



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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MORE THAN 100 GROUPS TELL CONGRESS: “FIRST THINGS FIRST!” FUND URGENT PRIORITIES AND PROTECT DREAMERS BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS

Now that Congress has acted to keep government open and running for two more weeks, it is time to get down to business: Congress must act this month to protect Dreamers and fund important priorities ranging from children’s health and other health programs to disaster relief for areas devastated by hurricanes and wildfires.

Congress also must lift the sequester caps in a bipartisan manner, and allow for more adequate funding for domestic and international spending – not just for the military.

That’s the message more than 100 national groups delivered to every member of the House and Senate this week. The groups include faith-based organizations, service providers, advocates for people in need, labor, civil rights organizations and policy experts. A copy of the groups’ letter to Congress is available [here](#).

The letter states:

“Week after week, the undersigned national organizations have watched as Congress has put off carrying out its responsibilities to address urgent priorities: continued health care coverage for our children and all low/moderate income people, emergency relief from natural disasters, continuing legal status for the Dreamers and other immigrants with Temporary Protected Status, lifting appropriations caps to prevent serious underfunding of vital programs, and enactment of full-year funding for FY 2018. Instead, House and Senate leadership has pressed forward with tax cut proposals that would make things worse for low- and middle-income people whose needs should be the focus of your attention. Our traditions and values of conscience and faith impel us to call upon you to put first things first.”

Specifically, the letter calls for achieving the following **without** the poison pills of paying for these priorities with harmful cuts to other needed programs or divisive ideological riders:

- Protection for the nearly 800,000 Dreamers. Each day, 122 Dreamers are being discontinued from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, meaning they are at risk of arrest and deportation. This means between now and the time the current budget resolution

expires on Dec. 22, approximately 1,708 Dreamers will be at risk. Each day that Congress delays, more deportations may occur.

- Reauthorization of the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Visiting Program, and continued funding of Community Health Centers. The deadline for reauthorizing CHIP was Sept. 30; many states are grappling with how and when to shut their programs down.
- Providing urgently needed relief for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Texas, Florida, and for communities hit by wildfires. In Puerto Rico alone, half the island remains without electricity and 472,000 homes are destroyed or damaged.
- Lift sequester caps for at least two years and adhere to the “parity principle” that has guided past sequestration deals – meaning domestic spending and military spending are treated alike. Lifting the caps equitably must be a top priority for Congress, so that it can proceed as quickly as possible to enact a spending bill for the remainder of fiscal year 2018.

You can see the full version of the letter to Congress and the list of national groups that signed [here](#).