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April 12, 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing to urge you to oppose Chairman Ryan's irresponsible budget proposal. It fails to effectively address our nation's economic challenges and reduce the federal deficit. In fact, it would impose considerable hardships on working families and state and local governments.

This budget proposal reflects the wrong priorities for our nation, setting woefully inadequate spending levels for programs that serve ordinary Americans and the most vulnerable in our society. AFSCME appreciates the need to get our fiscal house in order over the long term, but we must address fiscal challenges through a responsible combination of spending reductions that safeguard education, health care, and other vital services along with equitable increases in revenues. Slashing domestic discretionary spending below FY08 levels will result in the loss of up to one million jobs. At the very least, we should do no further harm to our fragile economy.

This budget would eviscerate Medicaid with \$1.4 trillion in cuts and privatize Medicare, making coverage more costly and less accessible, and would lay the groundwork for future cuts in Social Security. In particular, block granting Medicaid would merely shift costs to states and to the elderly and disabled.

This budget is a slap in the face to the American public's insistence that Washington reduce the federal deficit. In spite of this budget's unprecedented whack to federal spending, there is no significant dent in the federal deficit. Yet, these cuts would reduce spending as a share of the economy to the lowest level since 1949, prior to the creation of Medicare and Medicaid and the urgent need to protect our country from terrorist threats. The draconian cuts serve the sole purpose of lining the pockets of wealthy Americans and corporate interests, by cutting the individual income and corporate rates nearly one-third from 35% to 25% and making President Bush's tax cuts permanent.

Chairman Ryan's budget plan irresponsibly and unapologetically ignores the nation's need for additional revenues. The plan does not identify a single corporate tax break for elimination and includes preferences for oil and gas companies and hedge fund managers' carried interest loophole.

This budget is a disaster for working people, retirees and the most vulnerable Americans.. It fails to provide a real solution to our budget problems. I strongly urge you to oppose Chairman Ryan's budget plan.

Sincerely,



Charles M. Loveless
Director of Legislation

CML:blbr

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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