



March 25, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 2 million members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), I urge you to oppose the harmful resolutions for FY 2016 introduced by Budget Committee Chairman Price and to support the alternatives introduced by the House Democratic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Chairman Price's budgets exacerbate income-equality, hurt the economic security of low and moderate-income people in America, and create serious barriers to raising wages for workers.

The budgets cut over \$5.3 trillion dollars in program funding, including funding that supports job-creating infrastructure investments, job training, education, health care, food and lunch programs that help children. These programs provide critical support to workers and their families, especially those who are forced to live on inadequate wages. In addition, the proposals contain no new revenues and include massive tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. In fact, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), over 69 percent of the non-defense cuts come from programs that support low and moderate income population, demonstrating that the budgets do not prioritize the needs of working families.

A significant portion of these cuts come from health care programs. The budgets repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) with no real plan to replace it, putting coverage for 16.4 million people at risk. In addition, repealing the ACA means we all lose the ability to prevent insurers from discriminating against women and people with pre-existing conditions as well as limiting coverage through lifetime and annual coverage caps.

Cuts to Medicaid are just as significant, totaling about \$1.8 trillion when accounting for the repeal of the ACA's Medicaid expansion. Changes in funding of this magnitude will force states to cut benefits, further restrict eligibility, and reduce provider payments-as well as prevent states from ever building a viable long-term care system for the growing number of people who rely on these services. As a union representing hundreds of thousands of home care workers, we understand the importance of investments in home and community based services that prevent institutionalization. However, the workforce is woefully inadequate to meet demand, largely due to the low wages home care workers receive. The proposed cuts will make it difficult, if not impossible, to appropriately invest in services and the workforce needed to ensure that people can remain in the community or even have basic access to the long term services and supports they require.

Medicare does not fair better in this budget. Not only do the budgets cut Medicare by \$184 billion, they do so by significantly shifting costs to Medicare beneficiaries and they would convert Medicare into a voucher program.

Furthermore, the budgets reduce non-defense discretionary spending by \$759 billion below the already damaging sequestration levels. This funding supports education, research, and infrastructure, all which are essential to economic growth and increasing

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wages for workers. For example, though families and students are struggling to afford higher education, the proposed cuts will either prevent young people from attaining a college degree or force them to take on massive amounts of debt.

Lastly, the austerity-driven budgets not only cut programs that are essential for working people, they fail to invest in new programs to help low and moderate income families. Specifically, the President in his FY 2016 budget calls for \$1.5 billion to expand Head Start for low-income children and a landmark investment in the Child Care and Development Fund to help every eligible family with young children afford high-quality child care. These programs are essential to ensuring that everyday Americans are able to go to work to support their families.

We urge you to oppose Chairman Price's resolutions and instead support the alternatives of the House Democratic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional Progressive Caucus. We must work together to find ways to address the real crisis in America – income inequality, low and stagnant wages – by creating quality jobs for all. The budgets undermine this goal by attacking working families.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and we hope that you stand with us in our opposition to the budgets and in support of an agenda that helps working families. If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 730-7232 or contact by e-mail at steph.sterling@seiu.org.

Sincerely,



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