



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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MORE THAN 1,500 GROUPS CALL ON CONGRESS TO PASS A BUDGET THAT PROMOTES OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL, PROTECTS BASIC LIVING STANDARDS, AND PROTECTS OUR ENVIRONMENT

More than 1,500 groups have come together to urge Congress to ensure that funding in the fiscal year 2018 budget is adequate to meet the needs of all people and communities. The groups, from all 50 states, represent millions of Americans, 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.

The letter, circulated by the Coalition on Human Needs and delivered Tuesday to every member of Congress, states:

“Our message to you is clear: there is no way to keep the promise of prosperity for all Americans, including families with children, women, seniors, people with disabilities, communities of color, and others who are being left behind in the 21st 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.”

The letter lays out “some of the most egregious examples” of the pain that would be caused in particular by President Trump’s budget proposal, such as slashing Medicaid far more deeply than the drastic cuts proposed in congressional health care repeal bills, ending the federal commitment to provide a minimum basic food benefit through SNAP/food stamps, and cutting other services for people with disabilities, children, workers, seniors, as well as harshly undermining environmental and consumer protections.

The letter cautions that it is “necessary, but not sufficient, to reject the extreme cuts in the Trump budget,” calling on Congress to rebuild human needs programs that have been cut for years by undoing the “unrealistic sequester cap” on domestic appropriations through a bipartisan agreement. In fact, Trump and Congressional proposals to increase Pentagon spending beyond the existing cap cannot be achieved without a legislative change that must be bipartisan to pass; such an agreement must include increases to domestic/international peace programs.

And the letter offers an alternative: “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. “

The letter is being received by Congress as House Republicans are struggling to get agreement on their budget proposal, which is reported to require \$200 billion in filibuster-proof cuts certain to hit Medicaid, and likely also to affect SNAP, SSI, low-income tax credits, etc. The budget draft would also fast-track tax cuts and increase Pentagon spending while cutting domestic appropriations. The large cuts to basic living standards programs like Medicaid and failure to move towards a bipartisan agreement to lift sequester caps is causing some Republican House members to oppose the budget. The 1,500 groups signing this letter provide support for those who oppose cuts.

Of the more than 1,500 local, state and national groups, more than 150 work on affordable housing and homelessness; more than 130 work on hunger/food security; more than 100 work on health care; more than 80 are faith/religious-related groups; more than 60 concentrate on labor/workers rights; more than 50 address children’s needs; and more than 40 focus on education issues. Other major categories of groups include environmental, sexual violence, poverty, social justice, social services, women’s rights, and civil rights.

Note to media: A copy of the letter and a list of the more than 1,500 signees can be found [here](#).

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The Coalition on Human Needs is made up of more than 100 national organizations including faith groups, service providers, policy experts, labor, civil rights and other advocates concerned with meeting the needs of low-income and vulnerable people.