December 13, 2022
Dear Representative/Senator:

The prospect of the federal government unable to pay all its obligations in the event Congress fails to increase the debt limit poses an alarming danger to U.S. and global economic stability. Such a default would lead to a steep rise in interest rates, a global market panic, loss of millions of jobs and loss of trillions of dollars in household wealth. Those who threaten breach of the debt limit are playing recklessly with millions of lives.

That is why the undersigned 168 organizations concerned with meeting the basic needs of people with low incomes nationwide strongly urge you to use any procedural means necessary to vote before the end of the 117th Congress to increase or suspend the debt limit. While there are many critically important issues that must be dealt with in the remaining weeks of this Congress, we submit that assuring the U.S. government’s capacity to pay its bills and meet its obligations is an essential act of responsibility that should be approved without delay.

Congress enacts spending commitments every year and also makes decisions about revenues. These lawful decisions have required the federal government to borrow money. If members of Congress refuse to adjust the statutory debt limit, knowing that Congress has approved spending and revenues that necessitate borrowing, they would be abdicating their responsibility. The consequences, according to a 2021 paper by Moody's Analytics, would be “cataclysmic.” There is no doubt that the cataclysm, whether in 2021 or in the near future, would be most harshly felt by people with the lowest incomes, and their severe hardships would contribute to a downward spiral pulling the whole economy down. If Congress had failed to increase the debt limit in 2021, Moody’s estimated that 6 million jobs would have been lost, unemployment would have risen to 9 percent, and a stock sell-off would have wiped out $15 trillion in household wealth. Even the threat of a default in 2013 led to increased interest rates in short- and long-term Treasury yields, a cost borne by taxpayers. If there were to be a real default, Social Security, veterans and active-duty military would see at least a delay in their payments; if the inability to fund persisted, huge cuts in government services would occur affecting all federal services, including health care, housing, the military, nutrition, education, and much more. Investments we must make in our children would be severely curtailed; protections for older Americans would be harshly cut as well. We know how vital these services are, and how much your constituents will suffer if payments are delayed or denied. With so much global uncertainty due to war and the continuing global impacts of the pandemic, it is unconscionable to add to economic precarity.

With the prior experience that even the threat of default causes harm, we call on you to take that threat off the table, and to commit to a substantial increase in the debt limit or a lengthy suspension before the end of the 117th Congress.

Sincerely,

20/20 Vision DC
ADAP Advocacy Association
Addiction Connections Resource
African American Health Alliance
AIDS Action Baltimore
Akron Bible Church
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Children's Campaign
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Geriatrics Society
American Society of Nephrology
Americans for Tax Fairness
Arkansas Community Organizations
Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Atlanta Pride Committee
Avenue Community Development Corporation
Blackbelt & Central Alabama Housing
Brighter Beginnings
Casa Baltimore Limay
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Child Care Resources, Inc
Child Welfare League of America
Church World Service
Citizen Action of New York
Coalition Of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Communities Actively Living Independent & Free
Community Access National Network
Community Action Agency of New Haven
Community Action Partnership of North Central Missouri
Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County
Community Action Pioneer Valley
Consumer Action
Corporation for Supportive Housing
COVID Survivors for Change
Criminalization of Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
Death Penalty Action
Demand Progress
Dominican Sisters of Racine, WI
East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)
Educare Learning Network
Empower Next Generations
End Hunger Connecticut!
FamilyAid
Feeding New York State
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Bank of Delaware
Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Food For Thought
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
Full Plates Full Potential
Futures Without Violence
Gaithersburg HELP
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness
Green Mountain Self-advocates
Habitat for Humanity Chicago
Health Care for America Now
Health Care Voices
Healthcare Alternative Systems
Heights and Hills, Inc.
Hispanic Federation
HIV Medicine Association
Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP)
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Hunger Coalition
Indivisible
Inspirational Gospel Assembly
Island Harvest Food Bank
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Family Service of Colorado
Johnson Park Center (JPC)
Just Harvest
Justice in Aging
Kansas Action for Children
Kids Above All
Kids and Car Safety
Laradon
LeadingAge
LiveSafe Resources
Main Street Alliance
Meals on Wheels California
Meals on Wheels Orange County
Methodist Action Program
Mile High United Way
Mount Vernon United Tenants
Mt. Graham Safe House
Multi-Service Center
Natchez Housing Authority
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Association for Hispanic Elderly
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Child Care Association and National Early
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Aging
National Disability Institute
National Employment Law Project
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Homelessness Law Center
National Housing Resource Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
National WIC Association
National Women’s Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Hampshire School Administrators Association
New Jersey Association on Correction
New Progressive Alliance
New York StateWide Senior Action Council
Northwest Harvest
Office of The Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie
One Roof Community Housing
Patriotic Millionaires
Prevent Blindness
Prosperity Works
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Justice Center
Rachel Carson Council
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, Inc.
RESULTS
ROC United
RootsAction.org
San Diego for Every Child
San Juan Center
School-Based Health Alliance
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of the Presentation
Social Security Works
Society of General Internal Medicine
Spectrum Health Care
St Francis Xavier Church
St. Francis Center
The Affordable Homes Group
The AIDS Institute
The Foodbank, Inc.
The Gerontological Society of America
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
Turning Point
Ujima Inc., The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community
UnidosNow
United Church of Christ Justice and Local Church Ministries
Universal Income Project
Urban Resources Inc.
Utah Afterschool Network
Utahns Against Hunger
Valley Oak Children's Services
Voices for Progress
Voices for Vermont's Children
We All Rise
West Chester Food Cupboard
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
Westfield Community Center Association
Witnesses To Hunger NH