



# Society for Research in Child Development

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November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair Granger, and Chair Murray:

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) calls on members of Congress to avoid a federal government shutdown and pass spending legislation that includes the much-needed investments to support children's development. SRCD is a nonpartisan, multidisciplinary professional membership association with nearly 5,000 child developmental scientists. Our members come from many disciplines, including education, psychology, biology, sociology, anthropology, economics, public health and more. Our researchers' work looks to understand and improve the lives of children and our communities, while also supporting the U.S. as the global leader in science and innovation.

As Congress continues to discuss and negotiate spending packages, including continuing resolutions (CR), to avoid a federal government shutdown, we request that policymakers appropriately fund these vital programs and initiatives that support science, children, and communities across the nation. Additionally, we request that Congress reconsiders spending proposals for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) from Appropriation Committees and Subcommittees from both Chambers that do not provide the necessary funds for research-based agencies to properly serve the American public.

## **Support Children and Their Families**

Children and underserved communities have the most to lose when spending legislation is uncertain, as vital services are not ensured. Millions of families and children that receive federal financial aid through

programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), among others are at risk of losing their monthly benefit if Congress fails to pass adequate spending legislation. In addition, in the case of a federal government shutdown, the millions of children that are enrolled on Head Start and other federally funded childcare programs would be at risk of losing their slots. Rigorous scientific research has found these programs have led to a wide range of positive outcomes for children's development, including birth outcomes, newborn health, child outcomes, nutrition, reductions in poverty and criminal activity, higher educational attainment and college enrollment, positive economic and health outcomes in adulthood, and even the reduction of intergenerational poverty.

The uncertainty of a shutdown also affects health services available for the public, which can have negative effects on health outcomes. A shutdown could impact enrollment and other administrative processes within Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which could disrupt or stop vital health services. The uncertainty in Congress to keep the Federal Government operational creates unnecessary stress for millions of families and children that rely on these programs.

### **Support Science Funding**

The complexities of today's world need our scientist and research-based federal agencies to be fully operational, with the appropriate funding levels that guarantee we can strive to answer our most difficult social, health, and behavioral problems. Our members rely on federal scientific funding to help determine some of our most difficult social problems, such as how to address post-pandemic learning loss, how to curb the child and adolescent mental health and substance abuse crisis, how to ensure babies and children from all communities are supported with the tools to thrive, and many more. Failure to support these efforts would harm scientific innovation and research, diminishing our capacity to challenge societal obstacles and continuously improve American lives. Therefore, we ask for Members of the House and Senate to properly support research-based agencies.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) is the largest single public funder of biomedical and behavioral science in the world. The agency's support to our research community has created unique opportunities that have brought great contributions to both the U.S. population and the international community. The NIH FY24 funding approved by the House Appropriations Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee is \$3.8 billion less than FY23, while the Senate version of FY24 includes a 2% increase.<sup>1,2</sup> However, even with the proposed increase of 2%, it represents a cut vs. FY23 due to inflation. Furthermore, the House version included a reduction for new funding for the Advanced Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), and proposed cuts to other institutes, like the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Mental Health, among others. The House version also proposed a 12% reduction in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and a 18% cut for the Center for

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<sup>1</sup> *Senate Committee approves FY24 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill.* (2023, July 27). <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/minority/senate-committee-approves-fy24-labor-hhs-and-education-appropriations-bill>

<sup>2</sup> *Committee releases FY24 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.* (2023, July 13). House Committee on Appropriations - Republicans. <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-releases-fy24-labor-health-and-human-services-education-and-related>

Disease, Control and Prevention (CDC). Failure to properly fund HHS would limit the agency's ability to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans.

In addition, after the National Science Foundation (NSF) received historic bipartisan support on last year's omnibus bill, while also set to receive supplemental funding from the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, under this year's proposal from the Senate, the NSF would receive a 4% cut vs. FY23, which is \$11.30 billion less than the President's Budget proposal for FY24. The NSF is a main driver that ensures the progress of science.

In the case of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), we were concerned to see that the House Labor, Health, and Human Services (LHHS) included a reduction of 12.4% for IES for FY24 vs. FY23. Although the Senate version maintains FY23 funding levels for most IES programs, when accounting inflation levels, the proposed funding does not properly support the needs of the agency. As children across the nation are still recovering from the learning loss caused by the pandemic, the American people rely on the IES to continue its mission to address school readiness and education, which also includes children and students with learning disabilities.

It was in bipartisan spirit that Congress adopted the CHIPS and Science Act in 2022, which was intended to strengthen the United States's ability to compete while enhancing innovation and enterprise. We call for Members of Congress to once more fund science initiatives that fully support our underserved communities, our children, and our families.

As the current continuing resolution comes to an end on November 17<sup>th</sup>, we urge Members of Congress to work on funding legislation that keeps the federal government operational while ensuring that children's development, science, and technological innovation are supported.

We wanted to thank you for your time. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We work with Congressional offices regularly to help them create evidence-based policy to improve the lives of our nation's children and youth. We are always happy to help connect your office with experts who can give you nonpartisan advice on the science behind your work.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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