

April 5, 2019

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chair, House Budget Committee
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the nation's nearly 3,000 local health departments that protect the public's health, I write to support the Investing for the People Act (HR 2021), which would raise harmful budget caps on federal discretionary funding in fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

Our nation's governmental public health system is a partnership across the local, state, and federal level. Federal funding is critical to support public health agencies at the city and county level to keep communities across the country healthy and safe. While our nation spends \$3.5 trillion annually on health, less than 3% percent of that spending is directed to public health.¹ Yet these are critical investments to prevent expensive and debilitating illness and keep communities productive and thriving.

If Congress fails to reach a new budget agreement in the coming year, overall non-defense discretionary funding would be cut by 12 percent (adjusting for inflation) compared to fiscal 2019 levels, with many areas sustaining far deeper cuts as Congress seeks to limit the damage in certain areas at the expense of other national priorities. The Investing for the People Act, however, would prevent this untenable situation by raising the caps on federal defense and non-discretionary spending by \$88 billion each in FY 2020 and FY 2021 and preventing the need for draconian cuts to critical federal public health investments.

Local health departments are currently combatting a number of high-profile public health challenges like measles outbreaks and the opioid crisis. This is on top of the important work that local public health departments do each day behind the scenes to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe. Federal investments in these efforts are critical and can only be sustained if Congress works together to raise the budget caps.

¹ <https://www.tfah.org/report-details/a-funding-crisis-for-public-health-and-safety-state-by-state-and-federal-public-health-funding-facts-and-recommendations/>



Thank you for your attention to the importance of protecting health in communities across the nation by ensuring a stable federal budget. Please contact Eli Briggs, NACCHO Senior Government Affairs Director, with any questions at 202-507-4194/ebriggs@naccho.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Tremmel Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA

CEO