

CONGRESS:

Moms Want You To Make Good Choices for our Families!

Right now members of Congress are discussing year end budget negotiations, which will be voted on in the coming week. The Trump administration wants to use our hard-earned tax dollars to finance his anti-immigrant agenda in the government's fiscal year 2019 budget, **including \$5 billion for a wall at the southern border.** ^[1] ^[2] The moms of America believe this funding is better spent educating, feeding, housing, and caring for our families and making the communities we live in healthy and thriving, rather than funding harmful and immoral policies.

The wall is not just a hateful symbol of exclusion and a waste of billions of dollars that could be used instead to improve the health, nutrition, and education of children. It also will be a disaster for the environment, killing wildlife by interfering with the migration patterns and impeding access to food and water. It will cause dangerous flooding and endanger the lives of border residents.

America's families believe that we all do better when everyone has the opportunity to succeed, which means investing in strong families and communities by using tax dollars to support critical education, housing, nutrition and health care programs.

Here's how Congress should invest \$5 billion in our families rather than a wasteful wall:



1. PROVIDE HEALTHCARE FOR 1.4 MILLION PEOPLE

The number of uninsured Americans has plummeted since the Affordable Care Act, with 16 million more non-elderly Americans insured than before (elderly Americans are eligible for Medicare). But, 28 million Americans still remain uninsured at the end of 2016. At the program's current costs, \$5 billion could provide Medicaid – cost-effective, quality insurance – for 1.4 million Americans.



**28 MILLION AMERICANS
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AT THE END OF 2016**



2. INCREASE FEDERAL AID TO PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS BY 30%

The primary source of federal aid to public schools is the Title I program that provides federal funding to schools that serve lower income students. More than half of all public schools in the United States benefit from the program. In 2017, Title I grants to public schools totaled \$14.9 billion.

An additional \$5 billion would be a 30% increase to this aid, and could make a big difference to our schools. U.S. schools are old, and many are desperately in need of updates, like expansion to accommodate growing enrollment, and energy retrofits to control spiking energy costs. \$5 billion wouldn't be enough to solve the problems, but in a world where citizens launch GoFundMe campaigns to raise \$75,000 for school heaters, it would be a good start.



3. DOUBLE HEATING ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP) provides support to low-income households to help them afford heating and cooling costs – it is particularly beneficial to our country’s aging population. Its 2017 budget was just short of \$3.4 billion, so a \$5 billion increase could more than double it. With its \$3.4 billion budget, LIHEAP helps about 6.7 million families afford heat, and 1 million families afford cooling.



**LIHEAP HELPS
6.7 MILLION FAMILIES
AFFORD HEAT**



4. FIX FLINT'S WATER CRISIS

Fixing Flint's contaminated water system would cost \$216 million. [3]



5. DOUBLE FUNDING FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

With the United States facing a disturbing decline in life expectancy, experts have blamed both an opioid epidemic and a historically high suicide rate. Substance abuse and mental health should be near the top of the list for increased funding. And yet the current budget for the main federal agency that handles both substance abuse and mental health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), received just \$4.1 billion in federal funds in 2017. Adding \$5 billion to that could more than double current funding.

**AN ESTIMATED 72,000
PEOPLE IN THE U.S. DIED
FROM DRUG OVERDOSES
IN 2017***

**THE FEDERAL AGENCY THAT
HANDLES SUBSTANCE ABUSE
ONLY RECEIVED \$4.1 BILLION
IN FUNDING FOR 2017.**

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[1] https://www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/politics/trump-says-hes-considering-a-plan-b-if-congress-rejects-his-demand-for-5-billion-in-border-wall-funding/2018/11/27/149014fe-f27f-11e8-bc79-68604ed88993_story.html
[2] <https://www.vox.com/platform/amp/policy-and-politics/2018/11/28/18112713/trump-border-wall-funding-shutdown>

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jun/06/flint-water-crisis-lead-pipes-infrastructure-cost>

* Source: CDC Wonder

Note: Unsourced budget figures are from Office of Management and Budget, enacted budget for FY 2017.

Fact sheet created in conjunction with National Priorities Project. National Priorities Project fights for federal spending and revenue policies that works for all of us.