



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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December 21, 2017

Dear Representative:

I am writing to convey the very deep disappointment of the organizations making up the [Coalition on Human Needs](#) that Congress appears ready to head home for the holidays without carrying out its most basic responsibilities. What the nation needs is a bipartisan agreement to lift appropriations sequester caps to enable the completion of full-year FY 2018 funding; enactment of a clean Dream Act; disaster relief funding, with special attention to Puerto Rico's very urgent needs; 5-year reauthorization and funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program; long-term extensions for a number of other needed health programs, including Community Health Centers and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; increased funding for the decennial Census and for opioid treatment; extension of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act; and waiver of statutory PAYGO to prevent cuts in mandatory programs.

It appears Congress will be doing very little to carry out these most basic responsibilities before the year is out. The Continuing Resolution before you extends mostly flat funding through January 19. We urge you to vote against it as now drafted, and to act swiftly to add or otherwise enact the other urgently needed provisions described here.

The CR does not provide adequate funding for the decennial Census, a serious omission that threatens the accuracy of the count, and as a consequence, of the fairness of funding allocations and district line-drawing. The CR does include a PAYGO waiver, but only provides stopgap funding for CHIP and Community Health Centers. It leaves out the Home Visiting Program and the Affordable Care Act "fixes."

There is majority and bipartisan support to protect the Dreamers. It is unconscionable to leave without voting to stop their loss of legal status and to end their fear of deportation.

Separate legislation is before you to provide \$81 billion in disaster relief for states and territories afflicted by hurricane and wildfire disasters. It leaves out crucially needed help for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands – most notably, it lacks a waiver of matching requirements for Medicaid. This was provided for Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Puerto Rico, still in a state of devastation and economic contraction, should have the requirement to match Medicaid funding waived for at least two years, and should not be required to pay towards receipt of FEMA or Army Corps of Engineers assistance.

As for CHIP, the failure to provide five-year reauthorization and funding is shameful. The additional funding included appears to be inadequate to cover costs through March. Alabama has frozen intake;

other states are on the verge of doing so, and have sent out legally required notices to families warning them that their children's insurance may end. Leaving for the holidays without reauthorizing CHIP is a grossly irresponsible act.

We do not want the government to shut down, and we do want you to enjoy the holiday season with your families. But leaving so many responsibilities unmet is unacceptable. Please reject the CR and allow millions of families to put aside fear for their futures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Weinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deborah Weinstein
Executive Director