May 15, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The 760 undersigned organizations—representing the full breadth of diverse programs that support all of America, every day—are deeply alarmed by calls from some in Congress for very deep cuts in non-defense programs (often referred to as non-defense discretionary appropriations or simply “NDD”) for the next fiscal year and possibly beyond. Such cuts would be disastrous for the capacity of the federal government to serve the public, assist those in need, fuel innovation, and address national and global threats.

Non-defense appropriations are a small part of the federal budget—less than one-sixth—yet they fund a wide range of important programs and services that make America run. Examples include: scientific and medical research, medical care for veterans, environmental protections, assistance with housing and child care for low-income families, rural development, support for K-12 education and skills training, financial aid for college students, infrastructure investments in things like sewage treatment, safe drinking water, flood control and navigation improvements, diplomacy, humanitarian aid and development, courts and reentry programs, assistance for small businesses, and other programs for seniors, public health, and many more.

Due in large part to the Budget Control Act of 2011 and subsequent sequestration, NDD funding has not grown significantly. In fact, adjusted for rising costs and population growth, NDD funding is below where it was in 2010. Measured relative to the size of the economy, NDD funding is lower than the average from 1977 through 2022. The turn to austerity following the Great Recession, headlined by the Budget Control Act, had a detrimental impact on the recovery and overall economy, contributing to lower economic growth, higher unemployment rates, and poorer economic outcomes. Constrained NDD funding over the past decade means that many unmet needs have not been addressed or have grown. These NDD programs need more federal investment, not less.
In addition to pressing for deep NDD spending cuts, some policymakers have proposed multi-year statutory caps on appropriations, perhaps more stringent than those set in the Budget Control Act. Experience has demonstrated arbitrary and deep spending caps are equally problematic. Setting caps on discretionary spending for multiple years at a time is unwise and very dangerous since it is unrealistic to attempt to anticipate circumstances and needs further into the future. Doing so would create the risk of serious shortfalls.

Together we call on Congress to reject cuts to NDD appropriations and instead set funding for fiscal year 2024 at a level that recognizes both rising costs and the need for investment in programs important to fostering economic growth and meeting human needs. This principle should apply to all mechanisms used to set appropriations totals, including statutory caps, congressional budget resolutions, and the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

American Epilepsy Society
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geophysical Union (AGU)
American Geriatrics Society
American Heart Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine
American Leprosy Missions
American Library Association
American Lung Association
American Mathematical Society
American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)
American Mosquito Control Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physiological Society
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association Services
American Public Health Association
American Rivers
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR)
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society for Virology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology (ASCP)
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Human Genetics
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Neuroradiology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Society of Primatologists (ASP)
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American String Teachers Association
American Urogynecology Society
Americans for the Arts
AnitaB.org
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
APLA Health
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Arbor Research Collaborative for Health
Arizona Center for Economic Progress
Arthritis Foundation
Arts Education in Maryland Schools
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Associate Vice President, Government and External Relations, ETS
Associated Executives of Mosquito Control in New Jersey
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS)
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association for Psychological Science
Association for Women in Science
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities (AAU)
Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools (AMHPS)
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
Association of School Business Officials
International (ASBO)
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of University Professors of Neurology
Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology
Atlanta University Center Consortium
Atlantis Industries, Inc.
Autism Society of America
AVAC
Axis Advocacy
AZCASE
Basic Education Coalition
Baylor College of Medicine
BCCIL
Big Cities Health Coalition
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Science
BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Boys Town
BrightFocus Foundation
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
CA CASE
CAEAR Coalition
California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice
California Music Educators Association
Carbon180
CARE
Care 2 Prevent
CareerSource Capital Region
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Justice and Human Dignity
Chalk Talk Science Project
Champaign County Health Care Consumers
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Chiefs for Change
Child Neurology Foundation
Childhood Education International
Children’s Advocacy Institute
Children’s Action Alliance

Children's Hospital Association
Christian Connections for International Health
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
City Year, Inc.
ClearCure Biosciences, Inc.
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Coalition for National Science Funding
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Code.org
CoGenerate
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Committee for Children
Committee for Education Funding (CEF)
Community Behavioral Healthcare Association (CBHA)
Computing Research Association
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Conservation Legacy
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cornell University
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Council of the Great City Schools
Council on Undergraduate Research
COVID Survivors for Change
Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)
Crop Science Society of America
cureCADASIL
Cyb Llings, Inc
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Defenders of Wildlife
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Digestive Diseases National Coalition (DDNC)
Disabilities Law Program of Community Legal Aid Society
Disability Law Center
Disability Law Center Massachusetts
Disability Law Colorado
Disability Rights Arkansas
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National Coalition for Literacy
National Coalition of STD Directors
National College Attainment Network
National Community Development Association
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
National Council for Diversity in Health Professions (NCDHP)
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Maryland Chapter
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Maryland Chapter
National Health Council
National Healthy Start Association
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Disease Research Interchange
National Eating Disorders Association
National Ecstasy Association
National Employment Law Project
National Harm Reduction Coalition
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health Council
National Harm Reduction Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
NCJW PA
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Network on Aging
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization for Tardive Dyskinesia
National Organization for Women
National Pancreas Foundation (NPF)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
National Psoriasis Foundation
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Health Association
National Safety Council
National Skills Coalition
National Summer Learning Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Task Group / ID & Dementia Practices
National Women's Law Center
Native American Disability Law Center
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Natural Science Collections Alliance
NCJW PA
Nebraska CASE - NASES
NELA Alliance aka Northeast Louisiana Economic Alliance
Nephcure Kidney International
Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center
Never Use Alone Inc.
New Jersey Mosquito Control Association
New Leaders
New York Academy of Medicine
New York Council Of Administrators of Special Education
Newfield CSD
NH Association of Special Education Administrators
NMAC
North American Vascular Biology Organization
North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence
North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association
North Carolina Music Educators Association
North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project
Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases
Northern California Innocence Project
Northern Illinois University
Northwest Michigan Works!
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
NREA
NREAC
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)
Oakland County Michigan Works!
OCHIN
Ohio Innocence Project
Ohio's Hospice
OHSU
Oklahoma Disability Law Center
OraSure Technologies Inc
Oregon Music Education Association
Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine (TUCVM)
UAB Heersink School of Medicine
UC San Francisco
UCLA
UMass Chan Medical School
UnidosUS
United to Beat Malaria
University of California System
University of California, San Diego
University of Colorado System
University of Connecticut, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
University of Michigan
University of Rochester
University of Virginia
Upper Peninsula Michigan Works!
Urban Education Network of Iowa (UEN)
Urban Underground
UsAgainstAlzheimer's
USAging
USF School of Law Racial Justice Clinic
UVA Health
Vector Disease Control International
Vel R. Phillips School
Vermont Arts Council
Virginia CASE (VCASE)
Virginia Music Educators Association
Voices for National Service
Voices for Progress
Voices of Hope, Inc.
Warm Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia (wAIHA) Warriors
We Are TB
Weed Science Society of America
West Virginia University
Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine
Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
Wisconsin Music Educators Association
WomenHeart
Women's Refugee Commission
Workforce Development 83
Workforce Development Board #51
Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio
Workforce Development Board SDA-83, Inc.
Workforce Operations Area 61
World Learning
World Vision
WURRLYedu
YMCA of the USA
Young People in Recovery
Youth First
YouthBuild USA

cc:  Chair Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Committee
     Vice Chair Susan Collins, Senate Appropriations Committee
     Chair Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee
     Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Committee