

July 24, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Coalition on Human Needs, I urge you to vote Yes on H.R. 3877, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019.


CHN is an alliance of more than 100 national organizations representing millions of people of faith, human service providers, labor, civil rights, policy experts, and other advocates who work together to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable people. We have frequently communicated with you to describe the erosion over time in appropriations for human needs programs; from FY 2010 to FY 2019, domestic/international programs were cut [4.6 percent](#), taking inflation into account. Without adequate funding, we are only serving one in six children eligible for child care assistance and only helping one in five low-income families with children to secure rental subsidies. There are many more examples of unmet need. The two-year agreement for FYs 2018 and 2019 started to rebuild important services, and we believe that the new agreement for FYs 2020 and 2021 will allow for modest but important continued progress.

Taking into account both the capped funding total for FY 2020 for non-defense discretionary programs and the amounts available outside the cap, we estimate that funding for FY 2020 will grow by about 4.2 percent. Some of this will need to be spent on growing costs for Veterans MISSION Act health care, which we believe should more fairly have been placed outside the cap. Still, there will be enough funding to make more progress in meeting vital needs including child care, housing, education and training, nutrition, health, substance use treatment, and safety.

We have reservations about H.R. 3877. We are concerned that the funding levels it sets for FY 2021 are unrealistically low (more than \$10 billion less than a 2 percent inflation estimate for NDD programs). We believe that \$738 billion for Defense in FY 2020 is too high and wasteful in ways that detract from national security. We will work on a bipartisan basis in concert with many of our members to support language in the upcoming appropriations bills to strengthen congressional intent on protections for low-income people, including immigrants.

Despite this, we urge a Yes vote on H.R. 3877 because it allows for important if modest progress in addressing unmet needs and makes it far less likely that the appropriations process will be stymied, leading to the destructive recurrence of a government shutdown. By extending the debt limit through July 31, 2021, the bill will prevent an unconscionable self-inflicted economic meltdown. Further, we appreciate that this bill for the most part avoids cuts to basic needs programs as a way to pay for the increased appropriations levels. For these reasons, we congratulate the leaders who negotiated this agreement and urge you to vote for the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019.

Sincerely yours,



Deborah Weinstein
Executive Director