DRAFT

March XX, 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The XXX undersigned organizations—representing the full range of stakeholders in the programs of the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor—urge you to provide the largest possible 302(b) allocation to the FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee within the discretionary cap established by the Budget Control Act (BCA). Rebuilding our investment in these domestic programs will boost the economy and reduce the deficit through prevention of costly chronic diseases, increased earnings, and reduced expenditures for unemployment and other social service programs.

The programs and services administered by these Departments serve a broad range of constituencies and needs, but they all share a common, fundamental goal of strengthening this nation by improving Americans' lives. Despite their profound impact on American health, educational attainment, and productivity, many of these programs were deeply cut in FY 2011. Beginning in FY 2012, the BCA cuts $900 billion in discretionary spending over 10 years. Discretionary spending will be cut by an additional $1.2 trillion beginning in 2013 if Congress does not soon adopt a meaningful deficit reduction plan that addresses the true drivers of the debt.

With the rapid erosion of these critical federal functions, America stands to fall even farther behind our industrialized counterparts:

- The United States ranks 30th in infant mortality – widely recognized as a basic indicator of a country's overall health – behind even some developing countries.

- Scores from the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment showed that our nation's 15 year olds ranked 20th in science and 30th in math.

- The United States faces large and unacceptable gaps by race and socioeconomic status in student achievement, high school graduation, and college attendance and completion rates.

- Despite an 8.3 percent unemployment rate, our nation's businesses are struggling to find the skilled workers they need to sustain economic recovery, as a recent Manpower survey found 52 percent of U.S. employers are experiencing difficulty filling critical positions within their organizations—up from only 14 percent in 2010.

It is shortsighted to further cut discretionary funding in the interest of deficit reduction. We urge you to recognize the value of health, education, job training, and social services in improving the lives of American families and strengthening our global position. These discretionary programs should be protected from further cuts that will have profound consequences on our nation's global competitiveness and our capacity to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

We also urge you to work with your colleagues to prevent the harmful cuts that will occur to these programs under sequestration. While Pell grants are exempt from sequestration in FY 2013, all other discretionary health, education, and workforce investment programs will be slashed by as much as 9.1 percent on January 2, 2013. Education Department programs would be slashed by $4.1 billion, Head Start by $725 million, discretionary health programs within the committee's jurisdiction by $5.7 billion and workforce programs by $715 million.

Cuts of this magnitude will move us backwards in growing the economy, increasing jobs, improving global competiveness, protecting the health of Americans and increasing educational attainment.

If you have questions about this letter, please contact Emily Holubowich, Coalition for Health Funding (202-484-1100 or eholubowich@dc-crd.com), Joel Packer, Committee for Education Funding (202-383-0083 or JPacker@cef.org), or Rachel Gragg, Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce (202-223-8991 or rachelg@nationalskillscoalition.org).

Sincerely,