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House Proposal Cuts Millions in Public Goods for West Virginia

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The recent Republican proposal in the U.S. House of Representatives to cut current-year (2011) non-security discretionary funding by 13.8 percent is not well-targeted. It indiscriminately slashes effective programs such as Head Start, education, child care, infrastructure, crime prevention, and energy development that are important for our future economic growth.

Over 1,300 at-risk children up to age 5 in West Virginia could lose education, health, nutrition and other services under Head Start, while 61,000 college students in the state would be affected by a reduction in Pell Grants. The proposal would also end a program that helps low-income families weatherize their homes and permanently reduce their home energy bills, cut federal funds for employment and training services for jobless workers and for clean water and safe drinking water by more than half, and raise the risk that the WIC nutrition program may not be able to serve all eligible low-income women, infants, and children under age 5. In addition, it would cut funds for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by 22 percent, for the Food and Drug Administration by 10 percent, and for the Food Safety Inspection Service by 9 percent. Overall the proposal would reduce non-security discretionary funding for 2011 by \$64 billion.

More than a third of fiscal year 2011 (which began October 1, 2010) has elapsed, but Congress has not yet enacted full-year appropriations. The continuing resolution currently funding government activity expires on March 4. House Republicans are capitalizing on the need to enact appropriations for the rest of fiscal year 2011 to try to impose deep cuts in discretionary funding for 2011. Despite House Republican claims that their proposal returns funding to the “pre-bailout, pre-stimulus” level of 2008, there is no current discretionary funding for bailouts or stimulus that Congress can cut. Instead, the proposed cuts threaten the ability of federal programs to meet important needs in West Virginia and throughout the country.

Table 1 outlines the impact for West Virginia if the House proposal prevails instead of continuing the existing resolution for the rest of fiscal year 2011.

Table 1
Projected Cuts for Selected Programs in West Virginia under H.R. 1
Relative to Current Funding Levels

Program	Funding Cut
Title I Grants & Even Start	-\$4,800,000
Special Education Grants to States	-\$3,700,000
School Improvement	-\$2,200,000
Pell Grants	-\$39,000,000
Tech-Prep Education State Grants	-\$880,000
Workplace Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth	-\$140,000
Workforce Investment Act Job Training	-\$27,500,000
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant	-\$150,000
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant	-\$2,200,000
Public Housing Capital Fund	-\$4,700,000
HOME Investment Partnerships Program	-\$1,300,000
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	-\$22,000,000
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	-\$5,000,000
Community Development Block Grants	-\$17,000,000
Byrne Justice Assistance Grants	-\$900,000

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

These cuts put the burden of deficit reduction on the backs of West Virginia’s most vulnerable citizens. The co-chairs of the president’s deficit commission, and many mainstream economists, warn that slashing spending before the economy is stronger is very likely to put more people out of work and slow the economic recovery.

Congress should adopt a careful and balanced approach to deficit reduction that takes all parts of the budget into consideration. The House continuing resolution fails to meet that test. It would harm millions of children, seniors and people with disabilities and reduce the investments needed for future economic growth and is not a responsible approach to deficit reduction.