



July 8, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The American Lung Association strongly opposes the House FY25 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (FY25 LHHS) bill. The FY25 LHHS bill proposes a significant funding cut for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by 22%, offers flat funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), proposes the reckless reorganization of NIH and includes numerous harmful policy provisions that would threaten healthcare and health protections.

Our nation's public health infrastructure has been long underfunded, and this bill continues that harmful tradition - leaving our nation more vulnerable to global and domestic infectious and noninfectious public health threats. Investing in CDC pays dividends, especially when considering that 80% of CDC's dollars goes out the door to state, local, territorial & Tribal health departments and other public health entities. The drastic cuts to CDC proposed in the FY25 LHHS bill, including the elimination of the Office on Smoking & Health and for the Climate & Health program, will place an increased strain on the healthcare system, increase healthcare costs, decrease productivity, reduce educational outcomes and weaken our nation's military readiness. CDC should not be cut; instead the Lung Association calls on Congress to invest in the health of our nation.

This bill also provides flat funding for the NIH and a hasty reorganization of NIH. The NIH is a beacon of hope and a pathway to cures. Flat funding will lead to flat outcomes. It is imperative that we support our biomedical enterprise by providing it with robust, sustained and predictable funding. The Lung Association strongly rejects the effort to use the appropriations process to reorganize the NIH. Doing so without undergoing the necessary hearings, data analysis and review on biomedical research is a breach of procedural norms and protocols. We urge Congress to work in a bicameral and bipartisan way through an authorizing body to gather input from all key stakeholders and to conduct a thorough review of NIH operations and portfolios to ensure that any changes to NIH will improve health and accelerate results.

The Lung Association is also deeply troubled that approximately 40% of the House FY25 LHHS bill is comprised of harmful policy riders and other provisions that should not be included in appropriations bills. Policy riders jeopardize the health and safety of your constituents and make it even more difficult to pass annual funding bills. We are especially concerned about a series of policy riders that would undermine key public health, healthcare and climate protections.

The Lung Association urges the committee to reject the House FY25 LHHS bill as written. This legislation does not adequately fund the critical health programs that your constituents and our entire nation rely on and could stunt the biomedical research tens of millions of people in the U.S. rely on. The CDC & NIH are key public health agencies critical to protecting the public's health, promoting health equity and preventing future healthcare costs. Additionally, we stand in strong opposition to adding policy riders to appropriations bills, as they can undermine public health efforts. We ask the Committee to work to find a bipartisan path forward to a FY25 LHHS bill that provides robust, adequate funding that protects our nation's health and does not include policy riders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold P. Wimmer
President and CEO