prioritize robust federal investment in the critical programs that nurture children. More specifically, we strongly support robust funding for programs that impact children's development and wellbeing, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition, housing and welfare.

Upon the recent passage of H. Con Res. 71, we are writing to express our opposition given its failure to take into consideration the following priorities:

- 1. Reversing the divestment trend in children's programs:**
 - a. Increase the FY 18 302(a) allocation for the appropriations committee;**
 - b. Oppose cuts to non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending in FY 18 and over the next ten years totaling \$632 billion; and**
 - c. Maintain parity between NDD and defense discretionary spending**
- 2. Protect mandatory programs that help vulnerable children and families afford basic needs including food, housing, health care and income security.**

With the H.R. 601 expiration date of December 8, 2017 quickly approaching, we also urge you to:

- 1. Lift the budget cap for non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending set in the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (BCA; P.L. 112-25);**
- 2. Pass all 12 FY 18 appropriations bills no later than December 8th while increasing funding for children's programs in the Labor-Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Treasury-Housing and Urban Development and Commerce & Justice bills.**

3. Pass an additional supplemental appropriation bill to provide even more relief from hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey as quickly as possible, without burdensome offsets

We are very concerned with two divestment trends for programs that benefit children as identified in First Focus' *2017 Children's Budget Book*: (1) Since 2014, children's programs have accounted for a mere 4.1 percent of all new total federal spending, and (2) the share of total federal spending on children has decreased 5.5 percent (from 8.20 percent in 2014 to 7.75 percent in 2017.)

Given this pattern, we are concerned that H. Con Res. 71 cuts NDD funding by \$2.9 billion from FY 17 levels to meet the FY 18 BCA cap, along with unspecified cuts to NDD of \$632 billion over the next ten years. Already, the BCA has resulted in an alarming 13 percent decrease in inflation-adjusted NDD spending since 2010. Should Congress fail to reach a deal to lift the NDD budget cap, spending will continue to drop, with devastating consequences to over 130 discretionary programs that directly support children and families.

These required and proposed deep cuts are not tenable and this divestment trend must be reversed. Along with lifting the BCA caps, Congress must increase funding for children's programs and increase the 302(a) allocation for the appropriations committees. In the absence of this, the cuts to children's programs will have real consequences for real people – especially teachers, young children in low-income families, and children with special needs.

A core principle of the sequestration provisions in the BCA is that there is parity between non-defense and defense spending. We strongly support the parity principle and its inclusion in any future budget agreement that would provide relief from the sequester provisions in the BCA.

We also urge you to support mandatory programs that help lift children and their families out of poverty and oppose the use of these programs as an offset to pay for tax cuts among other things. Research has proven that providing assistance to poor children reduces poverty in the short-run and improves their longer-term outcomes, making these essential investments in our children and our nation's future.

Finally, in the wake of the devastation from Maria, Irma, and Harvey, we ask you to immediately act on an additional supplemental appropriation bill. While we are pleased H.R.2266 was enacted into law, there is still a need for additional funding to assist those impacted by the hurricanes and fires. It is imperative that you pass an additional relief package that increases funding without burdensome offsets to programs that already support children and families.

We cannot continue down this divestment path – our children deserve better. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you in the coming months to ensure all our nation's children have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Best,

1000 Days
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Psychological Association
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials, International
Boys & Girls Club
Bread for the World
Child Care Aware of America
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Health Fund
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
Committee for Children
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
March of Dimes
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Center on Shared Leadership®
National Network for Youth
National Respite Coalition
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National Title I Association
National WIC Association
Parents Anonymous® Inc.
Partnership for America's Children
Prosperity Now
Public Advocacy for Kids
Save the Children
Save the Children Action Network
SchoolHouse Connection
Share Our Strength
Strengthening Families All Around the World, Inc.
United Way Worldwide
Youth Development Institute of Puerto Rico
Youth Villages