



April 26, 2017

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**Oppose Ending Parity between Defense and NDD Spending and Oppose Any
Ideological Policy Riders**

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 210 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to oppose any proposal to fund the government that undermines the well-being of our most vulnerable communities, including working families and communities of color. We oppose any funding proposal that does not maintain parity between defense and non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending, provide adequate funding for programs that are critical to low-income and working families, or eliminate ideological policy riders.

The Leadership Conference believes that the federal budget should work to support and expand the middle class, invest in good jobs and the infrastructure our communities need, strengthen programs that support basic living standards like nutrition assistance and health care, and provide educational, economic, and employment opportunities for all Americans. Congress therefore must maintain parity between NDD and defense spending. NDD programs provide vital funding for public programs that include education, housing supports, infrastructure investments, environmental protection, workforce training, and children's programs, all of which are integral to Americans' quality of life and well-being. The continued disinvestment in NDD programs will only make our country poorer, sicker, less educated, and less secure. It is also critical to ensure that retired coal miners and their dependents do not lose their health care and retirement benefits.

Additionally, the civil and human rights community stands united in its opposition to the inclusion of ideological policy riders in any budget agreement. We believe it is inappropriate and irresponsible to attach ideological policy riders to appropriations bills. Specifically, The Leadership Conference opposes riders that would:

- Withdraw federal funding from so-called "sanctuary cities" as a penalty for withholding information about the immigration status of residents in these jurisdictions.
- Defund Planned Parenthood, which would, among other negative impacts, deny low-income people 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 and men every year.



- Allocate funding for a wall/fence along the southern border of the United States, or otherwise increase enforcement resources in the absence of comprehensive reform. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted, “[n]ot a single member of Congress who represents the territory on the southwest border said they support President Trump’s request for \$1.4 billion to begin construction of his promised wall.”¹
- Weaken or delay new protections for retirement savers, including the new Department of Labor rules protecting workplace retirement savers from being steered into inappropriate products. The fiduciary rule will save American families tens of billions of dollars a year.
- Roll back crucial financial reforms, including policy riders that would make it easier for predatory lenders to rip off vulnerable communities or threaten another financial crisis. We strongly oppose any riders that would undermine the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Dodd-Frank Act, or other financial regulations.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Zirkin, Executive Vice President at (202) 263-2880 or Emily Chatterjee, Senior Counsel at (202) 466-3648.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President

¹ See “Border Lawmakers Balk at Donald Trump’s Wall Request.” *Wall Street Journal*.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/border-lawmakers-balk-at-donald-trumps-wall-request-1492802294> (April 21, 2017)