



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

October 4, 2017

Re: House FY 2018 Budget Resolution

Dear Representative:

The undersigned Co-Chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Fiscal Policy Task Force urge you to vote against the House FY 2018 Budget Resolution. The improperly named “*Building a Better America*” budget would undermine the foundation of community living for people with disabilities. It paves the way to fast-track deep cuts to a wide range of programs that people with disabilities rely on for their health, safety, and wellbeing, while setting up massive tax cuts for the most prosperous.

CCD is the nation’s largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the education, self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

The budget’s premise that the government’s role in the lives of our citizens is harmful is a deeply flawed. In fact, for people with disabilities, federal government programs provide services and protections that provide the opportunity to live dignified and independent lives. Yet this budget seeks trillions in cuts to essential programs and endorses budgetary changes that promise lasting harm.

We are particularly concerned about the damaging effects that would be caused by the following proposals in the House Budget:

- Non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs that include education, housing, health, employment, and transportation are cut by \$1.3 trillion while simultaneously increasing defense spending by \$930 billion.
- Medicaid and other health care programs are cut by \$1.5 trillion.
- A directive to the Ways and Means Committee to find *at least* \$52 billion in cuts, putting critical programs within the Committee’s jurisdiction at risk.
- \$4 billion in cuts to Social Security by preventing unemployed workers with disabilities from receiving both the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and unemployment insurance benefits they have earned.
- Cutting Medicare by \$487 billion and converting it to a premium support system in which seniors would have capped amounts of funding to purchase either a private plan or traditional Medicare.
- Endorsing a balanced budget constitutional amendment for ratification by the states that would likely make recessions longer and deeper and harm essential federal programs.

- A policy on unauthorized appropriations that could effectively end numerous federal programs and remove decision making from appropriators.
- Undermining the federal regulatory system that helps to ensure accountability and transparency.

People with disabilities, already disproportionately in the lowest economic rung, would be pushed further down the ladder of inequality since the House Budget exacerbates the steady erosion in funding for programs serving low income people. According to data from the Coalition on Human Needs, 80% of the programs serving low people have been cut since 2010 when taking inflation into account. More than half were cut by 25%.

That this budget would allow fast tracking of such drastic cuts for people with disabilities while providing for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the most prosperous Americans is simply unconscionable. According to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center's preliminary analysis of the unified tax plan released last week, taxpayers in the top 1 percent (incomes above \$730,000) would receive 80% of all the tax cuts after ten years. Not only would the unified plan worsen the already shocking levels of wealth inequality in the country, but it would result in the loss of \$2.4 trillion in revenue over the first ten 10 years.

People with disabilities do not accept the simple presumption that tax cuts spur sufficient economic growth to make up for the lost revenue to the federal government. There is ample evidence proving otherwise. In fact, this budget violates several other [CCD principles for tax reform](#) signed by 27 national disability organizations.

People with disabilities need a bipartisan budget that protects Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security and provides commensurate increases for both defense and nondefense (NDD) spending. Instead, this budget targets the most vital mandatory programs for people with disabilities and doubles down on harmful cuts to NDD programs. Please reject this budget and work across the political aisle on solutions that will address our nation's priorities without targeting people with disabilities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the Fiscal Policy Task Force co-chairs: Donna Meltzer, 202-506-5813 or dmeltzer@nacdd.org; Kim Musheno, 301-588-8252 or kmusheno@aucd.org; Annie Acosta, 202-783-2229 or acosta@thearc.org; and Lisa Ekman, 202-550-9996 or Lisa.Ekman@nosscr.org.

Sincerely,

Kim Musheno, Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Donna Meltzer, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
Annie Acosta, The Arc of the United States
Lisa Ekman, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives