



November 16, 2015

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Ensure Adequate Funding for the EEOC

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Mikulski:

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 urge you to fund the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at the president's budget level. The Leadership Conference and our member organizations are committed to protecting American workers from unlawful discrimination in the workplace. Underfunding the EEOC will severely strain the EEOC's ability to ensure that workers alleging discrimination have timely access to justice.

The EEOC has played an instrumental role in ensuring equality and fairness for people who experience discrimination in the workplace, whether the discrimination is based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age, or disability. This year, the EEOC has obtained relief for victims in cases involving sexual abuse, racially discriminatory policies, and sex discrimination and harassment of women. The EEOC has been a leader in advancing the rights of women in the workplace, supporting women's rights to non-traditional jobs, equal pay for equal work, and the right to work while pregnant. The EEOC has also led the battle against religious discrimination in the workplace, most recently successfully defending, in the Supreme Court, the religious freedom of Oklahoma teenager Samantha Elauf.

We support the president's FY2016 budget, which provides adequate funding for the EEOC to help prevent and remedy employment discrimination. In contrast, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA) will severely strain EEOC's ability to ensure that workers have equal opportunities to achieve their full potential and help grow our economy.

Under the BBA, the EEOC would investigate and resolve fewer charges of employment discrimination. Workers could receive millions less in monetary benefits from EEOC's resolutions. Benefits obtained through mediation resolutions could drop by as much as \$15 million, and workers and employers could be forced to wait longer for investigations to be completed.

In addition, under the BBA, the EEOC would be less able to remedy broader instances of discrimination that affect large numbers of workers. The EEOC would also be less able to help vulnerable groups of workers like migrant farmworkers who are often reluctant or unable to advocate for their rights.

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At a time when the wealth gap is widening, we need an adequately funded EEOC that can enforce prohibitions against workplace discrimination and advance equal employment opportunity. It is for this reason that we ask that you ensure funding for the EEOC for FY 2016 at the level proposed in the president's budget.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Legal Director and Senior Legal Advisor Lisa Bornstein at (202) 263-2856 or Bornstein@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO


Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President