

THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

November 14, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Committee
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2508

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4704

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Chairmen Cochran & Blunt, Democratic Leader Reid and Ranking Members Mikulski & Murray:

The Children's Budget Coalition made up of over 25 organizations strongly supports robust funding for programs that impact children's development and wellbeing, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition and housing. To this end, as you work to complete the remaining 11 Fiscal Year 2017 (FY 17) appropriation bills we ask that you take into consideration our following four top priorities:

1. The enactment of all 11 remaining FY 17 appropriations bills by December 9, 2016;
2. The Labor, Health & Human Services and Education appropriations bill receives the highest possible 302b allocation in conference;
3. Children's programs receive the highest mark between the Senate or House bills in conference; and
4. Parity between non-defense and defense spending is maintained.

It is critical that all of the remaining 11 spending bills are enacted this year because the consequences of a Continuing Resolution (CR) are severe. Continuing Resolutions have significant financial repercussions which take a real toll on governing and waste taxpayer money. Additionally, under the rules of a CR, federal agencies cannot recruit or hire new staff; grants to states and local agencies are delayed and new programs cannot begin, which would include the recently enacted Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law No: 114-95). We cannot afford to further delay the passage of the remaining FY 17 appropriations bills and ask that you complete them by year end.

As you consider conference allocations for each of the remaining 11 spending bills, we ask that you allocate \$161.9 billion or more for the Labor, Health & Human Services and Education (Labor-H) appropriations bill. There are approximately 200 programs that critically impact children in numerous spending bills, ranging from Commerce, Justice and Science to Defense. However, over 130 of these programs fall under the Labor-H spending bill. These programs are critical to assisting children and providing them with resources necessary to leading a long and productive life.

Nonetheless there have been cuts to these critical programs and the top-line numbers in the FY 17 Labor-H spending bill are in fact less than FY 16 by \$270 million in the Senate and \$570 million in the House. This is not a new trend and we are concerned with this divestment in our children.

According to First Focus' [Children's Budget 2016](#), children's programs accounted for just a mere 2.1 percent of all new total federal spending over the last five years. The book also found that the share of total federal spending on children decreased 5.1 percent from 8.25 percent in 2014 to 7.83 percent in 2016. We cannot continue down this path – our children deserve better and we ask that you provide the programs that impact children with the highest possible mark in conference.

As you consider the funding levels for the 11 remaining FY 17 appropriations bills, we also ask that you avoid cutting funding for children's program to meet the caps. Non-defense discretionary cuts can result in fewer children accessing critical programs which can harm their futures in both the short and long-term. We ask that you abide by the framework in the Bipartisan Budget Act (Public Law No: 114-74) in which parity between non-defense and defense spending is maintained.

The Children's Budget Coalition is committed to ensuring that robust federal investment in the critical programs that nurture children is a top priority for our nation's leaders and you have an opportunity to help us increase the investment in children. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming weeks to ensure all of our nation's children have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

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AASA: The School Superintendents Association
ALL THREE CORPS
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Psychological Association
Children's Health Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Committee for Children
Communities in Schools
Easterseals
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children

Futures Without Violence
Kempe Center
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Center on Shared Leadership®
National Education Association
National Network for Youth
National Respite Coalition
National Title I Association
National WIC Association
Parents Anonymous® Inc.
Partnership for America's Children
Public Advocacy for Kids
Save the Children
Save the Children Action Network
School Based Health Alliance
Share our Strength
Strengthening Families All Around the World, Inc.
YMCA of the USA
Youth Villages