

THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURE

June 29, 2017

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairperson
Committee on Budget
United States Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Black
Chairperson
Committee on Budget
United States House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Committee on Budget
United States Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Ranking Member
Committee on Budget
United States House of Representatives
134 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20151

Dear Chairpersons Enzi & Black and Ranking Members Sanders and Yarmuth,

The Children's Budget Coalition is made of up over 60 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.

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY 18) budget resolution, we ask you take into consideration our following top priorities:

- 1. Support mandatory programs that help vulnerable children and families afford basic needs including food, housing, health care and income security;**
- 2. Lift the budget cap for non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending set in the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (BCA; P.L. 112-25);**
- 3. Increase the FY 18 302(a) allocation for the appropriations committee;**
- 4. Reverse the divestment trends in children's programs through opposing cuts to FY 18 NDD spending; and**
- 5. Support maintaining parity between NDD and defense discretionary spending**

We 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.

We are concerned that the BCA has resulted in an alarming 13 percent decrease in inflation-adjusted NDD spending since 2010. Should Congress fail to reach a budget agreement to lift the FY 18 NDD budget cap, spending will drop an additional \$2.9 billion, from \$518.5 billion to \$515.6 billion. This decrease is further exacerbated by required FY 18 NDD spending and scorekeeping adjustments totaling \$12.8 billion. These required cuts are not included in the \$54 billion NDD spending cut proposed in the President's FY 18 budget, which we strongly oppose.

We are also very concerned with two divestment trends for programs that benefit children as identified in First Focus' [2016 Children's Budget Book](#): (1) children's programs accounted for a mere 2.1 percent of all new total federal spending over the last five years, and (2) the share of total federal spending on children decreased 5.1 percent from 8.25 percent in 2014 to 7.83 percent in 2016.

These required and proposed deep cuts are not tenable and this divestment trend must be reversed. Congress must increase funding for children's programs by lifting the FY 18 NDD budget cap and increasing the FY 18 302(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 students with special needs.

A core principle of the sequestration provisions in the BCA is that there is parity between non-defense and defense and 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 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,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Psychological Association
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
Coalition on Human Needs
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
Committee for Children
Communities In Schools
Early Care & Education Consortium

Easterseals
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Institute for Child Success
Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
March of Dimes
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Education Association
National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
National Head Start Association
National Network for Youth
National Respite Coalition
National Title I Association
National WIC Association
National Writing Project
Partnership for America's Children
Prosperity Now
Public Advocacy for Kids
Save the Children
Save the Children Action Network
School Based Health Alliance
SchoolHouse Connection
Share Our Strength
Thousand Days
United Way Worldwide
Voice for Adoption
Voices for Progress
Youth Development Institute of Puerto Rico
Youth Villages