

Month Day, Year

600 MARYLAND AVE SW  
SUITE 835W  
WASHINGTON, DC 20024

Dear Member of Congress,

Discretionary programs, including nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs—ranging from education and job training, to housing and science, to natural resources and veterans services, to public health, safety and security—have been cut dramatically and disproportionately in recent years as lawmakers work to reduce the deficit, even though experts across the political spectrum agree these programs aren't a driving factor behind our nation's mid- and long-term fiscal challenges. The undersigned XXXX national, state, and local organizations, representing the hundreds of millions of Americans who support and benefit from NDD programs, urge you to replace sequestration with a balanced approach to deficit reduction that takes into account the deep cuts NDD has already incurred since 2010. We also urge you to ensure such sequestration relief is equally balanced between NDD and defense programs; a parity precedent set in the 2013 Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) negotiated by Senator Patty Murray and Congressman Paul Ryan.

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This "Murray-Ryan" deal provided two years of sequestration relief, temporarily masking sequestration's true impact. With sequestration relief expiring in fiscal year 2016 and appropriations bills now being written to the sequestered spending caps, we are seeing the difficult tradeoffs necessitated by woefully inadequate and historically low levels of spending after years of deficit reduction. In fact, current NDD funding is the lowest level on record dating back to the Eisenhower administration, relative to the size of the economy.

As illustrated in the NDD United impact report, [Faces of Austerity](#), and other accounts from across the NDD sectors, real Americans are feeling the negative effects of austerity. Elementary and secondary education, housing, and workforce training programs are unable to meet need. 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 haven't adequately support states and localities in meeting needs of law enforcement and crime victims. Programs designed to aid foreign victims of war and hunger are falling short, compromising our ability to address emergencies around the world.

Cuts to these and other vital NDD programs exemplify the need to replace sequestration with a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include further cuts to NDD programs, which have already done their part to reduce the deficit. 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. There is bipartisan agreement that sequestration is bad policy and ultimately hurts our nation. It's time to end the era of austerity.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact NDD Co-Chairs Emily Holubowich at [eholubowich@dc-crd.com](mailto:eholubowich@dc-crd.com) or Joel Packer at [jpacker@cef.org](mailto:jpacker@cef.org).

Sincerely,

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