



President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Barack Obama:

On behalf of the Health and Human Services Network of California, a statewide coalition representing more than 100 organizations dedicated to promoting strong and comprehensive health care and social services in California, we are writing to express our serious concerns and strong opposition to ongoing negotiations over a potential deficit reduction plan that would impose steep cuts to life-sustaining programs, arbitrary caps on Federal health spending, and a broad shift in tax responsibility onto the shoulders of the middle class.

Any proposed deficit reduction plan triggering significant spending cuts to essential health care and social services programs would thrust California's most vulnerable residents into prolonged crisis, resulting in nothing short of a catastrophe for the state's seniors, low-income families, vulnerable children and the broader middle class.

In particular, we oppose reductions to Social Security benefits, the cumulative impacts of which would reduce benefits exponentially down the road -- placing countless California seniors at a much greater risk of poverty, displacement, and hunger.

We oppose the imposition of restrictive caps on discretionary spending, which constrain government from investing in the vital infrastructure necessary to revive our economy and prepare our children, young adults, and existing workforce to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized and diversified economy.

We strongly oppose any potential proposals that cut billions of dollars from health care services and programs, including staggering cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. The impact of such astronomical cuts would further shift the burden to California's already flexed middle classes, working families, and seniors, while at the same time disproportionately impacting vulnerable children under the age of 19, who make up half of all Medicaid beneficiaries in the country. The widespread effects of these astonishing spending cuts would be further aggravated by the imposition of arbitrary spending caps, like that included in the proposal from the so-called "Gang of Six," which would restrict Federal health care spending to 1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plus 1% per beneficiary.

In addition to widespread spending reductions, we are equally concerned about potential maneuvers to broadly shift a greater percentage of the tax burden to middle class families by way of taxing health benefits and limiting mortgage interest deductions, while at the same time pushing through additional tax cuts for the highest income earners and offering permanent breaks to companies that outsource jobs overseas.

Over the last four consecutive fiscal years, the State of California has cut health care and human service spending by more than \$15 billion. Hundreds of billions of dollars more in cuts to Federal health care

and human services programs would disproportionately affect those California seniors, low-income children, struggling families, and people with disabilities who've already suffered untold hardships.

Your leadership on this imperative issue is absolutely necessary. We strongly encourage you to stand up against these drastic cuts, and respectfully ask that you pursue more viable and sustainable options that extend the notion of "shared sacrifice" to all Americans until all of America is prosperous and solvent. This includes, but not limited to, allowing tax cuts for the wealthy to expire and institute the Schakowsky millionaire tax rates; end tax credits for the oil industry; and institute a Financial Speculation tax.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Health and Human Services Network of California:

Anthony Wright, Executive Director, Health Access California  
Nancy Berlin, Executive Director, California Partnership  
Paul Tepper, Executive Director, Western Center on Law & Poverty  
Reshma Shamasunder, Executive Director, California Immigrant Policy Center

CC:

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer