April 8, 2014

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I urge you to oppose H. Con. Res. 96, the budget resolution proposed by Chairman Paul Ryan. This budget plan would impose considerable hardships on those who can least afford it in order to slash taxes for the wealthy and corporations, and to boost Pentagon spending.

We’ve seen this budget plan for four years running now, and thankfully, Americans have soundly rejected it time and time again. This year the cuts are deeper and even more harmful, slashing $5.1 trillion over 10 years with 69% of the cuts from low-income programs. It once again sets woefully inadequate spending levels for critical public services and slashes over three-quarters of a trillion dollars from non-defense discretionary spending (NDD) in order to increase defense spending by a whopping $483 billion. This would shrink non-defense discretionary funding by 2024 to 1.7% of GDP, less than half the level when Ronald Reagan was president. NDD programs are already being compromised by austere budget caps, but these additional cuts would incapacitate state and local governments, leading to massive cuts in vital public services and enormous job losses that would threaten our fragile economic recovery. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) projects that the proposal would result in the loss of three million jobs next year.

Entitlement programs that millions of children, seniors and the disabled rely on are once again a target. The Ryan budget would end Medicare as we know it and turn the guarantee of health care for seniors into a voucher, doubling out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries. And, it would lay the groundwork for future cuts in Social Security. It would gut Medicaid, impose inflexible funding caps through block grants to states, and shift enormous and unsustainable costs to the elderly, disabled and states. It would also repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), increasing even further the number of Americans without health insurance and eliminating important protections now enjoyed for the first time by millions of Americans.

Instead of increasing revenues to fund much needed programs to spur job and economic growth, the Ryan budget once again proposes tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit corporations and the wealthy. The Ryan budget also relies on the gimmick of dynamic scoring and sham accounting.

The Ryan budget would hurt families, kill job growth and send the economy back into a tailspin. We need solutions like those proposed in the Democratic, Progressive Caucus, and Congressional Black Caucus alternative budgets which support the middle class by creating jobs and protecting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other vital services. I strongly urge you to oppose Chairman Ryan’s budget resolution and support these progressive alternatives.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Federal Government Affairs