

November 16, 2015

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WASHINGTON, DC 20024

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

p: 202.484.1100  
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The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi,

The Steering Committee of NDD United—representing 2,500 organizations nationwide—applauds Congress for passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA, P.L. 114-74), which raises the spending caps for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and provides balanced sequestration relief to both defense and nondefense discretionary programs. With this deal in place, Congress can now reinvest in critical areas of federal funding that will improve the quality of life and well-being of Americans across the country. In order to realize the BBA's benefit, Congress must work to pass an omnibus spending bill that provides an opportunity for investment and avoids ideological policy riders that may risk ultimate passage of this critical spending measure.

Passage of the BBA provides the communities we represent temporary relief from the austerity measures passed several years ago as part of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA, P.L. 112-25). The effect of austere budgeting has had and will continue to have a real-world impact:

- Education, housing, nutrition, public health, and workforce development programs are unable to meet needs of our people.
- Scientific discovery has been hindered and public health preparedness and response has been weakened.
- Maintenance of air traffic control, weather systems, and National Parks has been deferred.
- Federal justice programs have not adequately supported states and localities in carrying out proven programs and new innovations to protect victims, prevent crime, and reduce recidivism.
- Programs designed to aid those affected by disaster and conflict have been impeded, compromising our ability to address emergencies around the world.

With the passage of the BBA comes the responsibility of Congress to develop more thoughtful fiscal policies that help ensure our nation remains a global leader for generations to come. Ideological policy riders would threaten the passage of an omnibus that is critically needed to fund federal investments. Indeed, Congress has the right to alter laws or propose new ones through regular order in authorizing committees, not through undermining the appropriations process, which is currently operating under a condensed timeline.

Finally, we call on you and your colleagues to move beyond crisis budgeting and continuing resolutions (CR), which do not offer the reliable and predictable funding required for federal program resources to be responsibly and effectively managed and meet emerging needs. CRs also make it difficult to provide additional resources, even where there is strong support for doing so on both sides of the aisle, and to reduce or eliminate spending where it is no longer needed. Accordingly, we urge passage of an omnibus spending package before the existing CR expires on December 11.

It is time to end the era of austerity and start investing in our nation for fiscal year 2016 and beyond.

Sincerely,



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Co-Chair, NDD United  
Executive Director, Coalition for Health Funding



Joel Packer  
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Executive Director, Committee for Education Funding



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Steering Committee, NDD United  
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Jenny Collier  
Steering Committee, NDD United  
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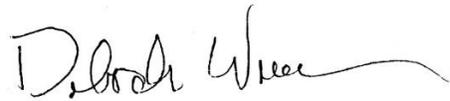
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Executive Vice President, The Leadership Conference on  
Civil and Human Rights

Cc: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations Chairs and Ranking Members