



June 26, 2015

Roy Blunt, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Patty Murray, Ranking Minority Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), and the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), we write to express our profound disappointment in the deep cuts in developmental disability programs contained in the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

The bill cuts programs authorized by the Developmental Disabilities Act by over five percent -- \$7 million in total. It cuts the Councils on Developmental Disabilities by \$3 million, University Centers on Disabilities by \$2 million and Protection and Advocacy programs by over \$2 million. The President had proposed increasing these programs and the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee voted to preserve these programs by providing at least level-funding.

Together, these programs are tasked with assuring that the over 54 million Americans with disabilities and the 4.6 million with developmental disabilities are able to participate fully in the daily life of America. Investments in these programs are cost-effective. These programs help states ensure that people with disabilities are avoiding costly institutional placements, help states develop jobs in the community with real wages, assist individuals to care for their own health needs, develop evidence based interventions and best practices, and train professionals and families to ensure that people with disabilities can be fully included in schools, jobs, and the community.

Cuts of this magnitude to these programs will leave a population that is already vulnerable to abuse, neglect, poverty, and discrimination without advocacy and support and will result in increased dependence on public assistance and reduced economic self-sufficiency. As our economy is still struggling to recover, this is not the time to cut programs that assist people with disabilities struggling to get their educational needs met and find competitive integrated employment. We believe our federal government should be investing more in such programs.

As you move forward with this appropriations bill, our collective organizations urge you to provide at least level funding to the DD Act programs as proposed by your colleagues in the House of Representatives.

Thank you for considering our views and concerns. Please feel free to contact any one of us.

Sincerely,



Andrew Imparato



Donna Meltzer



Curt Decker
Executive Director