

September 8, 2016

Dear [Senator or Representative]:

The undersigned national organizations strongly urge you to complete work on an omnibus appropriations bill at the earliest possible date. We recognize that this is highly unlikely before the end of September, but hope that if you must resort to a Continuing Resolution (CR), you will make that stop-gap bill as temporary as possible, without divisive policy riders, and return after the election to enact omnibus appropriations legislation.

Some issues cannot wait months to be addressed. Congress must act in September to provide funds to prevent the spread of Zika, to assist communities to stop lead poisoning from contaminated water systems, and to provide treatment for the epidemic of opioid abuse. These are emergencies needing immediate attention. Failure to act so far has meant children and families have been subject to preventable harm. Further inaction would be grossly irresponsible.

Meeting these domestic needs ought to be Congress' highest priority. If Congress also seeks to increase Pentagon spending, whether by increasing the uncapped Overseas Contingency Operations account or through defense appropriations, at least a like amount should be provided to address urgent domestic concerns. Retaining Congress' commitment to parity in funding increases for defense and non-defense discretionary spending is needed now more than ever, when epidemics from disease, substance abuse and poisoning must be stopped.

Congress must also include increased appropriations in a Continuing Resolution in areas where it is urgently needed. Programs including child care, Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Social Security operations, housing assistance, elder nutrition, and the Census Bureau's decennial census planning must have enough funds to carry out their responsibilities. In these or other examples where failure to go beyond flat funding would seriously jeopardize services and/or increase costs in the long term, Congress should include anomalies in the September CR.

The organizations signing this letter include human service providers, faith organizations, and other policy experts and advocates concerned with housing, education and training, health, nutrition, child care, and many other services of importance to low-income people. We know how important it is for service providers to be able to plan for a full year and to have enough funds to meet current needs. That is why communities nationwide are depending on Congress to act in September to address urgent needs immediately and ensure ongoing funding with no divisive riders, and enact omnibus full-year appropriations shortly after the election.

Sincerely yours,

9to5

AFL-CIO

African American Health Alliance (AAHA)

African American Ministers in Action

AFSCME

AIDS United

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

American Association of Service Coordinators

American Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Foundation for the Blind  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs  
Bend the Arc  
Bread for the World  
Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Child Welfare League of America  
Childcare Aware  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Leadership Council  
Children's Mental Health Network  
Church of the Brethren  
Coalition For Health Funding  
Coalition On Human Needs  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Doctors For America  
Easter Seals, Inc.  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Families USA  
Family Focus Treatment Association  
First Focus  
Food Research & Action Center  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church  
Generations United  
Justice in Aging  
Leadership Conference on Women Religious  
Leading Age  
Love Community  
Main Street Alliance  
Meals on Wheels America  
Mental Health America  
Moms Rising  
MoveOn  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Affordable Housing Management Association

National Association of Councils On Development Disability  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council on Aging  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Housing Law Project  
National Housing Trust  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Organization for Women  
National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center  
NDD United  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
People Demanding Action  
People for the American Way  
Progressive Congress  
Provincial Council of Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
RESULTS  
Service Employees International Union  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Inc  
TASH  
Union of Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice & Witness Ministries  
Voices for Progress  
YouthBuild USA  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE