

July 24, 2017

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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 the "Minibus" appropriations bill which packages together the Defense, Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs, Legislative Branch, and Energy and Water funding bills.

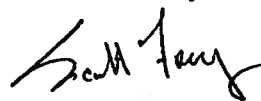
Congress should not craft funding bills that unilaterally violate the Budget Control Act (BCA) and the parity principle. In this case, defense is increased far above the cap while non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending is severely underfunded. In fact, passing this bill will not promote American security; rather it charts a direct course for deep cuts to the military. The defense funding levels would trigger sequestration in January of 2018, requiring cuts of \$72 billion. Further, dramatically increasing *only defense funding* endangers investments in essential public services. This is evidenced by House Appropriations bills' deep cuts of \$5 billion *below the current* non-defense caps and deep cuts that harm labor, health, human services, education, housing, transportation and other important programs. Instead of reaching a bipartisan agreement as called for by many members of Congress, this bill makes it harder to address urgent needs in other non-defense programs.

A budget deal remains the most likely path toward enactment of appropriation bills that responsibly meet the nation's national security commitments and domestic needs. AFSCME urges Congress to focus attention on a budget solution that provides commensurate increases for both defense and non-defense funding. This is the best way to avoid a fall budget showdown that would leave defense and all government programs, including state and local governments, in the lurch with considerable budget uncertainty and the threat of deep and damaging cuts.

We also oppose this minibus package, because it includes poison pill riders. This bill creates a new level of egregious riders by air-dropping in controversial funding for a border wall that is unrelated to any of the four bills.

It's time to address the most basic of congressional responsibilities, which means passing clean funding bills in a timely manner under regular order.

Sincerely,



Scott Frey
Director of Federal Government Affairs

SF:BL:mc
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