



September 7, 2011

To: Congressman Dave Camp
From: Jack Kresnak, President & CEO, Michigan's Children
Re: Children and the Federal Budget

Dear Representative Camp,

Congratulations on your appointment to the Congressional Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. On behalf of the vulnerable children in Michigan, we urge you to take a responsible approach to reducing the federal deficit that addresses needed revenues and prioritizes sensible and effective investments in low-income children and families. It is essential that the budget does not further endanger the future of children but rather helps guide Michigan and our country back on the path to economic prosperity.

As you well know, children and families in Michigan have been hard hit by the recession. The number of children living in poverty continues to grow and children of color are particularly vulnerable as they are more likely to be living in deep poverty. The percent of children living in Michigan families with earnings less than the federal poverty level increased by 64 percent in the past decade with nearly one out of four Michigan children living in poverty. This increase in child poverty was fully three times the national average.

Children are the hardest hit in a recession when their families' needs grow at the same time that revenues supporting the programs that mitigate the impact of poverty dwindle. This problem is particularly severe in Michigan because of the state's decade long struggle with structural budget deficits. Federal spending cuts have deep impacts on Michigan families who rely on safety net programs during economic hardships. In fiscal year 2012, federal funds are expected to support 41 percent of Michigan's state budget including:

- two of every three dollars in the Department of Community Health budget,
- 66 percent of the Department of Education budget, and
- 82 percent of the Department of Human Services budget

Michigan's Children recognizes the potential danger to the country's economic stability posed by growing debt in the long term. However, we maintain that cutting funding for programs that support health, education, community partnerships and nutrition programs for children, youth and families as a means of addressing this problem is not only irresponsible, it is fiscally unsound. We urge you to prioritize the future of our nation's children and invest in every child's opportunity to reach their fullest potential to ensure our future economic success. Please protect children and families in the debt negotiations.

We will be following up with your office to further discuss the impact of federal budget cuts on Michigan children and families. In the meantime, we have enclosed several resources that highlight the need of federally supported safety net programs for Michigan children.

Thank you for your support for our most vulnerable children.

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