



Federal Legislative Updates

News from Capitol Hill. . .

April 8, 2011

STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, RETIREES: NO ONE IS SAFE FROM DAMAGING HOUSE BUDGET!

A budget proposal for fiscal year 2012 released by House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI) would attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class and our most vulnerable populations. The House proposal would, among other things:

- Make deep cuts to non-security “discretionary” spending – which would cause dramatic reductions in education services to students and ballooning class sizes;
- Dismantle health care for the poor, disabled, and elderly by turning Medicaid into a block grant program. Fifty percent of Medicaid enrollees are children and one-third of all children receive their health care through Medicaid;
- Cut the maximum Pell Grant award, dashing the dreams of higher education for millions of students;
- Extend the District of Columbia Voucher Program, funneling scarce taxpayer dollars to private schools while slashing funding for programs serving public school students;
- Convert Medicare into a voucher system in which recipients would purchase insurance. Under such a system, insurance companies could reject the sickest patients or charge higher premiums to the oldest.

The proposal passed out of committee on April 6 and the full House is expected to vote on it the week of April 11.

Take Action TODAY: [Tell your Representative](#) to vote NO on a proposal to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class and the poor. [Read](#) NEA’s letter opposing the budget proposal.

At the same time, discussions continue on a continuing resolution for the current fiscal year (FY2011). To avoid a government shutdown, Members of Congress must reach an agreement this weekend. With many in Congress pushing for deep cuts in education and other programs, congressional supporters of public education must hold firm and stand up against such cuts. At stake is funding for critical education programs like Title I, IDEA special education, and Pell

Grants – programs that are critical to ensuring every student the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century. **Your voice is critical to keep up the pressure for investments in education.**

Take Action TODAY: [Tell Congress](#) to craft a full-year continuing resolution that invests in education for our nation's future

ATTENTION NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS: HELP SAVE NBPTS FUNDING!

Discussions around the continuing resolution have included proposals to eliminate all “earmarks,” including funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). **We need your help to save this important funding!** The NBPTS improves teaching and student learning. National Board Certified Teachers are highly accomplished educators who meet [high and rigorous standards](#). Elimination of this funding would decrease the ability of over 20,000 teachers and other educators annually in all 50 states and D.C. to seek National Board Certification, and impede the participation of Board Certified Teachers in school improvement efforts.

Take Action TODAY: [Tell Congress](#) to protect funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

BILL TO REPEAL UNFAIR SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSETS INTRODUCED!

The Social Security Fairness Act, (H.R. 1332) which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, was reintroduced this week with [49 original cosponsors](#). The GPO and WEP unfairly cut or eliminate Social Security benefits that public employees or their spouses have earned. [Learn more about these unfair offsets](#)

Take Action TODAY: [Tell your Representative](#) to cosponsor and support passage of the Social Security Fairness Act.

TELL THE SENATE TO REJECT VOUCHERS AND STAND UP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

As we reported last week, the House has passed legislation to renew and expand the District of Columbia private school voucher program. NEA strongly opposed the bill, which diverts millions of scarce taxpayer dollars to private schools through a program already proven ineffective. Senator Lieberman (I-CT) is expected to try to move the voucher bill in the Senate by trying to attach it to multiple pieces of legislation coming to the Senate floor.

Take Action TODAY:

- If your Representative voted against the voucher bill, [send a thank you e-mail](#).
- [Tell your Senators to VOTE NO](#) on renewal and expansion of the DC voucher program, when it comes up for a vote in that chamber.

CHEERS AND JEERS

Cheers to:



Representative Mike Honda (D-CA), who sponsored and fought for an amendment in the budget committee to protect our students' and our nation's future by blocking proposed deep cuts to education and Head Start. The amendment, which failed on a 16-22 party line vote, was an important attempt to correct the backward priorities espoused in the Chairman's proposal.



Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH), who spoke eloquently in the budget committee in opposition to a budget that does nothing but ask the poor and middle class to sacrifice. Representative Ryan cited studies backing wise cost-effective investment in early childhood education and argued that we should be investing more in education.



Representatives Buck McKeon (R-CA) and Howard Berman (D-CA), who stood up for educators and other public employees by reintroducing the Social Security Fairness Act -- to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision.

Jeers to:



House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI), who proposed a budget that runs completely counter to our values as a nation, by asking our children, working families, elderly, and disabled populations to make greater sacrifices than others. A particular jeer to Chairman Ryan's characterization of safety net programs for the disabled and elderly as "hammocks" that allow people to become comfortable rather than helping themselves.



Representative Reid Ribble (R-WI), who, in speaking against Representative Honda's budget committee amendment to protect education funding, argued that money isn't what matters in education, what matters is holding schools and teachers accountable.