



May 22, 2014

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health &
Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health &
Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce, the Coalition for Health Funding, and the Committee for Education Funding—[on behalf of more than 1,050 education, health and workforce training organizations](#)—earlier this year urged Congress to increase funding for workforce investment, health, and education. We are aware that the Committee faces significant fiscal constraints under the existing discretionary caps. We offer support for the discretionary allocation of \$156.773 billion for the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill, given it maintains funding for these critical programs and is an improvement over the House's allocation. However, we remain concerned that such levels are insufficient to meet our nation's needs, and we urge Congress to work together to end sequestration and raise the discretionary spending caps in FY 2016 and beyond.

Since FY 2010, discretionary programs have absorbed nearly three-quarters of the funding cuts made under the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution, the Budget Control Act, the American Taxpayer Relief Act, and other austerity measures, including sequestration. The discretionary spending cap established by the Bipartisan Budget Act provided some temporary relief, but remains too low to restore funding for core government functions. Continued stagnation will cause real and irreparable hardship for millions of Americans in the long-term.

The Senate's flat 302(b) allocation in FY 2015—which remains approximately 4 percent below FY 2010 levels and nearly 12 percent below 2010, when adjusted for inflation—will require continued cuts to job training, health, and education programs that put Americans' public health at risk and stymie medical progress, harm the economy by making it more difficult to provide more people with needed job training, reduce the quality of education for our nation's schoolchildren, and make it more expensive to attend college.

We support your efforts to protect these and other domestic programs from additional cuts. Nevertheless, the existing austerity frame is unsustainable. Under current law, the funding

available to meet basic education, health, and employment and training needs is simply too low, forcing the Committee to set allocations that are unrealistic. And it only gets worse from here: while we have some limited sequestration relief in FY 2015, we face the full impact of sequestration again in FY 2016 and for years to come. This is unacceptable. We urge Members of Congress to work together to put an end to this era of austerity.

Sincerely,

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