

Restore Funding For Children's Programs—Oppose the 2018 Budget



Support Robust Funding for Programs that Impact Children. Reject the Administration's FY 2018 budget outline and its extreme cuts. Members of Congress must lead the way in prioritizing kids and support adequate funding levels for children. The first step is to reject the administration's 2018 budget. We are asking Congress to lift the budget caps for Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) spending. Any increase in defense spending must maintain parity with non-defense spending. Also Congress must protect the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG),

The National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare holds to the principle that funding decisions should be based upon the cost of effective services, the benefits such services are expected to bring, and the likely consequences (including cost) of deferring or failing to make investments in children, youth and families. CWLA strongly supports robust funding for programs that impact children's development and well-being, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition, housing and welfare.

The proposed 2018 Administration budget would target the Department of Health and Human Services to dramatic cuts. At least some of these cuts would result in reductions of 23 percent compared to the last fully enacted 2016 totals or 18% from the current 2017 budget. As an alternative, some programs may be eliminated.

If Congress fails to lift the binding caps on appropriations set through 2021, the cuts to children's programs will have real consequences for real people; children and families. Congress must raise the caps and restore the across-the-board cuts that have been imposed on key children's programs in the past five years including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Child Welfare Services (Title IV-B part 1), Promoting Safe and Stable Families (Title IV-B part 2), Adoption Incentives Funds, Adoption Opportunities Act, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, 21st Century Learning Centers, IDEA Part C for Infants and Toddlers, McKinney-Vento Homeless students services, Head Start, and child care funds .

CWLA, as part of the Children's Budget Coalition – made up of over 50 children focused organizations – strongly supports robust funding for programs that impact children's development and well-being, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition, housing and welfare. There are more than 200 distinct programs that benefit children and families and the Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health & Human Services and Education, Agriculture, Transportation Housing & Urban Development, and Commerce, Justice & Science have jurisdiction over many of these critical programs.

While we are aware of the tight budgetary environment, we are still very concerned with two disinvestment trends for programs that benefit children:

1. Total government spending on children in the last five years, when adjusted for inflation, is down 9.4 percent, more than twice the rate of overall spending decreases of 4 percent. These totals include mandatory and discretionary spending as well as American Recovery & Reinvestment Act outlays. We are concerned with these disproportionate cuts to children's programs and the long-term impact they will have on the future of our nation's children and families.

2. The overall share of federal spending for children is only 7.89 percent of total government spending, which is down from 8.29 percent in 2014. Furthermore, over the last five years, the federal share of discretionary spending dedicated to children has dropped by 7.2 percent. We are concerned with this disinvestment in children, which has not kept pace with overall increases in federal spending during the same time.

If Congress fails to lift the binding caps on appropriations set through 2021, the cuts to children's programs will have real consequences for real people – especially teachers, young children in low income families, and students with special needs. The caps are scheduled to rise by approximately 2 percent per year which is roughly enough to begin keeping up with projected inflation, but not enough to also cover population growth or other rising needs of children.

We need to advance a child welfare continuum of care: prevention, intervention, placement and permanency: prevent child abuse *before it happens*, intervention to keep families together when it is best for the child, placement in foster which must be short and *must be quality care*, and permanency for families that reunify, adopt, or are kinship families and secure a future for youth who exit to adulthood—whatever is best for the child.

Many of these programs are integral part of a child abuse prevention strategy. If we are willing to invest in prevention we can prevent some of the children in these families from entering foster care in the future.

We cannot continue down this path – our children deserve better.