



November 5, 2015

## OPPOSE ALL POLICY RIDERS TO THE OMNIBUS BILL

Dear Member of Congress,

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 strongly urge Congress to pass a clean omnibus spending bill with no ideological policy riders.

The Leadership Conference believes that it is inappropriate and irresponsible to attach ideological policy riders to appropriations bills. Altering laws, proposing new ones, or preventing executive orders from being implemented should be done through regular order in the authorizing committees. We were deeply troubled by the appearance of hundreds of policy riders on appropriations legislation in both the House of Representatives and Senate earlier this year. Rather than engaging in unnecessary and destructive brinksmanship over riders, we believe that Congress should focus on doing its job: working in a timely, bipartisan fashion to pass legislation to fund the government. We strongly encourage all members of Congress to abide by this principle.

The civil and human rights coalition stands united in its opposition to the use of all policy riders on the omnibus bill. The list below is not comprehensive, but rather than listing every individual ideological rider offered in the appropriations process earlier this year, or that might appear in the coming weeks, below is a sampling of riders of particular concern to the communities we represent. The Leadership Conference opposes riders that would:

### Census:

- Prohibit the expenditure of funds to enforce 13 U.S. Code §221 with respect to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), which sets forth penalties for refusing to answer certain Census Bureau censuses and surveys.
- Require questions on citizenship and immigration status on the 2020 Census, for the purpose of excluding undocumented residents/noncitizens from the census state population totals used for congressional apportionment.

### Criminal Justice:

- Restrict TANF or other public benefits for formerly incarcerated individuals. Negatively impact funding for the Office of the Pardon Attorney in the Department of Justice (DOJ).

### Disability Rights:

- Require Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies, a nationwide network of agencies designed by Congress to protect the civil and human rights of people with disabilities, to get the affirmation of the individual's guardians if the P&A intends to bring a lawsuit to protect the individual's civil and human rights. Such a provision would undermine

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the ability of people with disabilities to uphold their civil and human rights in many instances because unfortunately, many guardians exploit or fail to act in the best interest of people with intellectual disabilities.

#### District of Columbia:

- Block the District of Columbia from enacting local policies relating to matters such as drug law reform, reproductive health, and LGBT rights.

#### Education:

- Prohibit the enforcement of the Gainful Employment Rule, which is based on a requirement in the Higher Education Act that all career education programs receiving federal dollars “prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.”

#### Employment:

- Defund or derail implementation of the Fair Pay & Safe Workplaces Executive Order or other pending executive actions in the area of employment.
- Attempt to roll back rules, regulations, and executive orders, including those that:
  - Ensure all workers are paid overtime and provided benefits under wage and hour rules;
  - Extend wage protections to home care workers;
  - Would modernize and streamline the National Labor Relations board’s election process, block the Board's efforts to ensure that workers can negotiate with companies that control their wages and working conditions, and strip workers in commercial operations on tribal lands from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act.
- Prevent the administration from cracking down on contractors that do not comply with workplace laws.
- Bar the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from issuing a final silica standard to protect workers from this deadly dust until additional scientific studies are conducted, further delaying the rule and leading to more diseases and deaths; and strip most workers of their legal right to have a representative participate in OSHA workplace inspections.

#### Financial Reform:

- Defund or repeal provisions of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.
- Remove independent funding from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), a regulator that has already returned more than \$11 billion to 25 million Americans harmed by their financial companies. No other bank regulator is currently subject to the appropriations process.
- Obstruct the CFPB’s rulemaking authority.
- Roll back crucial financial regulations affecting everything from risk management at giant financial institutions to safeguards against the kinds of toxic subprime mortgages that caused the financial crisis.
- Prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing or enforcing a rule that would ensure retirement savers are not getting conflicted financial advice on their retirement savings.
- Prevent the CFPB from fighting racial discrimination in auto lending.
- Curtail and obstruct the CFPB’s ability to rein in predatory payday lending.

#### Health:



- Defund Planned Parenthood, which would, among other negative impacts, deny low-income individuals access to critical preventative health care services, including birth control, well woman visits, cancer screenings, and screenings for sexually transmitted diseases. Planned Parenthood serves 2.7 million women, men, and young people every year.
- Eliminate funding for the Title X Family Planning Program, the only federal grant program dedicated entirely to family planning and related preventative health care. Title X-supported centers provide critical preventive care — including family planning services, well-woman exams, lifesaving cancer screenings, birth control, and testing and treatments for sexually transmitted infections — to nearly 4.6 million people.
- Defund or eliminate Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies and other funding, or undermine consumer protections.
- Undermine federal funding for Medicaid, restrict Medicaid enrollees' access to critical health services, or limit Medicaid eligibility.
- Apply broad religious refusal language that would allow employers, insurers, and health care providers to deny others access to health services.

#### Housing:

- Eliminate private enforcement funding for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, which private nonprofit fair housing organizations use to investigate more than 2/3 of all reported complaints of housing discrimination throughout the nation.
- Prevent the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and DOJ from enforcing a rule that provides a unified standard for challenging discriminatory housing policies and practices; prevent HUD from implementing the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule, which empowers local policymakers to create local solutions to address persistent barriers to fair housing choice.
- Block funding of the National Housing Trust Fund.
- Prohibit the Department of Treasury from selling its senior preferred shares in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac without Congressional approval, which would tie the President's hands and increase the risk of another bailout, while doing nothing to make Congress agree on comprehensive government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) reform.

#### Immigration:

- Prevent the administration from carrying out common sense administrative policies, in the wake of Congress' failure to reform our immigration system, to spare classes of immigrants from the threat of deportation.
- Cut federal funds for states and municipalities (sometimes referred to as "Sanctuary Cities") for determining that under the Fourth Amendment they cannot comply with "detainer" requests from the Department of Homeland Security.

#### Media/Telecommunications:

- Weaken the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) joint services agreement (JSAs) rule.
- Undermine or weaken the Lifeline program.

#### Voting:

- Reduce funding for the Election Assistance Commission (EAC).
- Combine the EAC with the Federal Election Commission.



The American people are tired of a government that lurches from crisis to crisis, and they deserve better. We urge Congress to act responsibly and pass a spending bill that has no ideological riders, rather than setting our nation up for another possible government shutdown in the middle of the holiday season.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Chatterjee, Senior Counsel, at (202) 466-3648.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson  
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President