

July 11, 2017

Dear Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, and Representatives Zeldin, King, Suozzi, Rice, Meeks, Meng, Velazquez, Jeffries, Clarke, Nadler, Donovan, C. Maloney, Espaillat, Crowley, Serrano, Engel, Lowey, S. Maloney, Faso, Tonko, Stefanik, Tenney, Reed, Katko, Slaughter, Higgins, and Collins:

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 New York 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 New Yorkers 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. New York relies on federal funding for 33 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. Close to [one-quarter of New York's people](#) (24 percent) were covered by Medicaid or the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2015; 64 percent of all the federal funds received by New York is for Medicaid; 18 percent of the state's general fund is for Medicaid.
- Ending the federal commitment to provide a minimum basic food benefit through SNAP/food stamps, by shifting 25 percent of the cost to states. New York would face a 10-year cost of nearly [\\$8.6 billion](#), but if such funds were not available, could instead cut benefits. In addition, [97,000 New Yorkers](#), 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 [801,128](#) working-age adults in New York with disabilities receiving SSDI and/or SSI in December 2015, 6.3 percent of New York's 18-64 year olds.
- Eliminating heating assistance for 1,202,723 people in New York by cutting \$363.1 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 14,497 families in New York.
- Eliminating \$87.5 million for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Grants to support before and afterschool care and summer programs for 87,480 children in New York.

- Cutting New York's state grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 45%, a loss of \$16.3 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 116,096 people in New York.

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 New York 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,

AAUW

Barrier Free Living

Bronx Lebanon Hospital

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled

Buffalo Council 35 / AFSCME

Buffalo Diocese Care for Creation Committee

Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network

Care for the Homeless Community Advisory Board

Castleton Park Tenants Association

Catholic Charities of Buffalo

Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties, NY

Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

Chemung County Housing Coalition

Church Women United in New York State

Citizen Action of New York

Citizens' Committee for Children

City Harvest

Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Local 1000/AFSCME

CNY Fair Housing

Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.

Community Health Action of Staten Island

Community Outreach at St. John's

Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

Community Voices Heard

Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.

Council 37 NYC District Council AFSCME Unions

Council 82 New York Law Enforcement Officers / AFSCME

Council of School Supervisors and Administrators Local 1 AFSA

Cuba Cultural Center, Inc.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporations

Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse. Inc.

Dominican Sisters in Committed Collaboration (Amityville, Blauvelt, Caldwell, Hope, Sparkill)

Donald J. Corbett Adoption Agency

Early Care & Learning Council

Every Child Matters Coalition of Chemung Co, NY

Field & Fork Network Inc.

Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc.  
Food Bank of Central New York  
Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
Food For All  
FPWA  
Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph  
Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Church  
Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, CUNY  
Good Shepherd Services  
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition  
Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties  
Health and Welfare Council of Long Island  
Helping Hands for the Disabled of NYC  
Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc.  
Hunger Action Network of New York State  
Hunger Solutions New York  
Interfaith Impact of New York State  
Justice Committee of the Albany Province of Srs. Of St. Joseph of Carondelet  
Karing Kitchen  
La Fuerza Unida, Inc.  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University  
League of women voters  
League of Women Voters - Rochester Metro Area  
League of Women Voters of Brookhaven  
League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara  
League of Women Voters of Geneva  
League of Women Voters of Nassau County  
League of Women Voters of New York State  
League of Women Voters of Putnam County  
League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County  
League of Women Voters of Rockland County  
League of Women Voters of Saratoga County  
League of Women Voters of Schenectady County  
League of Women Voters of Smithtown  
League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County  
LISC New York City  
Long Island Advocacy Center

Long Island Cares, Inc.  
NAMI Huntington  
National Association of Social Workers, New York City Chapter  
New York Association on Independent Living  
New York County Municipal Employees Council 66/AFSCME  
New York State Network for Youth Success  
Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.  
NW Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition  
Organize for Action WNY  
Peace Action Manhattan  
People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH) Buffalo  
Project Hospitality  
Queens Action Council  
Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York  
Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM)  
Sisters of Charity of New York  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY  
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities  
Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, New Windsor  
Southern Tier Independence Center  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen  
St. Peter's Kitchen, INC  
Staten Island Hunger Task Force  
Staten Island Inter-Religious Leadership  
The League of Women Voters of the North Country, NY  
The New York Immigration Coalition  
Town of Hamburg, NY  
United Neighborhood Houses  
Universal Living Wage Warriors  
Vera House, Inc.  
Veterans For Peace - Chapter 034  
VIP  
Voices for Community Advocates and Leaders (VOCAL-NY)  
Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.  
West Side Campaign Against Hunger  
Westchester Children's Association  
Westchester Residential Opportunities

WestCOP

YWCA Binghamton & Broome County

YWCA Brooklyn

YWCA Elmira & the Twin Tiers

YWCA NorthEastern New York

YWCA GCR