

Trump Budget Proposal Alarming

The Trump Administration presented their fiscal year 2018 (FY18) federal budget proposal to Congress this week and, as expected, the proposal is highlighted by substantial cuts to many programs that support children and families in Michigan. The Trump budget cuts Medicaid by \$800 billion, reduces the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by 20%, eliminates the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), eliminates the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, and reduces the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by 29%, among other devastating cuts to programs that help children and families.

- The Medicaid cut would result in the end of the Healthy Michigan Program and force the state to make extremely difficult decisions about whom to cover and what services to provide for Medicaid recipients. Currently, about 41% of children in Michigan are covered by Medicaid.
- CHIP currently funds Michigan's MICHild program, which provides health care for uninsured children who do not qualify for Medicaid. There are currently over 41,000 children in Michigan covered under MICHild.
- The elimination of SSBG would eliminate a significant source of public funding to support foster care and adoption support services in Michigan, and dismantle the social safety net that many of our most vulnerable families and children rely upon.
- The elimination of 21st Century funds would kill all public funding of before and after school and summer learning programs in Michigan. Programs that have proven results of improving the academic success of low-income and disadvantaged students in Michigan.
- Over 600,000 Michigan citizens living in households with children currently receive SNAP benefits, which are essential for them to meet the nutritional demands of growing children.

Congress will now begin hearings on President Trump's budget proposal and the House is expected to release their FY2018 budget proposal in late June. As your members of Congress head home for an extended Memorial Day recess, it is critical that they hear from you, their constituents. Let them know these cuts are unacceptable and you expect them to invest in programs that help children and families, not destroy the supports and services that children and families need as the President's budget proposal does.

At the state level, final negotiations on the FY2018 Michigan budget are taking place. Legislative leaders and the Governor are currently at an impasse over whether or not to significantly reform the Michigan Public Schools Employee Retirement System (MPERS). House and Senate Republicans want to eliminate pension benefits for new hires and transition

all new employees into a straight 401k type system. Governor Snyder is concerned about the costs to the State to make the transition and is resistant to the idea.

While some issues Michigan's Children has prioritized in the state budget debate have generally been agreed to by the House and the Senate, including increased funding for child care and At-Risk funding for schools, one important issue remains unresolved. Governor Snyder proposed increasing funding for the Michigan Youth Opportunity Initiative (MYOI), aimed at providing resources to children in the foster care system as they further their education beyond high school. The House budget agrees to Governor Snyder's increase, but the Senate plan does not. Now is the time to contact your state Senator and let them know this program provides life-changing opportunities to young people who have had to endure difficult situations growing up and urge them to support the increased funding allowing the program to be available to young people statewide.

Matt Gillard is the President and CEO of Michigan's Children, the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children from cradle to career, their families and their communities.