

Nondefense Discretionary (NDD) Spending Advocacy Letter: Raise the Caps

Email: Happy Monday! In March, Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network signed onto the [letter](#) below alongside 2,000 other national, state, and local organizations to call for a bipartisan budget deal to raise the caps on federal nondefense discretionary (NDD) spending. As the September 30th funding deadline approaches, NDD United would like to remind Congress about the need to “Raise the Caps” before any final spending legislation is enacted. Thus, we are recirculating the letter on Capitol Hill when they return from August recess. We are also collecting new signatures for those who did not sign on last time. If your organization has state and/or local affiliates or you notice that other organizations in your community are missing, please encourage them to join the [letter](#) now by completing the form [HERE](#). Our goal is to distribute the updated letter along with “Raise the Caps” hats on Capitol Hill when Congress returns from August recess. We will continue to be in touch about details for the day.

Email: Last march WAAN signed on to a national letter (please see the link below) advocating to raise the caps on non-discretionary federal funding. GWAAR did as well. The letter will be recirculated to Congress in August. I am writing to ask that you consider having your AAA sign on to the letter as it goes to Capitol Hill again. If you open the link to the letter you can see the organizations, organized by state, that did sign on. I have been impressed by the list from Wisconsin. I hope you can join us as sign-on organizations in this second round and help extend the list by including the AAA's from the two largest counties in Wisconsin. Thanks. Bob Kellerman

Dear Representative/Senator:

The 2,000 undersigned national, state, and local organizations urge you to help ensure adequate funding for programs funded through annual appropriations, by continuing the bipartisan practice of providing relief from sequestration budget cuts and opposing any new efforts to cut these programs more deeply. These “nondefense discretionary” (NDD) programs serve many vital national needs but have been subject to repeated cuts over the past six years, including through the appropriations caps and sequestration process established by the 2011 Budget Control Act. Full sequestration returns in fiscal year (FY) 2018, when the two-year relief provided by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 expires. Congress should avoid making further reductions in these programs and work 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. In doing so, we ask that you consider the following:

1. **NDD programs are essential to national security.** The fundamental job of the federal government is to secure the safety of its citizens at home and abroad. But America’s day-to-day security requires more than military might. NDD programs support our economy, drive our global competitiveness, and help Americans lead healthy, productive lives. Both the Budget Control Act and the Bipartisan Budget Acts of 2013 and 2015 recognized that defense and nondefense programs both contribute to the American way of life and to our security. In FY 2018, lawmakers should continue to adhere to this “parity principle” in fiscal policies, including a sequestration relief package.
2. **NDD programs have already been cut too much.** Despite the vast array of important, effective services provided through these programs—infrastructure and housing, veterans services, education and job training, National Parks, medical and scientific research, and public health, safety and security, to give just some examples—overall NDD appropriations 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. As a result of sequestration and other austerity measures enacted beginning in 2011, 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.
3. **NDD cuts have consequences.** As illustrated in NDD United’s impact report, *Faces of Austerity*, and other accounts from across the NDD sectors, Americans are feeling the negative effects of the Budget Control Act’s austere spending caps and sequestration. These cuts 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.

Deficit reduction measures enacted since 2010 have come overwhelmingly from spending cuts, with the ratio of spending cuts to revenue increases far beyond those recommended by bipartisan groups of experts. And there is bipartisan agreement that sequestration is bad policy and ultimately hurts our nation. **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.

If you have questions about this letter, please contact the NDD United Co-Chairs, Emily Holubowich (eholubowich@dc-crd.com), Joel Packer (packer418@gmail.com), Sheryl Cohen (cohen@cef.org), or Ben Corb (bcorb@asbmb.org). An electronic copy of this letter, as well as *Faces of Austerity*, is available at www.nddunited.org.

Wisconsin

9to5 Wisconsin
American Lung Association in Wisconsin
Association for Prevention of Family Violence (APFV)
AVAIL, Inc.
Beloit Domestic Violence Survivor Center
Bolton Refuge House, Inc.
City of Wausau Community Development
Commission on Aging, Barron County
Community Referral Agency
Disability Rights Wisconsin
Dover Healing House, a program of Women's Resource Center of Racine
End Domestic Abuse WI
Family Advocates, Inc.
Friends of Abused Families
Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity, Inc.
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.
Housing Authority of the City of Waukesha
Madison Area Bus Advocates
Marquette University
Menominee Indian School District
New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers
Northwoods Women, Inc.
Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.
People Against a Violent Environment
Prevent Blindness Wisconsin
Rainbow House Domestic Abuse Services, Inc.
School District of Florence County
Teach For America, Milwaukee
Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Vernon County Domestic Abuse Project
Washburn County Aging and Disabilities Committee
Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network
Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials
Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association
Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support
Wisconsin PTA