

May 16, 2008

Dear Elected Official:

The undersigned education, training, disability, public health, human services, medical research, child welfare organizations and labor unions representing the full range of stakeholders in the programs of the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor urge you to ensure that the final FY 2009 302b allocations for the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittees reflects at least a \$15 billion increase above the FY 2008 level for these critically important programs. This amount would: (1) restore cuts of core program funding over the last four years, (2) more appropriately account for four years of inflation and population growth to maintain service levels and purchasing power; and (3) return these programs to the FY 2005 level, a high water mark for many.

The programs and services administered by the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor serve a broad range of constituencies and needs. However, they all share a common, fundamental goal of strengthening this nation by investing in and improving the quality of life of its people, especially the most vulnerable. Unfortunately, the resources they need have been cut, eroded by inflation or stretched thin by swelling numbers of those in need. While Congress has worked to restore some of the cuts, many programs still remain far below their FY 2005 level, and others lost all funding. The President's FY 2009 budget request continues or deepens cuts for most of the programs in the Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill. America cannot sustain its global scientific and economic leadership, national security and citizens' health and well-being without increasing these investments.

While our organizations represent a wide array of domestic priorities, we are united in our effort to increase discretionary funding for health, education, labor enforcement, job training and social services programs by at least \$15 billion as the budget process moves forward. This is essential to sustain the prosperity and standards of living of our nation.