

March 27, 2012

## REJECT REP. RYAN'S DRACONIAN FY 2013 BUDGET RESOLUTION

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong opposition to the Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal offered by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI). We urge you to reject this draconian proposal and instead pass a budget that does no harm to the most vulnerable Americans and that ensures there is enough revenue to sustain our country's recovery and invest in the future.

The Ryan budget makes cuts that are extreme and irresponsible, slashing or eliminating many services that are needed by communities represented by our organizations, including vulnerable people such as low-income families, young children, students, older people, individuals with disabilities, the jobless, and the uninsured. In fact, more than 62 percent of the cuts in the Ryan budget are cuts to programs that serve lower-income Americans. With millions of families currently hurt by unemployment and reduced income, the Ryan budget would make things worse by gutting Medicare and Medicaid and calling for massive cuts in education, emergency food assistance, and other necessities. These cuts go well beyond those agreed to in the Budget Control Act of 2011, in part because the Ryan budget calls for significantly higher levels of defense spending – increasing defense funding by \$228 billion over the next ten years *above the pre-sequestration baseline* – reneging on the deficit reduction deal agreed to last summer and forcing the outright elimination of many important government functions.

At the same time that it proposes huge spending cuts that will harm low-income and middle-class Americans, the Ryan budget would give massive tax cuts to corporations and wealthy individuals that need them the least. Rather than reduce deficits or restore fiscal responsibility, the Ryan budget seems aimed primarily at appeasing the radical visions of some to starve many functions of the federal government out of existence.

We are particularly troubled by the following aspects of the Ryan House budget proposal:

- **Medicare:** Like the proposal in the House-passed FY2012 budget resolution, this newest budget breaks America's promise to seniors and jeopardizes their health. The proposal to raise the Medicare eligibility age while repealing the Affordable Care Act would leave countless 65-66 year olds without coverage. At the same time, it would eliminate the guarantee of Medicare for people now under age 55, replacing it with a system of vouchers that would fail to keep pace with increased medical costs and would leave the existing Medicare system less viable for its remaining patients.
- **Medicaid:** The Ryan budget's proposal to convert Medicaid into a block grant to states would result in more than \$800 billion in cuts and would do nothing to reduce health care costs. These cuts would have devastating effects on the health care of the millions of children, seniors, and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid. The Urban Institute

found that a similar block grant proposal in last year's House budget resolution would have caused 14 to 27 million low-income Americans to lose coverage by 2021.

- **SNAP:** The Ryan budget would cut SNAP (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) by \$134 billion over the next ten years by converting the program into a block grant and imposing burdensome new requirements. This would result in millions of low-income families being thrown off the rolls or having their benefits drastically cut, undoubtedly leading to increased hunger and poverty during difficult economic times.
- **Education:** While details are scarce, the Ryan budget would group education with training, employment, and social services into one budget function that would be cut by about 20 percent. The devastating cuts in education spending would be in addition to the 8 to 9 percent cut that is already scheduled to go into effect as a result of the 2011 sequestration agreement. Pell Grant funds would also face huge cutbacks, potentially denying college access to millions of students. These draconian cuts would reverse our nation's progress on improving student achievement, devastate our nation's education system, and harm America's economic future.
- **Other Vital Services and Programs:** Across the board, the Ryan budget would target disproportionate cuts to countless services and programs that are vital to the communities that we represent. Total cuts in low-income programs, including cuts in both discretionary and entitlement programs, appear likely to account for at least \$3.3 trillion or 62 percent of Representative Ryan's total budget cuts. These cuts will severely jeopardize safety net programs like Head Start, child care, WIC, veterans' assistance, Community Development Block Grants, and jobs programs.
- **Tax Cuts for Millionaires and Billionaires:** Perhaps the most unconscionable aspect of the Ryan budget is that while it would deprive many Americans of the most basic necessities like health care and food assistance, it would drastically lower tax rates in a way that favors the wealthiest Americans. These additional tax cuts would be on top of the average annual tax break of \$125,000 a year that people earning more than \$1 million would receive if – as the Ryan budget also proposes – the Bush tax cuts were made permanent. At the same time, the plan speaks of closing “lobbyist loopholes” in the tax code but does not specify a single one that will be discontinued.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose the Ryan FY2013 budget proposal. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, at (202) 466-6058.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
AFL-CIO  
AIDS United  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

The American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), AFL-CIO  
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers  
APALA Education Fund  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Campaign for America's Future  
Campaign for Community Change  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Community Action Partnership  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
The Education Trust  
The Every Child Matters Education Fund  
Families USA  
Health Care for America Now  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of  
America, UAW  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
League of Women Voters of the U.S.  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Legal Momentum  
Mental Health America  
NAACP  
National Association for College Admission Counseling  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)  
National Education Association  
The National Employment Law Project  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)  
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Rural Education Association  
National Skills Coalition  
National Women's Law Center  
RESULTS: The Power to End Poverty  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute  
United for a Fair Economy  
United Steelworkers  
USAction  
Voices for America's Children