



## COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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November 15, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro:

On behalf of the Coalition on Human Needs, I am writing to strongly urge you to do everything in your power to enact omnibus FY 2022 appropriations legislation including all 12 subcommittee bills. Our nation badly needs the increased funding provided in the House Appropriations Committee bills. We face many increased needs, a great many exacerbated by the pandemic and its economic dislocations. For more than a decade, funding levels for vital human needs programs have shrunk, especially taking inflation into account. If Congress fails to enact omnibus appropriations legislation and instead defaults to a long-term continuing resolution (CR) with flat funding, we will seriously damage our capacity to respond to the multiple public health and economic crises we face. As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, you have a key role to play in working for enactment of an omnibus, not a long-term CR.

Members of the [Coalition on Human Needs](http://www.chn.org), including human service provider organizations, faith groups, labor, civil rights, policy experts and other advocates concerned with meeting the needs of people with low incomes, enthusiastically welcomed the funding levels provided in the Biden FY 2022 budget and the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. We have tracked nearly [200 human needs programs](#) over the past decade. Between FYs 2010 and 2020, we found that two-thirds of these programs, covering health care, housing, nutrition, social services, education, training, and more, had lost ground, taking inflation into account. In the past year, we have begun to rebuild. But the needs are also growing.

We now face rising prices affecting necessities including utilities, food, and rent. Flat funding from a prolonged CR would fail our people by not providing needed increases in programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The House increases LIHEAP by \$125 million; the Senate bill increases funding by \$175 million. Both these increases are too modest when taking into account that natural gas [heating costs](#) are projected to rise by 30 percent this winter and heating oil is expected to rise by 43 percent. Nutrition programs will also need funding increases because of rising food prices. The House has provided \$1.4 billion for Senior Nutrition programs, an increase of \$436 million above the FY 2021 enacted level. Responding to the acute shortage of affordable housing, the House bill would expand rental assistance to

125,000 additional households. These increases are vitally needed. Flat funding in all these areas would be simply unacceptable.

We have for some time faced a substance use crisis, and are projected to reach 100,000 deaths from opioid overdoses by the end of this year, up from about 93,000 in 2020. The House funding level for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is \$9.16 billion, \$3 billion more than current year funding. Without those additional funds, we will not be able to cope with the continuing increases in opioid addiction.

The pandemic has increased mental health problems. The proposed SAMHSA funding levels allow us to respond more adequately. In particular, House funding for various children's mental health programs increase by \$118.5 million over current year levels. This is a vital turn-around after years of erosion. From FYs 2010 to 2020, Children's Mental Health Services declined by 14 percent, including inflation. We must not return to flat funding when the pandemic has adversely affected the mental health of millions of children and adults.

Over the past decade, we allowed our public health capacity to diminish, and as a consequence we were not ready to cope with COVID-19. The House Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill increases the Centers for Disease Control about \$2.7 billion over the current year, allowing for the agency to rebuild so that it can more effectively respond to COVID-19 and future health threats.

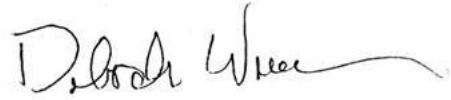
We know our economy is hampered by a mismatch between jobs available and people with the skills to fill those positions. FY 2022 appropriations proposals include increases in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs (WIOA), YouthBuild, Registered Apprenticeships, and Reintegration of Ex-Offender programs, as well as expansion of community college training programs. These will lead to jobs with higher pay and broadly shared economic growth. These increases are needed to overcome a ten-year 17 percent reduction in WIOA programs and to move us forward.

There are too many important programs to list here. But we do wish to underscore that children have experienced many hardships during the pandemic, including unprecedented losses in education. The historic increases proposed in Title I K-12 education for students with low incomes and in special education funding are urgently needed to help children overcome the educational setbacks they have experienced. Title I spending rises by at least \$16.6 billion over FY 2021, and there will be \$341 more per student for more than 7.6 million students with disabilities. The FY 2022 appropriations bills include many important funding increases to help families care for their children. In addition to the mental health, housing, and education funding already mentioned here, there are badly needed increases in child care, Head Start, early learning programs, and child abuse prevention and treatment programs. There are also urgently needed increases in funds to care for unaccompanied immigrant children.

The nation's recovery depends on strengthening a host of domestic programs that have been allowed to shrink for years, not just to get to where they had been before, but to respond to needs far greater because of the pandemic and its global economic dislocations. A long-term

continuing resolution would be a severe failure to address these needs. We strongly urge you to enact omnibus appropriations legislation including all twelve bills as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Weinstein", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Deborah Weinstein,  
Executive Director