

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your requests, thoughtful ideas, and insightful recommendations as we have worked through the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations process.

The nature of an Appropriations bill in a divided federal government is compromise, and the Omnibus Appropriations bill pending before the House of Representatives is a compromise in every sense. It is not the Appropriations bill that Democrats would write if we were in the majority, and there are many aspects we would like to improve.

As you evaluate the Omnibus, please consider the likely alternative if the Omnibus does not pass – a full-year Continuing Resolution. This outcome would erase important victories on both funding and policy. 187 Democrats voted for the recent budget agreement, which enacted tens of billions in offsets to end mindless sequestration budget cuts. A full-year CR would mean Democrats agreed to these offsets for nothing.

Democratic unity and steadfastness during negotiations allowed us to achieve important victories on both funding and policy in each of the 12 Appropriations bills within the Omnibus. Please consider that, under a full-year CR, the following victories would vanish:

#### **Agriculture**

- Protecting food and drug safety with a \$132 million increase for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA);
- Combating world hunger with \$250 million in additional funding for international food aid;
- Fighting childhood hunger by nearly doubling funding for the summer EBT program;

#### **Commerce, Justice, Science**

- Increasing Violence Against Women Prevention and Prosecution programs by \$50 million, an increase of more than 10 percent;
- Increasing Census funding by \$282 million to ensure an accurate and efficient count;
- Increasing FBI funding by \$163 million to help disrupt homegrown terrorism;
- Increasing National Science Foundation (NSF) funding by \$119.3 million.

#### **Energy & Water**

- Increasing funding for the Department of Energy Office of Science by \$279 million;
- Increasing funding for the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Office by \$136 million;

- Increasing funding for water resources projects within the Department of Interior by \$135 million, including more than \$50 million for drought response in western states.
- Increasing funding for environmental cleanup activities by \$337 million;
- Increasing funding for ongoing Nuclear Nonproliferation activities by \$90 million;
- Increasing funding for the Army Corps of Engineers construction by \$535 million;

### **Financial Services & General Government**

- Protecting taxpayer service and enforcement at IRS by increasing funding by \$290 million;
- Bolstering consumer financial protection by increasing SEC funding by \$105 million;
- Increasing Small Business Administration 7(a) loan authorization by \$3 billion, an increase of more than 10 percent.

### **Homeland Security**

- Increasing security for the White House, presidential candidates, and for President Obama's post-presidency security detail by increasing Secret Service by \$268 million;
- Increasing Predisaster Mitigation funding by 300 percent and increasing Flood Mapping funding by nearly 200 percent;
- \$50 million in new funding to help state and local communities counter violent extremism and help state and local law enforcement prepare and respond to Paris-like terrorist attacks;

### **Interior**

- \$144 million increase for the Land & Water Conservation Fund, bringing it to its highest funding level since 2010;
- Increasing funding for the National Park Service by \$237 million or nearly 10 percent;
- \$195 million increase for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and \$165 million increase for the Indian Health Service;
- Increases of nearly \$2 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH);

### **Labor, HHS, Education**

- Investing in medical research with \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH);
- Investing in public health with \$308 million increase for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);

- Increasing Child Care and Development Block Grants by \$326 million or more than 10 percent;
- Increasing Head Start by \$570 million;
- Increasing Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies by \$500 million;
- Increasing Special Education state grants (IDEA) by \$415 million;
- Increasing funding for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) by \$160 million;
- Increasing funding for institutional development which includes aid for historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges, Asian American Pacific islander institutions and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving institutions by \$40 million or 8% across the board;
- Increasing funding for Impact Aid by \$17 million;

#### **Military Construction, VA**

- \$2.37 billion to make up for shortfall in VA Medical Services in 2016;
- \$1.5 billion in new funding to purchase new medication that cures Hepatitis C;
- Increasing Medical and Prosthetic Research by \$41.8 million;
- Fully funding the VA major construction account and all projects with a \$682 million increase;

#### **State and Foreign Operations**

- Increasing international disaster assistance by nearly \$900 million to meet increased global need;
- Almost \$50 million more for Global Health;
- Implementing International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota reforms needed since 2010;
- \$180 million more for embassy and diplomatic mission security;
- \$658 million for Ukraine, including authority for a new loan guarantee.

#### **Transportation, HUD**

- Increasing Section 8 Tenant Based Rental Assistance by \$195 million and increasing Section 8 Project Based Rental Assistance by \$885 million, bringing these programs to the level necessary to meet existing need;

- \$45 million increase for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative;
- \$300 million new funding to help victims of flooding disasters that occurred in 2015.

But our important victories are not limited to these items. We also successfully fought off riders that would have seriously damaged our environment, jeopardized women's health, prohibited labor from key initiatives to increase wages and protect American workers, and undermined the financial security of retirees.

Again, the Omnibus Appropriations Act is far from perfect. There are many areas that Democrats would improve if we were writing the bill. However, there is no doubt that it is far preferable to the most likely alternative – a full-year Continuing Resolution that would erase achievements important not just for Democrats, but for all working Americans.

Sincerely,

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