

September 8, 2016

Dear [Senator or Representative]:

The undersigned national organizations strongly urge you to complete work on an omnibus appropriations bill at the earliest possible date. We recognize that this is highly unlikely before the end of September, but hope that if you must resort to a Continuing Resolution (CR), you will make that stop-gap bill as temporary as possible, without divisive policy riders, and return after the election to enact omnibus appropriations legislation.

Some issues cannot wait months to be addressed. Congress must act in September to provide funds to prevent the spread of Zika, to assist communities to stop lead poisoning from contaminated water systems, and to provide treatment for the epidemic of opioid abuse. These are emergencies needing immediate attention. Failure to act so far has meant children and families have been subject to preventable harm. Further inaction would be grossly irresponsible.

Meeting these domestic needs ought to be Congress' highest priority. If Congress also seeks to increase Pentagon spending, whether by increasing the uncapped Overseas Contingency Operations account or through defense appropriations, at least a like amount should be provided to address urgent domestic concerns. Retaining Congress' commitment to parity in funding increases for defense and non-defense discretionary spending is needed now more than ever, when epidemics from disease, substance abuse and poisoning must be stopped.

Congress must also include increased appropriations in a Continuing Resolution in areas where it is urgently needed. Programs including child care, Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Social Security operations, housing assistance, elder nutrition, and the Census Bureau's decennial census planning must have enough funds to carry out their responsibilities. In these or other examples where failure to go beyond flat funding would seriously jeopardize services and/or increase costs in the long term, Congress should include anomalies in the September CR.

The organizations signing this letter include human service providers, faith organizations, and other policy experts and advocates concerned with housing, education and training, health, nutrition, child care, and many other services of importance to low-income people. We know how important it is for service providers to be able to plan for a full year and to have enough funds to meet current needs. That is why communities nationwide are depending on Congress to act in September to address urgent needs immediately and ensure ongoing funding with no divisive riders, and enact omnibus full-year appropriations shortly after the election.

Sincerely yours,

9to5

AFL-CIO

African American Health Alliance (AAHA)

African American Ministers in Action

AFSCME

AIDS United

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

American Association of Service Coordinators

American Farmworker Opportunity Programs
American Federation of Teachers
American Foundation for the Blind
Americans for Democratic Action
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Bend the Arc
Bread for the World
Campaign for America's Future
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Child Welfare League of America
Childcare Aware
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Leadership Council
Children's Mental Health Network
Church of the Brethren
Coalition For Health Funding
Coalition On Human Needs
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Council for Opportunity in Education
Doctors For America
Easter Seals, Inc.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Families USA
Family Focus Treatment Association
First Focus
Food Research & Action Center
Friends Committee on National Legislation
General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church
Generations United
Justice in Aging
Leadership Conference on Women Religious
Leading Age
Love Community
Main Street Alliance
Meals on Wheels America
Mental Health America
Moms Rising
MoveOn
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Affordable Housing Management Association

National Association of Councils On Development Disability
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Aging
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Trust
National Immigration Law Center
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Organization for Women
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
NDD United
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
People Demanding Action
People for the American Way
Progressive Congress
Provincial Council of Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)
Public Advocacy for Kids
RESULTS
Service Employees International Union
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Inc
TASH
Union of Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice & Witness Ministries
Voices for Progress
YouthBuild USA
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

This list includes groups that signed after the letter was distributed to Congress.