



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

Writing a Press Release about Sequestration and Congress's Work on Appropriations

Press releases will heighten awareness of the devastation continued cuts to human needs programs, as called for in Congress's budget and appropriations bills, will bring to your community. It will also send a message to Congress that we are watching, and that there is another path they should take.

Below are a suggested outline and sample press release you can use. Your organization's press release should use your own words. Think about connecting news stories to Congress's decision to keep harmful sequestration cuts in place next year and slash essential human needs programs even further in future years. Include examples that relate to the issues your organization works on and your community. It is helpful to put a face to the numbers; incorporating stories that make the data come to life will increase the impact. How have those your organization works with benefited from the programs that would be cut under sequestration?

Think about including some of these pieces in your press release:

- The headline should summarize your position: either opposition to a specific cut ("Thousands of Children will Lose Head Start if House Spending Bill is Enacted, says Org. Name") or more general opposition ("Housing and Human Services Cuts Show Why Congress Must Go Back to the Drawing Board"). If your organization is engaged in some kind of activity, you can highlight that ("Org. Name Joins with X Groups to Tell Congress to Stop Cutting Human Needs Programs").
- Your first paragraph should cite a current action in Congress (an appropriations bill is approved in committee or on the House floor, for example) or an action your group has taken (held a forum, joined with x groups to sign a letter to Congress...).
- Include information about your organization and your community.
- Describe the proposed cuts to human needs programs included in Congress's budget and spending bills. Focus on one or a few specific programs that will be cut. Include information on how valuable these programs are, and how sequestration cuts threaten them. For example, if cuts go through, XX people in your state will lose housing, Head Start, etc. Use resources from the White House ([here](#) and [here](#)) and the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) for state data. Mention [past cuts](#) to that program as well, and consider using these program-specific [talking points](#) and [program outcomes fact sheet](#) from the Coalition on Human Needs. State data has not been compiled for every program, but if you have any state or local information, include it.
- Give an overview of what's going on in Congress: Budget resolutions have passed that include cuts that will bring spending on domestic programs to new lows; work on annual spending bills continues, adhering to those cuts; President Obama has threatened to veto spending bills that include the too tight sequestration caps.

- Offer a solution. It's not too late for Congress to change course, end sequestration, increase funding to the programs, and help vulnerable people in your community. In some states where the climate is right, show support for the President's budget and his vow to veto bad appropriations bills.
- Preempt any anticipated counter-attacks, like that our country can't afford it. Note examples of increased Pentagon spending and tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy as evidence that we can afford a different route. Note evidence that corporate tax cuts don't lead to job creation.
- Make the case for added revenue. Everyone should pay their fair share so we can help those who truly need it.

For **additional talking points you can use**, see CHN's [tip sheet](#) on writing a Letter to the Editor and other resources on our [FY2016 Budget resource page](#). Please send a copy of your press release to CHN's Senior Policy Writer Lecia Imbery at limbery@chn.org.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2015

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OrgName Denounces Education Cuts in Proposed Spending Bill; Calls on Congress to End Harmful Sequestration Caps and Invest in Education Programs

June 17, 2015: OrgName sharply criticized cuts in Head Start and other education programs approved in a Congressional subcommittee today. The FY16 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill would slash programs in these departments by \$3.7 billion over current funding levels and by \$14.6 billion below President Obama's FY16 request. OrgName also applauded President Obama's commitment to veto this and other appropriations bills that leave harmful sequester caps in place for the coming year.

"The cuts in this bill would be devastating to critical education programs," said Jane Smith, executive director of OrgName. "If Congress has its way, [46,000](#) fewer children will be allowed to participate in and benefit from Head Start compared to President Obama's budget, including [nearly 2,000 children](#) from our state alone. Ample research shows how important Head Start is in preparing children from low-income families for success in school and life, and these cuts would be a major step backwards. In addition, this bill derails important health, employment, and worker protection programs that would jeopardize our low-income neighbors."

"Congress needs to go back to the drawing board and throw out the sequester caps that are taking necessary funding away from these programs. We can afford to meet our needs if we raise revenue by ensuring that corporations and wealthy individuals pay their fair share. Investments in programs like Head Start help Americans succeed.

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OrgName is an organization that fights to end poverty and ensure everyone has a fair chance to succeed. For more information, visit OrgName.org.