



AFSCME's Budget Priorities

Once again, Congress faces a fiscal crisis of its own making. None of the 12 required spending bills have become law or are expected to become law prior to the end of the fiscal year (FY) on September 30. Further, Congress has failed to allocate needed resources to deal with life-threatening public health emergencies, including the Zika virus and the Flint water crisis.

When Congress returns in September, only 19 legislative days will remain until the new fiscal year begins. With so little time, a stopgap continuing resolution (CR) will likely be needed. Following the elections, Congress should be guided by the principles forged in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 when completing FY 2017 bills, including the rejection of poison pill policy riders, ensuring spending parity between defense and nondefense spending, and providing agreed-to funding levels for federal programs.

AFSCME Urges Congress To:

1. Avoid any further government shutdowns by passing a short-term CR to ensure that the government can continue to operate beyond September 30.
2. Pass all annual appropriation bills or an "omnibus" package without poison pill policy riders.
3. Ensure that any increases in defense spending match increases in nondefense discretionary spending.
4. Increase funding for investments in essential public services to create jobs and to protect public health needs.
5. Reject any balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Avoid Any Further Government Shutdowns

AFSCME strongly opposes partisan efforts to shut down the government or delay funding decisions. Operating under a long-term CR is unacceptable because it relinquishes Congress' budget responsibilities and fails to provide the fiscal stability necessary for agencies, states and cities to operate effectively and efficiently. AFSCME urges Congress to pass a clean CR by September 30 if any remaining appropriations bills have not been signed into law, and to ensure that emergency funds needed to protect the public health are readily available.

Pass FY 2017 Spending Bills Without Poison Pill Riders

Congress must pass a clean spending bill for all remaining FY 2017 bills free of any harmful, ideological policy riders that would weaken protections for workers and consumers, or

prevent the government from keeping workplaces safe or hold big corporations accountable for wrongdoing. AFSCME has joined with hundreds of other organizations in opposing harmful riders that would prevent enforcement of important regulations, including those that mandate that investment advisers must operate in their clients' best interests (fiduciary rule), that require overtime pay that would benefit 12.5 million middle-class workers, and that would protect workers' health through an Occupational Safety and Health Administration rule on toxic silica dust in the workplace.

Ensure Parity Between Defense and Nondefense Spending

The House-passed Defense Appropriations bill employs a budget gimmick, transferring \$18 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds to the base bill. This clearly violates the parity principle as no commensurate increases were approved for nondefense programs. Further, the House Republican budget calls for an additional \$30 billion in defense discretionary spending for FY 2017. It is essential that Congress abides by its own agreement and ensures parity for FY 2017 between defense and nondefense spending. Any increases in defense spending must be matched dollar for dollar with increases to nondefense spending.

Increase Funding for Investments in Essential Public Services and Protect Public Health

An omnibus spending bill should prioritize investments in public services such as infrastructure, clean water, public health, employment services, public safety, child care, education, nutrition assistance and other vital services. These investments will create new jobs and stimulate the economy. Funding increases for these programs are essential to reverse the harm from Congress' mindless austerity that has shrunk federal investments to their lowest levels as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 1962, shortchanging many vital public services and leaving many Americans without the support they need. AFSCME urges increased investments in public services that help working families and strongly opposes cuts to these programs.

Reject any Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Amending the U.S. Constitution to require a balanced budget is a simplistic, dangerous answer to a complicated issue. It would put the economy in a fiscal straightjacket, making recessions more frequent, longer and deeper. It would impose indiscriminate funding levels, likely leading to more budget battles and instability. Further reductions in domestic spending would sabotage the economy and eviscerate key programs including education, public health, homeland security, employment services, law enforcement, transportation, infrastructure and many others. A balanced budget amendment would force cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, putting millions of seniors and other vulnerable people at risk. And, many proposed balanced budget amendments require super-majority thresholds to raise taxes, which would place insurmountable hurdles for raising the revenue needed to adequately fund vitally important public investments.