



Committee on Appropriations – Democrats

NO MONEY SHALL BE DRAWN FROM THE TREASURY BUT IN CONSEQUENCE OF APPROPRIATIONS MADE BY LAW US CONSTITUTION ARTICLE I, SECTION 9, CLAUSE 7



Congresswoman Nita Lowey,
Ranking Democratic Member

Republican Appropriations Bills:

Shortchanging America's Future, Serving Special Interests

“At a time when the need for aggressive investments in America’s future could not be greater, the Republican majority’s Appropriations bills shortchange hard-working American families while serving special interests. We can and must do better.”

Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)

Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

A report prepared by Appropriations Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republican budget sets unrealistic spending levels that shortchange critical priorities, placing our national and economic security at risk. At a time when critical needs – veterans’ health care, roads and bridges, schools, and much more – are growing exponentially, the Republican budget has resulted in Appropriations bills that force hardworking American families to do more with less.

Faced with caps that prevent responsible investments in critical priorities, the Republican majority has presented bills that slash funding for public health, public safety, and the environment, and targeted programs important to women and families’ personal finances. The Republican majority compounded the damage of these funding cuts with destructive, political riders that benefit special interests.

This report highlights some of the most damaging funding cuts in the 2016 Appropriations bills, and policy riders that prioritize special interests and politics over hardworking American families.

DIVESTING IN THE FUTURE

TRANSPORTATION

The American Society of Civil Engineers gives America's infrastructure a D+ and estimates \$3.6 trillion in investment is needed by 2020 to restore it to a state of good repair. Travelers pay for our infrastructure's disrepair in safety, traffic congestion, fuel costs, and travel time. Further, investments in our infrastructure yield dividends through higher productivity and jobs in the construction, manufacturing, and retail sectors.

- The T-HUD bill cuts capital investment grants by 41 percent below the President's budget request, and cuts TIGER grants \$400 million below the FY2015 level and \$1.15 billion below the President's request, preventing aggressive investments in repair and upgrade of degraded highways, roads, and bridges.
- The T-HUD bill cuts Amtrak by \$251 million (18 percent) below last year's level and fails to include a single dollar for expansion of intercity passenger rail or installation of safety mechanisms like Positive Train Control, diminishing travel options and safety for millions of commuters and other travelers.

EDUCATION

The United States is far behind many countries in providing access to preschool education, and ranks just 25th in the world in enrollment of 4 year-olds. Early childhood intervention is critical in reducing inequality and narrowing achievement gaps. Yet the Labor-HHS-Education bill would de-fund preschool programs in 18 states, causing 60,000 children to lose access to preschool entirely.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill also eliminates more than 20 elementary, secondary, and higher education programs, including those that reduce gun violence in schools and increase access to mental health services; support school counselors' efforts to ensure a safe environment; promote physical education; improve the teaching and learning of science and mathematics, and increase literacy. \$2.5 billion in net cuts and underfunding of core priorities at the Department of Education will inhibit teachers' ability to reach students and prevent millions of students from reaching their full potential.

HEALTHCARE

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which focuses on provider delivery of healthcare, contributed to a 17 percent decline in healthcare-associated infections between 2010 and 2013, saving an estimated 50,000 lives. Yet the Labor-HHS-Education bill would eliminate AHRQ, shifting its load to other agencies without providing funding necessary to carry out these responsibilities. This elimination will diminish our ability to improve quality – and cost-efficiency – of care in hospitals and other healthcare delivery settings.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), which tests reforms to healthcare payment and delivery systems, will lead to \$31 billion in net budget savings over the next decade. One project, the Pioneer Accountable Care Organization demonstration project, generated nearly \$400 million in Medicare savings in its first two years. Yet the Labor-HHS-Education bill would rescind \$6.8 billion in mandatory funding for CMMI, putting a halt to promising ongoing projects to improve efficiency of healthcare payment and delivery.

VETERANS

At a time when demand for veterans' health services is increasing, the MilCon/VA bill shortchanges VA medical care by \$690 million compared to the President's request, which would result in 70,000 fewer veterans receiving medical care, fewer staff critical to improving quality of care, and delays in medical research.

HURTING PUBLIC SAFETY

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The CJS bill would eliminate the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) hiring program, resulting in 1,300 fewer law enforcement positions safeguarding communities. Additionally, the bill would radically cut grants for juvenile justice programs, with severe consequences for at-risk and disadvantaged youth.

GUN SAFETY

The Committee rejected a Democratic amendment to the Commerce-Justice-Science bill blocking firearms sales to individuals on the terror watch list. Between 2004-2014, individuals on terror watch lists tried to purchase guns or explosives 2,233 times, and 91% of sales were approved.

The CJS bill would allow felons, mentally ill, and domestic abusers to apply to restore their ability to own a gun. If 20% of denied individuals applied, it would cost \$160 million in agent hours, or 865 full-time agents diverted from law enforcement investigation responsibilities.

SAFETY ON THE ROAD

Nearly 4,000 Americans per year die in crashes involving large trucks, more than 12 percent of all highway fatalities. Yet the T-HUD bill included a provision increasing allowable driving time for truckers to 82 hours per week, putting lives at risk. These sleepy drivers will be driving longer, heavier, and more dangerous trucks because the same bill also includes provisions increasing maximum truck weights and lengths.

SAFETY ON RAILROADS

President Obama requested \$825 million to help commuter railroads install Positive Train Control (PTC), technology, which could have prevented tragic crashes in the Bronx and Philadelphia that caused a dozen deaths, hundreds of injuries, and millions of dollars in damage. The T-HUD bill failed to provide a single dollar to help install this lifesaving technology on commuter, intercity passenger, and freight rail corridors, making future crashes more likely.

MITIGATING FLOOD RISK

FEMA estimates nearly half of its maps are unreliable for predicting flood risk, and 9.4 million Americans would benefit from updated mapping. Yet the Homeland Security bill shortchanges Flood Mapping by \$179 million, increasing flood risk for homes, businesses, and property.

FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants finance home elevations, safe rooms, flood proofing, wildfire mitigation, and other projects to reduce disaster impacts, saving \$3-4 for every \$1 invested. Yet the Homeland Security bill shortchanges Pre-Disaster Mitigation by \$175 million.

The FSGG bill prohibits funding to implement a Federal Flood Management Standard, leaving coastal communities without resources as they build and grow under threat of more frequent and severe storms.

PREPAREDNESS GRANTS

The Homeland Security bill would prohibit preparedness grants to cities that do not enforce federal immigration law. This provision would strip top terror targets like New York City of hundreds of millions in funding for port and transit security, emergency response, firefighters, and much more, placing tens of millions at greater risk from terror attacks or natural disasters.

ENDANGERING WOMEN'S HEALTH

TITLE X FAMILY PLANNING

The Labor-HHS-Education bill would eliminate funding for Title X Family Planning, denying 4 million women access to health services like contraception, pregnancy testing and counseling, sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment, and prenatal services. More than 4 million women would lose access to cervical and breast cancer screening services. Sixty percent of women who rely on a Title X center consider it their primary source of medical care.

TEEN PREGANCY

The Labor-HHS-Education bill cuts teen pregnancy prevention to just 20 percent of its FY2015 enacted level and mandates at least half of federal funding go to ineffective abstinence-only programming. This would result in nearly 300,000 teens no longer receiving evidence-based sex education, proven to reduce risk of both pregnancy and acquiring a sexually transmitted infection.

"CONSCIENCE"

The Labor-HHS-Education bill would put a woman's health care decisions in the hands of her employer by allowing employers or any health insurer to block a woman's access to preventive health services if the employers have "religious or moral" objections, including contraception, fertility treatment, vaccinations, blood transfusions, or anything else.

The FSGG bill would go even further in the District of Columbia, blocking a D.C. law prohibiting employers from terminating the employment of a woman for using in vitro fertilization, becoming pregnant outside of marriage, or any other health choice to which the employer claims a religious or moral objection. Women should be free to make their own healthcare decisions without interference from their employers – or the Republican Congress.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Provisions in the Labor-HHS-Education and FSGG bills defunding and blocking implementation of the Affordable Care Act would have a particularly severe impact on women.

- As a result of ACA, 55 million women benefit from preventive services coverage with no out-of-pocket costs, including contraception, breast and cervical cancer screenings, well-woman visits, HPV tests, Hepatitis B screenings, pregnancy and breastfeeding services, and much more.
- As a result of ACA, insurers are no longer allowed to discriminate by gender, protecting women from higher rates and prohibiting treating pregnancy as a preexisting condition used to deny coverage.
- Since 2013, 7.7 million women gained high-quality, affordable health insurance, reducing the uninsured rate among women by 40 percent, from 18.9 percent to 11.4 percent.

JEOPARDIZING PUBLIC HEALTH

TOBACCO

The Agriculture bill includes a provision exempting e-cigarettes and other tobacco products – including flavored products designed specifically to attract young smokers – from FDA’s critical pre-market review requirement, a special interest giveaway to the tobacco industry that will hurt public health and set back efforts to prevent children and teens from smoking.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill cut CDC’s Tobacco Control investments by more than half, from \$216 million in FY2015 to \$105 million in FY2016, damaging cessation programs and other investments to combat the nation’s leading preventable cause of death. The bill would also eliminate the *Tips from Former Smokers* campaign, estimated to have helped 300,000 smokers quit and saved 50,000 lives since 2011. The cost of continuing the program for a year is less than the tobacco industry spends on marketing in three days.

LEAD SAFETY

The T-HUD bill slashed by 32 percent federal efforts to remediate lead contamination in homes. This would result in 4,200 fewer homes treated, leaving approximately 7,600 children under age 6 unprotected from lead-based paint hazards, which can have lifelong effects on cognitive functioning, behavior, and physical health.

The Interior bill prohibits EPA from enforcing its rule on safe removal and renovation of lead paint, adding risk to remediation efforts undertaken at the estimated 4 million homes with at-risk children.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill cuts CDC’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to \$15 million, less than half its FY2010 high of \$34.8 million.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

The Agriculture and Labor-HHS-Education bills thwart federal efforts to help Americans live healthy lifestyles by locking in an arbitrary evidence standard for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and limiting topics to “diet and nutrition.” This prohibits USDA and HHS from updating DGA with current scientific information, and prohibits DGA from even including information about the importance of physical exercise.

GUN VIOLENCE

The Labor-HHS-Education report distorts statutory language in a misguided attempt to block CDC from studying gun violence, a top-5 cause of death for Americans age 5-64. Gun violence resulted in nearly 34,000 deaths in 2013, and prohibiting study by public health professionals sets back progress on understanding patterns and prevention strategies.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The Labor-HHS-Education and FSGG bills would block funding for the Affordable Care Act (ACA), causing 19 million Americans to lose health coverage. They would deny assistance for states to expand Medicaid, causing millions of low-income families to lose coverage, and return us to a time when health insurers could deny coverage due to a pre-existing condition, place a lifetime cap on benefits, or charge women higher rates than men. Repealing the individual mandate would cause health insurance premiums to skyrocket 15-20 percent in the individual market. CBO has confirmed repealing ACA would cost American taxpayers more than \$350 billion over the next decade.

ENDANGERING FINANCIAL SECURITY

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY

Families lose \$17 billion in earnings every year due to financial advice from advisors who divert their retirement savings into lower performing investments that provide a larger financial reward to the advisor. The Labor-HHS-Education bill would block a proposed rule requiring financial advisors to give advice that is in their client's – not the advisor's own – best financial interest.

MINIMUM WAGE

The Labor-HHS-Education bill carves out a special interest exemption from minimum wage law. The provision would allow federal contractors to pay employees who provide seasonal recreation services or equipment rental on federal land less than the national minimum wage of \$10.10 per hour.

ENFORCING DODD-FRANK

The Dodd-Frank financial reforms were enacted in response to the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, and 63 percent of American households experienced a median decline in wealth of 45 percent between 2007-2009. Yet the FSGG bill slashes the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) budget by \$222 million below the President's request, despite the fact that this agency is funded by fees on transactions. The Agriculture bill slashes funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) – a critical bulwark against fraud and irresponsible speculation in commodities industry – by \$77 million below the request.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS

The FSGG bill would strip the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Office of Financial Research (OFR), created by Dodd-Frank to protect consumers, of their mandatory funding stream. The provision would make these offices subject to the Appropriations process and defunding beginning in FY2017.

MANUFACTURING

The CJS bill slashes \$176 million (58 percent) from the President's request for NIST's manufacturing programs; fails to provide a single dollar for the President's requests to establish manufacturing institutes, which were authorized with bipartisan support just last year and proven to support U.S. jobs; and eliminates funding for the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia (AmTECH) program, whose grants support critical research on the future of advanced manufacturing across industries.

DISLOCATED WORKERS

The Labor-HHS-Education bill slashes funding to help dislocated workers, providing a mere \$74 million, which is \$147 million less than the FY2015 level and \$167 million less than the President's request. This will prevent states from providing reemployment assistance and training to about 100,000 workers in response to plant closings and mass layoffs, and from providing disaster relief employment.

PLAYING POLITICS

BENGAZI

The State and Foreign Operations bill shamefully inserts presidential politics into Appropriations by withholding State Department funding based on policies related to email preservation and responses to FOIA requests. The State Department has already provided 45,000 documents to the Select Committee Investigating the Benghazi Attacks, provided five briefings, witnesses at each hearing, and eighteen interviews, yet Republicans continue to push the red herring that the Department has been uncooperative. Select Committee Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) has directly taken credit for this political provision, which could diminish core State Department efforts to fight terrorism, stop weapons proliferation, and combat human trafficking.

CUBA

Five of 12 Appropriations bills meddle foolishly and politically in foreign policy with provisions intended to undermine President Obama's normalization of relations with Cuba, including:

- Prohibiting funding to open a U.S. Embassy in Cuba, hampering our ability to help U.S. citizens abroad, push the Cuban government on return of American fugitives from justice, and engage with the Cuban people to encourage civil liberties and essential freedoms.
- Banning travel and financial transactions with Cubans, and limiting importation of goods.
- Prohibiting commercial air or cruise line service to Cuba, preventing family visits, academic and cultural exchanges, or humanitarian projects that can benefit both Americans and Cubans.

NET NEUTRALITY

The FSGG bill includes a provision blocking the Administration from implementing "net neutrality." Blocking an open internet means allowing hidden fees, unfair terms and conditions, and pay-for-priority schemes benefiting deep-pocketed special interests that can afford to buy preferential treatment. The provision prohibits net neutrality implementation as long as lawsuits are ongoing, encouraging special interest plaintiffs to drag out proceedings as long as possible. A federal court has rejected exactly what this provision attempts to do.

BIG MONEY IN POLITICS

The FSGG bill protects the expanding role of big money and special interests in politics by prohibiting SEC from requiring disclosure of political contributions, contributions to tax exempt organizations, or dues paid to trade associations. Additionally, the bill prohibits Treasury from finalizing standards to determine tax-exempt status of a 501(c)(4) organization. The FSGG bill also prohibits funds to require entities submitting an offer for a Federal contract or participating in an acquisition to disclose campaign contributions.

HURTING THE ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Commerce, Justice, Science bill slashes funding for climate research at NOAA by \$61 million below the President's budget request, and eliminates funding for Climate Resilience Grants. These cuts will hurt federal weather and climate forecasting and hurt coastal communities' ability to plan for severe weather events.

The CJS bill would prohibit funding to implement climate change agreements, and the SFOPS bill prohibits funding for international organizations and programs that address global climate change and promote clean technology. These steps undermine U.S. ability to lead and convince other nations to reduce emissions and take other steps to mitigate global climate change.

DRINKING WATER AND SANITARY SEWERS

The Interior bill slashes State Revolving Funds for drinking water and sanitary sewers by \$581 million below the FY2015 enacted level. These cuts not only endanger our nation's water infrastructure and public health, but they also mean 32,000 fewer construction jobs on more than 200 projects.

CLEAN AIR

The Interior bill would prevent EPA ozone standards, which would prevent 320,000 asthma attacks in children, 600 nonfatal heart attacks, and 1,400 premature deaths each year. Ozone has been proven to aggravate lung disease, increase frequency and severity of asthma attacks, and reduce lung function.

The Interior bill also would prohibit EPA standards for carbon pollution at power plants. These standards will lead to climate and health benefits worth \$55 billion to \$93 billion per year in 2030. The benefits include avoiding up to 6,600 premature deaths and up to 150,000 asthma attacks in children.

CLEAN WATER

The Interior and E&W bills prevent EPA and the Corps of Engineers from clarifying which waters are protected by the Clean Water Act as requested by the Supreme Court, maintaining confusion about scope of the law's pollution control programs. The Clean Water Rule protects drinking water sources for 117 million Americans but one in three Americans get drinking water from streams that lack clear protection from pollution.

The Interior bill would also block the Department of Interior from developing or implementing its Stream Protection rule to protect headwater streams from toxic coal mine waste. The proposed rule will incorporate updated science and reduce the harmful environmental consequences of surface coal mining operations.

HORSES

The Committee rejected an amendment to the Agriculture bill banning use of federal funds to inspect facilities slaughtering horses for human consumption, making it possible that plants in three states resume the practice, which Americans overwhelmingly oppose. The last year horse slaughter facilities were operating in the U.S., more than 100,000 horses were slaughtered for human consumption abroad.

THREATENED SPECIES

The Interior bill prohibits listing the Greater Sage Grouse as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act; delists gray wolves in the Western Great Lakes and Wyoming from ESA; and removes protections for Northern Long-Eared Bats. The CJS bill prohibits funding for the protection of migratory birds. Scientists—not politicians—should make determinations about the vitality of species and effects on larger ecosystems.