

DRAFT

March XX, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The XXX undersigned organizations—representing the full range of stakeholders in the programs of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education—urge you to restore the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 302(b) allocation to the Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to the FY 2010 level of \$163.6 billion.

The programs and services administered by these Departments serve a broad range of constituencies and needs, but they all share a common, fundamental goal of strengthening this nation by improving Americans' lives. Despite their profound impact on American health, educational and skills attainment, and productivity, these programs and services have eroded since FY 2010.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and the subsequent Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 have begun to reverse this trend—restoring FY 2013 sequestration cuts in the aggregate and bringing the FY 2014 302(b) allocation in line with FY 2011 in nominal terms. However, the FY 2014 allocation remains 3.6 percent below FY 2010 in nominal dollars, and almost 10 percent lower than FY 2010 in real dollars, as adjusted for inflation. The increasing cost of “must pay” programs—e.g., nonprofit student loan servicers and support for unaccompanied alien children from war torn areas—erode discretionary funding available for other programs in this 302(b) allocation. As a result, many programs did not see full sequestration relief in FY 2014, and almost every program remains below FY 2010 levels while buckling under the weight of increased demand.

After years of doing more with less these critical federal functions must do less with less, and America stands to fall even farther behind our industrialized counterparts:

- The United States ranks 30th in infant mortality – widely recognized as a basic indicator of a country's overall health – behind most developed nations even some developing countries.
- The United States faces large and unacceptable gaps by race and socioeconomic status in student achievement, high school graduation, and college attendance and completion rates.
- Despite a 6.6 percent unemployment rate, our nation's businesses are struggling to find the skilled workers they need to sustain economic recovery, as a 2013 Manpower survey found nearly 40 percent of U.S. employers report having difficulty filling current job openings.

More than 3,200 organizations [previously called on Congress](#) to stop sequestration. Although the BBA provided partial sequestration relief in FY 2014, there will be significantly less relief in FY 2015 and without action sequestration will be back in full effect FY 2016. We continue to urge you to work with your colleagues to reverse these harmful cuts by replacing them with a credible, balanced approach to deficit reduction. Only a balanced approach to deficit reduction can restore fiscal stability. Continued discretionary cuts will move us backward in growing the economy, increasing jobs, improving global competitiveness, protecting the health of Americans, and increasing educational attainment.

We urge you to recognize the value of health, education, job training, and social services in improving the lives of American families and to restore the Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee 302(b) allocation to the FY 2010 level of \$163.6 billion. Ideally, the allocation should provide the FY 2010 level, adjusted for inflation.

If you have questions about this letter, please contact:

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Cc: Members, Senate and House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittees

Sincerely,

Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce
Coalition for Health Funding
Committee for Education Funding