**disABILITY LINK - Legislative and Social Policy Report – October 2017**

|  |
| --- |
| Threats to the rights and independent living of people with disabilities continue – ACHA (in a variety of forms) and the recent budget proposals are the most concerning in a list of concerns….I began the previous Legislative and Social Policy Report (in July 2017) with the same sentence, much has happened in the meantime, but we are still in the same situation.  **The Most Recent Health Care Proposals –** The most recent of the variations of the American Health Care Act (AHCA), called the Cassidy-Graham Act did not go to a vote in the Senate before September 30 (which it needed to do if it was to be passed by a simple majority), and so it went the way of the other AHCA variations…for the moment. It must be noted, that all the recent “Repeal and Replace Obamacare” proposed legislation went far beyond the content of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and instigated huge differences in funding (including heavy cuts) to Medicaid which existed for 45 years before the ACA of 2010 (having been created when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed amendments to the Social Security Act on July 30, 1965). Medicaid is important to the disability community, not just regarding health care, but home and community based supports.**The Most Recent Budget Proposals –** On October 5, 2017, the 2018 Budget resolution passed the House. Next is the Senate, and then there may be a conference committee to resolve differences between the bills. Either way, both bodies have to pass an identical final version before they can proceed (I understand that some Republican staffers are projecting this will be wrapped up by early November, other sources are more skeptical).  The budget resolution is not the end goal, though Congress cannot realistically enact massive tax cuts without it. If the budget resolution passes, Congress will be able to proceed with reconciliation again, and that is the real goal here.  The GOP plan to use reconciliation to take a run at tax reform, it is anticipated that they will be using cuts to Medicaid and other basic services to finance it - the reconciliation process is familiar, right? The House and Senate will both have to pass a bill, the Senate will only need 51 votes, and it could either happen very quickly or drag out until the clock runs out (depending on the advocacy by the disability community, etc.) Here are some of the issues outlined in extracts of the letter sent on October 5, 2017 to Senators from the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities……***Re: Senate Budget Committee Vote on 2018 Budget Resolution*** *Dear Senator: The undersigned Co-Chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Fiscal Policy Task Force urge you to vote against the FY 2018 Senate Budget Resolution and the work requirement amendment introduced by Senator Kennedy. The Senate Budget paves the way to fast-track deep cuts to a wide range of programs that people with disabilities rely on for their health, safety, and wellbeing…**CCD is the nation’s largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the education, self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.* ***Loss of Federal Revenue, Tax Cuts, and Pressure to Cut Federal Programs*** *Passage of the Senate Budget is a critical first step in moving forward with the outline of a tax plan released last week. This tax plan would result in the loss of $2.4 trillion in revenue over 10 years, according to a preliminary analysis by nonpartisan Tax Policy Center (TPC). Such a drastic loss of federal tax dollars will create pressure to cut many important programs for people with disabilities in the long run, including Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and numerous non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs. The TPC analysis notes that trillions of unspecified spending cuts would be needed to balance the Senate Budget in 10 years and CCD reasonably fears many disability-related programs will end up being included in these unspecified cuts…* ***Affordable Care Act (ACA) Repeal and NDD Budget Caps*** *The Senate Budget would allow for, among other things, legislation to repeal or replace the ACA (including its Medicaid expansion) and lower the non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending caps. Measured relative to the Congressional Budget Office’s June 2017 baseline estimates, the Senate Budget would allow for cuts of $1.3 trillion, primarily in Medicaid and subsidies to make coverage affordable through the ACA marketplaces. NDD funding, which supports a broad array of disability programs such as housing, education, employment, and transportation would see $800 billion in cuts, a nearly 30% reduction from 2010 levels, adjusting for inflation. We strongly oppose these cuts.* ***Work Requirement Amendment****We oppose the Kennedy amendment to implement work requirements for all means-tested federal “welfare” programs. Any policy proposal with the goal of increasing work must ensure that a person’s basic needs (such as housing, food, health care, and attendant care) are met in order to be able to work. For example, Medicaid specifically covers services, such as attendant care, that are critical for people with disabilities to be able to get to work and do their jobs. Requiring individuals to work to qualify for this program would set up a completely contradictory policy.* *People with disabilities need a bipartisan budget that protects Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security and provides commensurate increases for both defense and nondefense spending. Instead, this budget targets the most vital mandatory programs for people with disabilities and doubles down on harmful cuts to NDD programs. Please reject this budget and work across the political aisle on solutions that will address our nation’s priorities without targeting people with disabilities.* *If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the Fiscal Policy Task Force Co-Chairs:* *Donna Meltzer, 202-506-5813 or* *dmeltzer@nacdd.org**;* *Kim Musheno, 301-588-8252 or* *kmusheno@aucd.org**;* *Annie Acosta, 202-783-2229 or* *acosta@thearc.org**;* *and Lisa Ekman, 202-550- 9996 or* *Lisa.Ekman@nosscr.org**.* *Sincerely,* *Kim Musheno, Association of University Centers on Disabilities* *Donna Meltzer, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities* *Annie Acosta, The Arc of the United States* *Lisa Ekman, National Organization of Social Security Claimants’ Representatives***Contacting Congress –** Below is the contact information for Congressional Representatives from Metro Atlanta and the Georgia Senators – communication from members of the disability community is essential – thank youLinda Pogue – Disability Rights and Program Director – 404-687-8890 x114 – GreenPogue@disABILITYLINK.org  |
| **disABILITY LINK – Congressional Representation****US Senator Johnny Isakson:** * <https://www.isakson.senate.gov>
* <https://www.isakson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-me>
* Atlanta office – phone - 770-661-0999
* Atlanta office – fax – 770-661-0768
* 3625 Cumberland Blvd. SE 3970, Atlanta GA 30339
* DC office – phone – 202-224-3643
* DC office – fax – 202-228-0724
* 131 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
* Staffer – William Dent –

william\_dent@isakson.sentate.gov * <https://twitter.com/SenatorIsakson>

**US Senator David Perdue:*** <https://www.perdue.senate.gov/>
* <https://www.perdue.senate.gov/connect/email>
* Atlanta office - phone – 404-865-0087
* Atlanta office – fax – 404-865-0311
* 191 Peachtree St NE 3 3250, Atlanta GA 30303
* DC office – phone – 202-224-3521
* DC office – fax – 202-228-1031
* 445 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
* Staffer – John Eunice – john\_eunice@perdue.senate.gov
* <https://twitter.com/sendavidperdue>

Find your Congressional Representatives - [www.contactingcongress.org](http://www.contactingcongress.org) or Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121**Metro Atlanta Congressional Representatives****3rd Congressional District - US Representative Drew Ferguson**: * <https://ferguson.house.gov/>
* <https://ferguson.house.gov/contact>
* 1601 E Highway 34, Suite B, Newnan 30625
* Local office – phone – 770-683-2033
* 1032 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone – 202-225-5901

 **4th Congressional District - US Representative Hank Johnson**: * <https://hankjohnson.house.gov/>
* <https://hankjohnson.house.gov/contact/email>
* 5240 Snapfinger Park Drive, Suite 130, Decatur GA 30035
* Local office – phone – 770-987-2291
* Local office – fax – 770-987- 8721
* 2240 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone - 202-225-1605
* DC office – fax – 202-224 -0691

**5th Congressional District - US Representative John Lewis**:* <https://johnlewis.house.gov/>
* <https://johnlewis.house.gov/contact-me>
* 100 Peachtree NW, Suite 1920, Atlanta GA 30303
* Local office – phone – 404-659-0116
* 343 Cannon Houses Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone - 202-225-3801

 **6th Congressional District - US Representative Karen Handel**: * <https://handel.house.gov/>
* <https://handel.house.gov/contact>
* 85 Mill Street, Suite C-300, Roswell GA 30075
* Local office – phone – 770-998-0049
* Local office – fax – 770-998-0050
* 1211 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone – 202-225-4501

**7th Congressional District - US Representative Rob Woodall**:* <https://woodall.house.gov/>
* <https://woodall.house.gov/contact>
* Lawrenceville, GA 30046-6935
* Local office – phone – 770-232-3005
* Local office – fax – 770-232-2909
* 1724 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone – 202-225-4272
* DC office – fax – 202-225-4696

**11th Congressional District - US Representative Barry Loudermilk**:<https://loudermilk.house.gov/> <https://loudermilk.house.gov/contact/> * 9898 Highway 92, Suite 100, Woodstock GA 30188
* Local office – phone – 770-429-1776
* Local office – fax – 770-517-7427
* 328 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone – 202-225-2931
* DC office – fax – 202-225-2944

**13th Congressional District - US Representative David Scott**:* <https://davidscott.house.gov/>
* <https://davidscott.house.gov/contact/>
* 173 North Main Street, Jonesboro GA 30236
* Local office – phone – 770-210-5073
* Local office – fax – 770-210-5673
* 225 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
* DC office – phone – 202-225-2939
* DC office – fax – 202-225-4628
 |