

January 11, 2018

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi,

January 19 marks the end of the first full year of the Trump presidency. Over the past year, we have seen a sustained and unprecedented assault on our core values and on American communities all across the country. Throughout these challenges, we have learned one critically important lesson: We are strongest when we stand together.

At the end of December, Congress passed a short-term spending bill and left town without addressing several of the most pressing issues that affect the lives and well-being of tens of millions of people throughout the country. By January 19—the date by which the Republican-controlled Congress must pass legislation to avert a government shutdown—you must ensure that there will be no further delays on these key priorities, which already have been held hostage for too long.

On or before January 19, Congress must pass legislation that provides permanent protection for Dreamers. Approximately 15,000 young people already have lost Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protection since the president ended the program in September, and every day that Congress fails to act before March 5, an average of 122 additional DACA recipients will lose protections. We know these young people. We work with them and pray with them, and our children are educated alongside them and by them in our schools. Nearly three-quarters of DACA recipients have a spouse, child, or family member who is a U.S. citizen. By voting three times on spending bills that offer no protections to Dreamers who are losing status right now, Congress has for months appropriated funds that will be used to deport these young people. This must stop.

On or before January 19, Congress also must pass legislation that provides critical—and long-overdue—relief to the millions of Americans affected by natural disasters in recent months. In September, Hurricane Maria dealt a devastating blow to the people of Puerto Rico, and today, electricity still has not been restored for more than 660,000 power customers on the island. This would not be tolerated for Americans living anywhere else, and it cannot be ignored any longer.

On or before January 19, Congress also must reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, which ensures critical health care services for 9 million children across the country. The small patches that Congress passed twice in December do nothing to provide the stability that patients and health care providers need to ensure proper continuity of care.

American families and America's children have waited too long for Congress to do the right thing on these and other issues: Enough is enough. We, the undersigned, ask that you ensure that all these priorities are addressed together as part of any deal on raising the budget caps or providing further government funding.

Sincerely,

Neera Tanden, President and CEO, Center for American Progress

Janet Murguía, President and CEO, UnidosUS (formerly the National Council of La Raza)

Vanita Gupta, President and CEO, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Nan Aron, President, Alliance for Justice

Frank Sharry, Executive Director, America's Voice

Anthony D. Romero, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union

Caroline Fredrickson, President, American Constitution Society

Lee Saunders, President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

John C. Yang, President and Executive Director, Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)

Deepak Bhargava, President, Center for Community Change

Olivia Golden, Executive Director, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Ana María Archila, Co-Executive Director, Center for Popular Democracy

Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children's Defense Fund

Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs

Murshed Zaheed, Vice President, Politics, CREDO

Heather C. McGhee, President, Demos

Thea Lee, President, Economic Policy Institute Policy Center

Rev. Jennifer Butler, CEO, Faith in Public Life

Mark Magaña, President and CEO, GreenLatinos

Chad H. Griffin, President, Human Rights Campaign

Elisa Massimino, President and CEO, Human Rights First

Ezra Levin and Leah Greenberg, Co-Executive Directors, Indivisible

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Brent A. Wilkes, CEO, League of United Latin American Citizens

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Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Executive Director/CEO and Co-Founder, MomsRising

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Lily Eskelsen García, President, National Education Association

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Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO, National Women's Law Center

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director, NETWORK, Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Michael Keegan, President and CEO, People For the American Way

Scott Reed, Executive Director, PICO National Network

Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Angela Glover Blackwell, CEO, PolicyLink

Robert Weissman, President, Public Citizen

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Mary Kay Henry, President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Mohammad Ali, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Small Business Majority

Michael Breen, President and CEO, Truman National Security Project

D Taylor, International President, UNITE HERE

Cristina Jiménez Moreta, Executive Director and Co-Founder, United We Dream

Arturo S. Rodriguez, President, United Farm Workers

María Teresa Kumar, President and CEO, Voto Latino