

FACES OF AUSTERITY 2.0:

How Budget Cuts Continue to Make Us Sicker, Poorer, and Less Secure

In 2013, NDD United published its first “Faces of Austerity” report, documenting the impact of federal budget cuts on Americans and their communities. This follow-up report tells the stories of Americans from big cities and rural towns alike who continue to feel the effects of budget cuts. For more on their experiences and the online report, visit www.RaisetheCaps.org

Cuts Hurt Education Equity

Featuring Shawna Hanson, mother of child with autism, from Missoula, Montana, and Jim Stefankiewicz, Superintendent of Ocean Township School District in Oakhurst, New Jersey

Shawna Hanson’s son suffers from autism that requires a secure environment and properly trained staff to keep him and his classmates safe. Without sufficient funding, their school district struggled to meet requirements set out by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Across the country in New Jersey, short-funding IDEA creates similar struggles for Superintendent Jim Stefankiewicz.

Cuts Hurt Addiction Prevention

Featuring Sara M. Howe, Chief Executive Officer at the Illinois Association for Behavioral Health in Springfield, Illinois

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that as many as 91 Americans die each day as the result of an opioid overdose. In local communities, organizations like the Illinois Association for Behavioral Health, led by CEO Sara Howe, leverage federal funding to build prevention efforts through programs like the Teen Institute, which trains teens to take action to reduce addiction. Reliant upon a federal block grant for 95 percent of their budget, the program has been hit hard as funding fails to keep pace with inflation.

Cuts Hurt Students Pursuing Higher Education

Featuring Tiffany Gusbeth, Assistant Director of Student Success Services at the American Indian College Fund in Denver, Colorado

Tiffany Gusbeth helps thousands of teenagers pursue a college degree through scholarships, thanks to her hard work and the Federal Work Study program that enabled her to pursue her own degree. Many future leaders like Tiffany, who was raised in a single-parent home where financial support for higher education was not an option, may not be so fortunate without the availability of adequate Work Study assistance.

Cuts Hurt Emergency Preparedness

Featuring Phil Maytubby, Director of Public Health Protection, Oklahoma City/County Health Department, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Oklahoma City/County Health Department director Phil Maytubby is one of the many health officials across the nation tasked with upholding emergency response and recovery systems that are vital to protecting communities from public health emergencies such as disease outbreaks. More than half of local health departments rely on federal funding alone to prepare for public health emergencies, but cuts have reduced staff by roughly 20 percent.

Cuts Hurt Individuals Seeking Better Job Opportunities

Featuring Thomas Hudson, Co-Op Intern at GE Appliances, and Michael Gritton, Executive Director at KentuckianaWorks in Louisville, Kentucky

Current GE Appliances staff member Thomas Hudson is one of thousands of Kentuckians who left a low-skill job to improve their productivity by entering a training program designed to give them the skills to ascend to at least a “middle-skill” job through education and training. These programs rely heavily on the federal government for funding, and directors such as Michael Gritton of the KentuckianaWorks program have had their federal funding slashed under austere spending caps, resulting in real reductions in capacity.

Cuts Hurt Hungry Seniors

Featuring Eve Anthony, Vice President, Athens Community Council on Aging, Athens, Georgia

In 2014, CEO Eve Anthony described the impact that across the board sequestration cuts had on Georgia’s Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA). Since then, continued austerity has led to the erosion of programs such as senior employment that improve senior independence, and reduced the number of meals supported by their Meals on Wheels program, leaving many seniors on waitlists, or worse, ineligible for waitlists.

Cuts Hurt Juvenile Justice

Featuring Matt Reed, Director YMCA of Greater Louisville, Kentucky and Cassidy, a recipient of juvenile justice diversion services

Through most of her childhood, Cassidy lived in a haven for drug dealers, traffickers, and buyers, and would routinely miss 40-70 days of school per year. If it were not for the federally-funded assistance of YMCA of Greater Louisville, Cassidy would have likely ended up in a juvenile detention center. Instead, Cassidy was able to enroll in the Opportunity Program’s truancy diversion program—a program designed to aid first-time and non-serious juvenile offenders. Now because of federal budget cuts, the program that helped Cassidy is at risk.

Cuts Hurt Access to Affordable Childcare

Featuring Melissa Armas, Mother of Leila Armas and member of Educational Enrichment Systems (EES), San Diego, California Parent Voices Chapter, Chula Vista, California and Altonara Bush, Mother of Daylen Bush, Member, National Women’s Law Center’s Child Care Network, Belle Glades, Florida

For almost a century, the federal government has provided funding to support child care for families in need to allow them to pursue work, training, or educational opportunities. However, funding has failed to keep pace with need, putting the ratio of children who receive care through federal assistance to those who qualify for care at less than one in six. Melissa and Altonara tell about their struggles finding childcare, including five to seven year waiting lists.

Cuts Hurt the Young and Homeless

Joseph Hill-Coles, Community Navigator for Youth Service, Inc., Former Resident at Project HOME, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

After Joseph Hill-Coles spent part of his young adulthood living on the streets of Philadelphia, he found himself at Project HOME, one of the few federally supported housing options for single youth in the city. Joseph attributes his current success to Project HOME, and Joseph is now responsible for connecting homeless youth with the resources they need to get off the streets at Youth, Inc., where he continues to fight to help Philadelphia’s youth gain access to a dwindling number of housing vouchers as they pursue work.

Cuts Hurt National Parks

Featuring Jim Northup, Retired Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park, Luray, Virginia

Jim Northup, retired Superintendent of Shenandoah National Park, was hit hard by a five percent budget cut due to sequestration in 2013, which greatly inhibited National Parks sites across the nation to preserve historic, natural, and cultural resources for future generations. Continued budget cuts have resulted in a reduction in the number of rangers and created a backlog of maintenance that will take years to address.