

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Leahy, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, advocates for the nation's taxpayers and fiscal responsibility in the federal budget, we write to you with several concerns about fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations. The agreement reached by you and your colleagues includes significant spending increases relative to FY 2021 appropriations levels, and makes no attempt to offset increased spending with cuts elsewhere.¹ We urge you to re-negotiate this agreement with meaningful cuts to both defense and non-defense discretionary appropriations.

In FY 2021, Congress enacted an omnibus appropriations bill that committed \$734.3 billion to security spending and \$910.3 billion to non-security spending, a total of \$1.6446 trillion.² Nearly \$238 billion of these outlays were for spending above Budget Control Act (BCA) caps – \$45.3 billion for security spending and \$192.5 billion for non-security spending, primarily for the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account and COVID-19 response, respectively. That means lawmakers still committed more than \$1.4 trillion to FY 2022 appropriations within the constraints of BCA spending caps.³

Your FY 2022 appropriations agreement saddles taxpayers with significant discretionary spending increases relative to spending constrained by BCA caps in FY 2021. The agreement will increase security spending by \$42 billion (5.6 percent) relative to cap-constrained spending in FY 2021, and non-security spending by \$46 billion (6.7 percent). The agreement contains no meaningful spending cuts (discretionary or mandatory) to offset these increased commitments. Unfortunately, the agreement also paves the way for Congress to increase discretionary spending even further in FY 2023 and subsequent years, which is exactly what happened over numerous budget agreements during the ten-year BCA era (FYs 2012-2021).⁴

¹ House Committee on Appropriations. "DeLauro Introduces Government Funding Legislation." March 9, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/delauro-introduces-government-funding-legislation> (Accessed March 9, 2022.)

² Congressional Budget Office. "Divisions A through L of the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 133, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Rules Committee Print 116-68)." December 21, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56913> (Accessed February 14, 2022.)

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See: Lautz, Andrew. "The Final Verdict of the Budget Control Act: Congress Cheated Caps By \$2.7 Trillion." NTU, September 27, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.ntu.org/publications/detail/the-final-verdict-of-the-budget-control-act-congress-cheated-caps-by-27-trillion>; Swift, Nan. "Play budget games, win expensive prizes." R Street Institute, July 23, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.rstreet.org/2021/07/23/play-budget-games-win-expensive-prizes/>; Taxpayers for Common Sense. "Budget Watchdog, All Federal — Episode 12: ABCs of the BCA." September 14, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.taxpayer.net/budget-appropriations-tax/budget-watchdog-all-federal-episode-12-abc-of-the-budget-control-act/>

We are deeply concerned that defense (i.e., security) spending in the agreement receives an increase even greater than the increase approved in the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which was \$25 billion above the Pentagon’s budget request for the year.⁵ Some lawmakers have sought this increase in the name of “parity” with non-defense spending increases.⁶ This long-running “parity” concept may leave Members of both parties with temporary political wins, but over time burdens the nation’s taxpayers with extraordinary losses and potentially crippling deficits for years to come.⁷

We appreciate that the COVID supplemental funding in the agreement appears to be fully offset with previously appropriated COVID-19 relief funds. Our organizations were among the seven who wrote to Members of Congress in January, urging them to ensure any additional COVID-19 public health spending contemplated by Congress uses already-appropriated but uncommitted and undisbursed funds from prior COVID-19 relief efforts.⁸ We also understand that the situation in Ukraine is an urgent one, but this proposed spending is not offset and will ultimately have to be paid for with more debt that American taxpayers will need to repay.

We urge you to re-negotiate the FY 2022 appropriations agreement, focusing on discretionary spending cuts relative to FY 2021 levels for both defense and non-defense appropriations and full offsets for any supplemental appropriations. If the March 11 deadline for government funding is a constraint, we believe a continuing resolution could carry federal agencies over until appropriators can strike a more fiscally responsible deal. Our organizations stand ready to propose spending cuts that would more than offset any new and supplemental spending.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Taxpayers Union
Americans for Tax Reform
R Street Institute
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

CC: The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Members of the House Committee on Appropriations

⁵ House Committee on Appropriations. “DeLauro Introduces Government Funding Legislation.” March 9, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/delauro-introduces-government-funding-legislation> (Accessed March 9, 2022.)

⁶ Krawzak, Paul M., and McPherson, Lindsey. “Defense appropriations likely to exceed fiscal 2022 NDAA levels.” *Roll Call*, February 11, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://rollcall.com/2022/02/11/defense-appropriations-likely-to-exceed-fiscal-2022-ndaa-levels/> (Accessed February 14, 2022.)

⁷ Lautz, Andrew. “‘Poison parity’: hawks demand equal boosts for non-defense and military spending.” *Responsible Statecraft*, March 31, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/03/31/poison-parity-hawks-demand-equal-boosts-for-non-defense-and-military-spending/> (Accessed February 14, 2022.)

⁸ “Coalition Shares Concerns With Potential \$68 Billion Stimulus Bill.” NTU, January 10, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.ntu.org/publications/detail/coalition-shares-concerns-with-potential-68-billion-stimulus-bill>