

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murray and Congressman Hensarling:

Thank you for your work on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. I am writing as a follow-up to my September 7 letter where I outlined the National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) recommendations to best bring our budget in balance. NASW has collected stories about how potential budget cuts will impact people throughout the country. Please consider these as you make your decisions about deficit reduction.

"I am a social worker and I am very concerned about the budget cuts to Medicaid. I also have a multiply handicapped adult daughter and I am extremely concerned that these cuts will continue to put these people at higher risk for not being able to be cared for. There are already so many families who cannot handle the care of their disabled family members without that much needed support. Please continue to look into advocating for individuals who rely on SSI. Thank you for your time and consideration in this crucial matter." ~ Carolyn from Rochester, NY

"I'm a public school social worker in a high poverty area of Minneapolis, and every day – several times a day – I see the impact of these services. Right now, a number of my students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders benefit from on-site mental health services, often funded by Disability Services through Social Security.

You can imagine how helpful it is for families for their children to be able to get therapy at school. Previously a parent without a car and with limited funds would have to take time off work, take a bus to pick up their child at school, then bus to the therapist, then back to school or home – sometimes with one or two younger siblings in tow. If weather was bad, they'd miss their appointment. If they didn't have bus fare, they'd miss their appointment. If their employer said, "No more time off," they'd discontinue therapy altogether. I could go on about the necessity of the importance of medical assistance and Social Security – for students who receive their asthma or ADHD medication through medical assistance; for parents and custodial grandparents who rely on Medicare or medical assistance to get their own medication for depression, diabetes or blood pressure so they're able to care for the students. I see it and I hear it every day. We can't lose these services." ~ Jane from Minneapolis, MN

“I am California resident who works as a social worker in a teen pregnancy division. Our program educates young parents on prenatal care, parenting and provides resources to assure they graduate from high school. We provide intensive case management services which include mental health services, childcare, and educational workshops. The mortality rate for teen population is high in the central valley, in which I work. Offering our services has caused the mortality rate to decrease, teens completing high school at a record high compared to teens in the general population.

Our office has been notified that our program will be significantly cut, therefore teens would lose the much needed services that we provide. In the long run, cutting now to save monies will ultimately cost the state more later when the outcomes of teen parents are evaluated in the absence of intensive case management services. Our nation cannot afford to have an epidemic number of uneducated teens who do not have access to services to provide quality parenting to their children.”

~ Latasha from Fresno, CA

“Sixty percent of our clients make less than \$20,000 a year (36% make less than \$10,000). They depend on safety net programs like Medicaid/CHIP/SNAP to provide for themselves and their families as they work to improve their lives. Without these services, Missouri would probably see a decrease in families able to work their way off welfare.”

~ Anne from St. Louis, MO

NASW urges the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to submit recommendations that include sufficient revenue increases that reduce the deficit while preserving our ability to create jobs, rebuild the economy, and protect vulnerable people, like those quoted above, from the loss of vital services.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction