

November 15, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

As advocates for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community we represent a diverse community. Many of our constituents rely on services provided with federal tax dollars. In the continuing debate over the federal budget many members of our community, like other Americans, are finding the services they depend on put in jeopardy. From health care outcomes to education and housing many in the LGBT community rely on services and protections provided by the federal government because of a lifetime of discrimination and diminished opportunity. For these reasons we are concerned about cuts to continuing federal funding for vital programs that are in place to help the most vulnerable people and families in the country. In particular the LGBT community will be particularly disadvantaged by the proposed cuts to the following programs:

- **Medical and scientific research:** We know that LGBT people have health disparities and greater levels of disability than the general population.<sup>1</sup> This funding could be life-saving. We need more research and targeted research into the healthcare needs of LGBT people, not less.
- **Education and job training:** LGBT people continue to lack clear federal employment protections and transgender women of color are particularly disadvantaged by job discrimination. Our community needs more job-training and job placement, not less. Vital programs, such as the Department of Labor's Job Corps, One-Stop Centers, and VETS provide important services to job seekers and should see their funding increased, not decreased.
- **Housing and social services:** LGBT people, especially older people, identify affordable housing as a top priority. The need to provide safe, secure and culturally appropriate shelter for LGBT youth and access to affordable housing across the lifespan is critical. Instead of cuts, social services funding should be increased. Funds are also needed to cultural competency training for social service providers. Ryan White HIV/AIDS funded programs could be at risk along with Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. Given that in 2009 black men accounted for 70% of the estimated new HIV infections among all blacks<sup>2</sup> any cuts would be detrimental to Ryan White Minority AIDS Initiative activities.

These are just a few of the programs that could be at risk if Congress imposes cuts to these vital non-defense discretionary programs. Since fiscal year 2010 these programs have experienced an average of a 10% reduction and have already been cut by the Budget Control Act of 2011. These social service programs are not the reasons we have a large public debt and should not be compromised as a symbolic

---

<sup>1</sup> Frederiksen-Goldsen et al., The Aging and Health Report, 2011. Available at [http://caringandaging.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/factsheet\\_keyfindings\\_final.pdf](http://caringandaging.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/factsheet_keyfindings_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/>

show of austerity. While we believe that the long-term future of our nation depends on a sensible budget, we do not agree that balancing the budget and reducing our national debt requires further eroding social safety net programs.

We urge you to find a plan that is balanced and fair, and is not predicated on cuts to critical non-defense discretionary programs.

Advocates for Youth

American Humanist Association

CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers

Colage

Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals

Family Equality Council

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association

Immigration Equality

International Federation of Black Prides

National Black Justice Coalition

National Coalition on LGBT Health

National Council of Jewish Women

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Center for Transgender Equality

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

National Minority AIDS Council

People For the American Way

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders

Transgender Law Center

Unid@s