

Human Needs Taking a Bullet for Deficit Reduction

The House of Representatives' first order of business upon returning to Washington this week is to vote on a package of spending cuts aimed at a variety of low-income programs. **The publicly stated purpose is for deficit reduction, but *Mobilizer* readers, we have seen this show before.** The safety net does not need to be sacrificed while holding defense, business subsidies, and all other manner of spending harmless. Your Representative in the House needs to know cutting low-income programs to pay down a debt they did not cause is unacceptable. **Enough is enough.**

Background

The recently passed House Budget Resolution instructed six different House Committees to identify spending reductions to various programs that could be substituted for the automatic cuts (known as the sequester) set to occur in January. The recommended reductions fall heavily on low-income people and include:

- \$33 billion cut to food stamps, reducing benefits for all and kicking two million off the rolls
- \$8 billion cut to Child Tax Credit by denying the credit to legal working immigrants
- \$6 billion cut to Medicaid in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories
- \$10 billion cut to the Prevention and Public Health Fund, eliminating the fund entirely
- Repeal of the Medicaid Maintenance of Effort provision, allowing states to kick current beneficiaries off the rolls prior to the 2014 Expansion
- Repeal of incentives for states to conduct outreach and enroll children in CHIP

The deficit reduction package along with the annual spending limits established by the House will increase defense spending, cut more than \$40 billion from non-defense spending this year and another \$260 billion over ten years. All while reducing revenue by the trillions. **This is not deficit reduction - it is a barely camouflaged attempt to retreat even further from providing a safety net and ensuring basic human needs.**

This package is not likely to pass now, but the danger comes when these proposals become seen as palatable approaches to cutting the deficit. Kicking low-income households off food stamps to pay down the debt may seem reprehensible today, but could become acceptable in Washington tomorrow without strong opposition from *Mobilizer* readers and other concerned citizens. **Do not let today's political realities provide false comfort. These proposals can easily become a blue print for future deficit reduction in a new Congress, and must be resisted at every turn.**

TAKE ACTION

The package (known as the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act) is expected to be debated and voted on by the full House around May 10. Call the Capitol Switchboard at **1(877) 210-5351** and ask to be connected to your Representative. Tell them:

- You do not support the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act and urge them to vote against it.
- Low-income programs and households should be protected from deficit reduction efforts as they have been in previous deficit reduction packages of the last 30 years.
- Defense spending reductions and new revenues must be part of any deficit

reduction effort.

Congress needs to know that low-income programs have support and alternative methods of deficit reduction are viable. **Call today!**

You can still join us at the 2012 National Health Care for the Homeless Conference next week in Kansas City. View full conference details, including information about the 70+ accredited workshops, nationally recognized plenary speakers, professional networking opportunities and registration details, at <http://www.nhchc.org/national-conference-2012/>.

Be sure to also register for the grassroots advocacy Pre-Conference Institute on May 15th.

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