

As Congress begins to negotiate the federal budget for fiscal year 2018 (FY18), the austerity level “sequestration” budget caps established under the 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA) are once again in force after a partial, two year reprieve. Unless Congress negotiates another agreement to lift these caps, the FY18 budget for non-defense agencies and programs will be constrained to a level even lower than in FY17.

Under that kind of stifling spending limit, Congress cannot fulfill its responsibility for advancing the health and wellbeing of the American people, including continuing to rebuild the budget of the NIH, equipping the CDC to combat deadly infectious health threats and ensuring our other health and research agencies meet their respective missions.

We hope your organization will join a sign-on letter (text below) urging congressional leaders to raise the budget caps.

To join the organizational sign on letter, please email [Jacqueline Lagoy](#) by COB Friday, June 16 and include your organization’s name as you would like it to appear on the letter.

And please share this sign-on letter broadly!

June XX, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leaders McConnell, Pelosi and Schumer,

The undersigned organizations are grateful for your determined and successful efforts to secure an omnibus spending bill in fiscal year 2017 (FY17). On a bipartisan basis, you demonstrated a steadfast commitment to producing a federal budget that is not frozen in time, but rather responds to current and evolving challenges, opportunities and strategic priorities. In that context, we urge you to negotiate another bipartisan budget agreement that advances the nation’s health and raises the non-defense and defense spending caps established under the 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA).

After two rounds of sequestration relief, the sequestration spending caps will come back into full force in FY18, undercutting key national priorities including faster medical progress. We appreciate that the original intent of these caps was to promote fiscal discipline, but the practical effect flouts that intent. While the caps are counterproductive in numerous ways, underinvesting in research is a powerful case in point.

With the FY17 omnibus, the 115th Congress took up the mantle from the 114th and continued to rebuild the budget of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This ongoing effort to provide sustained funding for NIH not only reflects Americans' overwhelming support for faster medical progress, it is also tactical. NIH research catalyzes private sector innovation and creates jobs. And if our nation does not conquer illnesses like Alzheimer's and cancer, the costs of those health threats alone jeopardize our nation's long-term fiscal security. Discretionary funding supports American priorities and fiscal imperatives; the sequestration caps undermine them.

Whether the challenge before us is fiscal, economic, health or security-related, Americans do not acquiesce to threats, we end them. Our nation must not block its own path by forsaking strategic investments. We urge you to forge another bipartisan budget deal that increases the spending caps and overrides sequestration, setting the stage for a safe, prosperous and healthy future.

Sincerely,

[Organizations]