

July 11, 2017

Dear Senator Brown, Senator Portman, and Representatives Chabot, Wenstrup, Beatty, Jordan, Latta, Johnson, Gibbs, Davidson, Kaptur, Turner, Fudge, Tiberi, Ryan, Joyce, Stivers, and Renacci:

As Congress begins its work on the FY 2018 budget, we are writing to urge you to ensure that funding is adequate to meet the needs of all people and communities. The undersigned are organizations from Ohio including faith groups, human service providers, labor and civil rights organizations, and advocates and policy experts concerned with improving our nation's health, protecting our environment, supporting families, reducing poverty and hunger, strengthening our communities, and investing in economic growth and prosperity for all our people.

Our message to you is clear: there is no way to keep the promise of prosperity for all Ohioans and all Americans, including families with children, women, seniors, people with disabilities, communities of color, and others who are being left behind in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, without significantly increasing investments in public education, affordable housing, health and nutrition, public transit, roads and bridges, clean air, clean water, clean energy, child care, and other means of making investments in communities that also create good jobs. Rather than meeting these goals, President Trump's FY 2018 budget, however, proposes harsh reductions in all these areas, cutting domestic and international discretionary (NDD) programs \$54 billion below the current law's sequester cap and transferring those funds to the Pentagon. Ohio relies on federal funding for 18 percent of its state budget. These proposed cuts would be devastating, and we urge you to oppose them.

Some of the most egregious examples of the pain that would be caused by the Trump budget cuts include:

- Denying medical care to well over 23 million people nationwide because the budget slashes Medicaid deeply, inflicting a 47 percent cut (\$1.6 **trillion**) through 2027. If the [restrictive caps](#) included in the budget were in place in Ohio from 2001-2011, the state would have lost over \$6.4 billion in federal Medicaid funds.
- Ending the federal commitment to provide a minimum basic food benefit through SNAP/food stamps, by shifting 25 percent of the cost to states. Ohio would face a 10-year cost of nearly [\\$4.2 billion](#), but if such funds were not available, could instead cut benefits. In addition, [92,000 Ohioans](#), mostly elderly and people with disabilities, would lose SNAP benefits because the minimum benefit would be eliminated.
- Breaking the promise not to cut Social Security by slashing Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by \$72 billion over 10 years. There were [542,894](#) Ohioan working-age adults with disabilities receiving SSDI and/or SSI in December 2015, 7.6 percent of Ohio's 18-64 year olds.
- Eliminating heating assistance for 431,254 people in Ohio by cutting \$146.7 million from the state's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Reducing the number of rental vouchers for low-income families by 250,000 nationwide. That loss of rental assistance would be more than double the 2013 sequester cuts of 85,697 vouchers, which denied rental assistance to 4,108 families in Ohio.
- Eliminating \$43.2 million for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Grants to support before and afterschool care and summer programs for 43,195 children in Ohio.
- Cutting Ohio's state grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 45%, a loss of \$13.7 million to fund efforts to implement environmental programs for clean water and clean air that protect public health.

- Cutting 27% of federal assistance to enable job training placements, cutting funds for 67,529 people in Ohio.

Rather than budget cuts, we urge you to support a budget that is an engine for economic progress. It must provide enough funding for jobs and infrastructure programs, with targeted help for low-income communities and struggling individuals, including immigrants seeking a better life. A good budget will direct funds to job creation, not more incarceration; and ensure funding for programs that alleviate poverty, targeting funds to reduce disproportionate poverty among people of color, especially children.

All people in Ohio deserve the security of being able to sustain basic living standards. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), unemployment insurance, and refundable tax credits for low-income people are essential programs that should be protected and improved, not cut. We urge you to reject structural limits to these programs such as block grants or per capita caps, restrictions in eligibility or benefits that deny assistance to people in need and only worsen barriers to stable employment.

Our national security depends on adequately funded protections against threats to public health, as well as protections against poverty, hunger and homelessness, without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, or immigrant status.

It is necessary, but not sufficient, to reject the extreme cuts in the Trump budget. FY 2017 funding shows the harm that comes from years of flat or reduced funding due to tight caps. Out of 168 program areas serving low-income people tracked by the Coalition on Human Needs, 135 were cut from FY's 2010 – 2017, taking inflation into account; 54 were cut by more than 25 percent. We must do better. At minimum, Congress must undo the unrealistic sequester cap on NDD programs and maintain the bipartisan commitment to parity in funding beyond the caps, matching any defense increase with the same amount for NDD programs. Further, cutting domestic programs to fund increases in military spending or tax cuts is wholly unacceptable. On the contrary, investments should increase to meet our nation's huge and growing unmet needs.

A responsible budget requires an increase in revenues from fair sources to fund needed investments. The President's call for more than \$5.5 trillion in tax reductions overwhelmingly benefits profitable corporations and wealthy individuals. The President's tax plan is not responsible, and its promise of unprecedented economic growth is not credible.

We also strongly urge you to reject the inclusion of reconciliation instructions in the budget resolution intended to force cuts and restrictions in programs that support basic living standards and instructions that would expedite unfair tax breaks for wealthy individuals and profitable corporations.

We also urge you to reject controversial ideological policy riders that threaten to stall the budget process, potentially preventing states and localities from receiving federal resources in a timely manner. Policy provisions of great consequence to workers, retirees, consumers, and the environment should receive thorough consideration by authorizing committees and not be slipped into spending bills.

Congress must produce a budget that moves us towards more opportunity for all, that safeguards and advances our basic living standards, and that protects our environment.

Sincerely,

AFSCME Ohio Council 8

Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation (BPDC)  
CAC of Pike County  
City of Cambridge Economic & Community Development  
Cleveland Housing Network  
Cleveland Nonviolence Network  
Cleveland Peace Action  
Communications Workers of America District 4  
Communities United for Action (CUFA)  
Community Action Commission of Belmont County  
Compassionate Toledo  
Del-Mor Dwellings Corp.  
FaCT-Faith Communities for a Sustainable Future  
Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc.  
Food Program and Clothesline of Jackson  
Freestore Foodbank  
Glenmary Home Missioners  
Holy Spirit Catholic Community, Inc.  
Hope Chest of Defiance  
Housing Research & Advocacy Center  
Innovation Ohio  
Kings Local Food Pantry  
Life Start, Inc.  
MACHDO  
Main Street Alliance of Ohio  
May Dugan Center  
Mid-Ohio Foodbank  
Monroe Twp Food Bank  
National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter  
NCBW100COC  
Needy Basket of Southern Miami County, Inc.  
Northeast Churches Emergency Center Food Pantry  
OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4  
OCSEA  
Ohio AFL-CIO  
Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund  
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks

Ohio CDC Association  
Ohio Council of Churches  
Ohio Federation of Teachers  
Ohio Women's Public Policy Network  
Overcomers Group Inc.  
Policy Matters Ohio  
ProgressOhio  
Results  
SAFY  
Schubert Center for Child Studies  
Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio  
SEIU District 1199 WV/KY/OH  
Shared Harvest Foodbank  
Sierra Club Ohio Chapter  
St. Peter Peace and Justice Team  
The Alliance of Churches, Inc.  
The Arc of Ohio  
The Foodbank, Inc.  
Toledo Area Jobs with justice & Interfaith Worker Justice Coalition  
Toledo Fair Housing Center  
TOPS - On Purpose Girls Mentoring  
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio  
West Ohio Food Bank  
West Side Creation Care Team  
Western Reserve Community Development Corporation  
Westland Ecumenical Community Food Pantry  
Working America  
Xenia Area FISH Food Pantry  
YWCA Dayton  
YWCA Greater Cincinnati  
YWCA Steubenville  
YWCA Warren  
Zion's Kitchen, Inc.