



May 10, 2011

Dear Members of Minnesota's Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the organizations listed below, we urge you to take a responsible and balanced approach toward deficit reduction as Congress makes critical budget decisions.

Our nation is starting to recover from the longest and deepest recession since the Great Depression. Yet many Minnesotans are still struggling with unemployment, underemployment and rising costs for energy, housing, health care and other basic needs. At the same time, the federal government is facing a serious long-term imbalance between spending and revenues.

We urge you to support the following principles as Congress develops its budget and considers appropriations bills for the current fiscal year 2011 and for fiscal year 2012:

1. Congress's budget decisions should not undermine the fragile economic recovery now under way.

The nation's most pressing short-term need is to return to economic health. Dramatic cuts in federal spending will be a drag on the economic recovery and could cost the nation jobs. Cuts in federal funding to state and local governments similarly will bring about larger budget cutbacks at the state and local level, with a further loss of jobs.

2. Long-term deficit reduction should be achieved through a responsible and balanced approach that is equally divided between spending reductions and increases in needed revenue.

We urge you to support fair and appropriate options for increasing revenue as well as reducing spending. Allowing the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for high-income households to expire after 2012 is necessary and appropriate. Also, restoring the federal estate tax at its 2009 parameters would help to reduce long-term deficits.

3. Deficit reduction should not lead to an increase in poverty or inequality.

Low-income Americans and other vulnerable populations should be protected from budget cuts that would create undue hardship. In fact, all three major deficit reduction packages of the last two decades adhered to this principle.

We recognize that reductions in spending will be necessary to achieve deficit reduction. But focusing a disproportionate share of spending cuts in non-security discretionary spending – the area of the budget including our investments in affordable housing, medical research, nutrition, education, environmental protection, energy assistance and other vital services – or enacting multi-year hard spending caps with no flexibility is both unwarranted and unbalanced. This area of the budget is not a major contributor to growth in our long-term budget deficits, and such an approach will create significant hardship for the most vulnerable people in our communities and increase poverty.

4. A constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget is not an appropriate option to achieve deficit reduction.

We urge you to oppose a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget. Such an amendment would make it more difficult for future presidents and for Congress to respond to future economic emergencies, and could well make a bad situation worse and turn a recession into a depression.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the next federal budget and appropriations bills are responsible, balanced and reflect Minnesota values.

Sincerely,

Steve Francisco  
Federal Policy Director  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

On behalf of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the following organizations:

A + Home Care, Inc, Bloomington	Chinese Social Service Center, Richfield
A Minnesota Without Poverty, Minneapolis	Churches United in Ministry, Duluth
Affirmative Options Coalition, St. Paul	Clare Housing, Minneapolis
African American Family Services, Minneapolis	Community Action of Minneapolis, Minneapolis
AFSCME Minnesota Council 5, South St. Paul	Community Partners with Youth, New Brighton
Alexandra House, Inc., Blaine	Cornerstone, Bloomington
Alliance for Sustainability, Minneapolis	Dads Make a Difference, St. Paul
Anna Marie's Alliance, St. Cloud	Domestic Abuse Project, Minneapolis
ArtiCulture, Minneapolis	Duluth LISC, Duluth
Basic Needs Inc. of South Washington County, St. Paul Park	Early Childhood Resource and Training Center, Minneapolis
BeechWood Inc, Minneapolis	East Side Neighborhood Development Company, Inc., St. Paul
Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, Minneapolis	Everyday Tax Service, Ramsey
CABI, Minneapolis	Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation, Minneapolis
Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center, Hastings	Growth & Justice, St. Paul
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud	Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota, Mankato
Central Minnesota Housing Partnership, St. Cloud	
Child Care WORKS, Minneapolis	
Children's Dental Services, Minneapolis	

Hastings Family Service, Hastings  
HIRED, Minneapolis  
HOME Line, Minneapolis  
Housing Preservation Project, St. Paul  
Hunger Solutions Minnesota, St. Paul  
Jewish Community Action, St. Paul  
JOBS NOW Coalition, St. Paul  
Justice Commission-Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet  
and Consociates, St. Paul  
L.I.F.E.! Partners In Progress, Inc, Minneapolis  
Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis  
League of Women Voters of Minnesota, St. Paul  
Lee Carlson Center for Mental Health and Well-Being,  
Fridley  
Legal Assistance of Olmsted County, Rochester  
Legal Rights Center, Minneapolis  
Legal Services Advocacy Project, St. Paul  
Listening House of St. Paul, Inc, St. Paul  
Mankato Area Environmentalists, Mankato  
McKenna Corp., Bloomington  
Meeker County Emergency Food Shelf, Litchfield  
Merrick Community Services, St. Paul  
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers,  
Minneapolis  
Metropolitan Economic Development Association,  
Minneapolis  
MICAH, St. Paul  
Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance, Minneapolis  
Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council,  
Minneapolis  
Minnesota Citizens for Tax Justice, St. Paul  
Minnesota Community Action Partnership, St. Paul  
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies, St. Paul  
Minnesota Food Association, Marine on St. Croix  
Minnesota Naturalists' Association, Eagan  
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society, Minneapolis  
Minnesota Valley Action Council, Mankato  
National Association of Social Workers, Minnesota  
Chapter, St. Paul  
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, Ely

Northwestern Mental Health Center, Crookston  
Open Access Connections, St. Paul  
Parenting Resource Center, Inc., Austin  
Partners for Affordable Housing, Mankato  
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Minneapolis  
Productive Alternatives, Inc., Fergus Falls  
Progressive Action Alliance of Washington County,  
Stillwater  
Project for Pride in Living (PPL), Minneapolis  
Reach for Resources, Inc, Hopkins  
Ready 4 K, St. Paul  
Rebuilding Together Twin Cities, Minneapolis  
RESOURCE, Inc., Minneapolis  
Restorative Justice Community Action, Minneapolis  
St. Stephen's Human Services, Minneapolis  
Second Harvest Heartland, Maplewood  
Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, Grand  
Rapids  
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, St. Paul  
Simpson Housing Services, Inc., Minneapolis  
Southeastern Minnesotans for Environmental  
Protection (SEMPEP), Preston  
Store To Door, St. Paul  
TakeAction Minnesota, St. Paul  
The Arc of Minnesota, St. Paul  
The Family Partnership, Minneapolis  
The Link, Minneapolis  
The Mercy Hospital Foundation of Moose Lake, MN  
The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with  
Disabilities, St. Paul  
Theresa Living Center, St. Paul  
Twin Cities RISE!, Minneapolis  
United Cambodian Association of Minnesota Inc., St.  
Paul  
Vail Place, Hopkins  
VSA Minnesota, Minneapolis  
Wealth for the Common Good, Minneapolis  
West Central Industries, Inc., Willmar  
Wingspan Life Resources, St. Paul  
WIT Group, Maple Plain