



July 13, 2017

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The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

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Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

NDD United—representing more than 2,000 national, state, and local organizations—is concerned that the House Appropriations Committee’s current path forward on fiscal year (FY) 2018 spending bills undermines critical nondefense discretionary (NDD) functions of the federal government. Specifically, setting a spending level for defense that violates the Budget Control Act’s (BCA) spending caps and breaks the longstanding, bipartisan parity principle between defense and NDD programs could lead to a breakdown of the appropriations process and risk a fiscal showdown this fall. We strongly urge lawmakers to avoid making further reductions in these programs and work together in a bipartisan fashion to replace the scheduled sequestration cuts through a package that is balanced—both in how such relief is paid for and how it is applied to defense and NDD programs.

The FY 2018 302(b) allocations adopted by the House Appropriations Committee would increase defense funding by \$72 billion while cutting NDD funding by \$5 billion, relative to the BCA limits. These important NDD investments in education and job training, public health, safety and security, infrastructure and housing, National Parks and environmental protection, and medical and scientific research, to name a few examples, have already sustained significant cuts as a result of the Budget Control Act and sequestration. The cap on NDD funding in FY 2017 is 13.4 percent below 2010 levels, adjusted for inflation. Without action to stop sequestration, in FY 2018 NDD programs are projected to decline to 3.1 percent of GDP—equal to the lowest level in more than 50 years.


The House’s 302(b) allocations double down on sequestration. The funding reductions in FY 2018 for most NDD programs outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs (which is part of NDD and has already received a funding increase for 2018) would be cut by \$22 billion after adjusting for inflation. If these spending levels were enacted, NDD programs would fall to more than one-fifth below their 2010 level, after adjusting for inflation. These cuts—on top of the last seven years of cuts to NDD programs—are dragging down our economic recovery, hampering business growth and development, weakening public health preparedness and response, reducing resources for our nation’s schools and colleges, compromising federal oversight and fraud recovery, hindering scientific discovery, eroding our infrastructure, and threatening our ability to address emergencies around the world. Simply put, these cuts are bad for the country and are not sustainable.

Congress and the President must work together to protect NDD programs from further cuts and end sequestration. Such sequestration relief must be equally balanced between nondefense and defense programs, as strong investments in both NDD and defense are necessary to keep our country competitive, safe, and secure. We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation, and are eager



to work with you to help produce another bipartisan budget agreement to protect critical nondefense discretionary programs.

Sincerely,



Emily J. Holubowich  
Founding Co-Chair, NDD United



Joel Packer  
Founding Co-Chair, NDD United



Sheryl Cohen  
Co-Chair, NDD United



Ben Corb  
Co-Chair, NDD United