



March 19, 2015

REJECT ENZI'S BUDGET RESOLUTION

Dear Members of the Senate Budget Committee:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our strong opposition to the Fiscal Year 2016 budget proposal offered by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY). We urge you and your colleagues to reject it and instead pass a resolution that strikes a fair and reasonable balance between revenue increases and spending cuts, rather than one that attempts to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable Americans and hides the true costs of proposed cuts.

The Leadership Conference believes that the diverse communities we represent, many of them low-income, would suffer greatly from the cuts in the Enzi budget. The Enzi budget purports to balance the budget in 10 years and proposes \$4.5 trillion in non-defense budget cuts that are extreme, inequitable, and lacking in transparency. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that *two-thirds or more* of the proposed budget savings appear to originate in cuts to programs for low- and moderate- income Americans.¹ The budget would slash or eliminate services that are critical to communities represented by our member organizations, including vulnerable groups like young children, seniors, low-income families, individuals with disabilities, students, the unemployed, and the uninsured. In a still recovering economy, the Enzi budget would unfortunately knock many Americans back down again by gutting Medicare, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), with dramatic, unspecified cuts in education, veterans' pensions, and other necessities.

Although the Enzi budget may speak of fiscal responsibility and protecting hardworking families, the few details that the proposal provides instead reveals a vision of America that bears little resemblance to those ideals.

We are particularly troubled by the following aspects of the Enzi budget proposal:

- **Income Security:** The Enzi budget would cut income security programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, Head Start, school lunch and other child nutrition programs, SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for low-income seniors and people with disabilities by \$660 billion over 10 years. The plan provides little to no information on which programs would be cut, or by how much. It is unconscionable that millions of the most vulnerable Americans who depend on these programs face major cuts, while the most wealthy among us may receive additional tax cuts.

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Statement by Robert Greenstein, President, On Senate Budget Chairman's Plan*, (March 18, 2015)(available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/files/3-18-15bud-stmt.pdf>).

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This proposal would certainly lead to massive and disproportionate cuts to countless services and programs that are vital to the communities that we represent.

- **Education:** The bill contains significant cuts to Pell Grants. As a result, Pell Grants would lose substantial purchasing power, potentially denying access to college for millions of students who need financial aid. These are short-sighted cuts that would reverse our nation's progress on improving student achievement and fail to invest in our nation's youth and our economic future.
- **Health Care:** The Enzi budget would repeal the coverage expansions in the Affordable Care Act and also cut (through "block grants") Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program by approximately an additional \$400 billion. These two steps would cut trillions of dollars and drastically increase the number of uninsured Americans. Under this budget resolution, tens of millions of Americans would lose coverage or be underinsured.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose the Enzi FY2016 budget proposal. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Chatterjee, Senior, at (202) 466-3648.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President