

October 6, 2016

600 MARYLAND AVE SW
SUITE 835W
WASHINGTON, DC 20024

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

p: 202.484.1100
f: 202.484.1244

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

NDD United—representing 2,500 organizations nationwide—strongly supports your efforts to draft and enact omnibus spending legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2017 before the continuing resolution expires December 9, 2016. As demonstrated by the last two years, the remaining months of the 114th Congress allow adequate time to complete the appropriations process. Punting decisions about FY 2017 funding until next year is an abdication of Congress's constitutional responsibilities, and an affront to effective governance.

In drafting such legislation, we urge you to adopt the highest possible 302(b) allocations and use all feasible offsetting savings in light of the Budget Control Act's (BCA) austere spending caps for nondefense discretionary (NDD) spending. As a direct result of the BCA and sequestration, funding for NDD programs has been cut more than 13 percent since 2010, in real terms. In fact, funding for NDD programs as a share of the nation's overall economy is near a historic low. NDD United has documented the consequences of the BCA for five years, and has found that these cuts consistently undermine Americans' health, safety, and security. While insufficient to fully restore all NDD programs, the FY 2017 302(b) allocations—together with offsetting savings—represent the best opportunity to invest in key priorities, including veterans' health care, medical research, law enforcement, student aid, public health, infrastructure, affordable housing, lifesaving international development assistance, and more.

Further, it remains critical that the omnibus spending legislation is not politicized by ideologically motivated policy riders. Such riders will threaten the legislation's passage and risk a government shutdown. Indeed, Congress has the authority to alter current policies and propose new ones through the legislative process. But attempting to do so through the appropriations process risks Americans' access to important programs they rely upon every day.

No country runs effectively on autopilot. It is unnecessary, unproductive, and irresponsible to prolong the debate about FY 2017 spending beyond December. We strongly support your efforts to clear the decks and finalize FY 2017 spending legislation before the 114th Congress adjourns. In so doing, the 115th Congress will be free to focus on restoring stability and certainty to the FY 2018 appropriations process, and lay the groundwork for replacing sequestration in FY 2018 and beyond.

For more information, please contact Emily Holubowich at eholubowich@dc-crd.com or visit www.nddunited.org.