

Dear President Obama, Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to ask you to oppose any appropriations bill that contains inappropriate and ideological policy riders.

With the passage of the framework bill for funding the government, attention now turns to how to allot the monies and what may be attached. Appropriations bills have been used before to undermine essential safeguards through “policy riders” – provisions that address extraneous policy not funding issues, and are slipped into appropriations bills to win approval as part of must-pass funding legislation. These are measures that the public opposes, and the President would likely veto as standalone legislation. The American people support policies to restrain Wall Street abuses and ensure safe and healthy food and products, to provide for clean air and water and keep workplaces safe, to prevent consumer rip-offs and corporate wrongdoing, and to ensure continued access to vital health care services.

These inappropriate riders are intended to advance the priorities of special interest donors and supporters. They have become the “new earmarks,” but they are actually far worse than the old earmarks, because they have vastly greater reach and consequence for the American people. Some Members of Congress have even gone so far as to say they are willing to shut down the entire government over outrageous policy riders like the defunding of Planned Parenthood which provides health services to millions of low-income Americans.

Below are just a few of the many examples of wildly inappropriate policy riders which have been attached to the FY16 subcommittee appropriations bills to serve the narrow interests of particular industries at the expense of public health, safety, workers’ rights, financial security, science, and the environment. These legislative proposals would:

- Prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from updating one of our most important air quality standards-the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone (Senate EPA Interior).
- Prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing or enforcing a rule that would ensure retirement savers are getting sound financial advice on their retirement savings (House Labor HHS).
- Force the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to redo a study on forced arbitration, a tactic increasingly used by corporations to deny consumers and or employees access to the courts to settle disputes (House Financial Services).
- Eliminate any funding for the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, created by Congress to provide federal agencies with scientific evidence to improve the safety, affordability and accessibility of health care to the American public (House Labor HHS).
- Bar the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from issuing a final rule, years in the making, to protect workers from toxic silica dust until it spends up to \$800,000 on an unnecessary scientific study to provide “epidemiological justification” for imposing exposure limits, ensuring further delay and more diseases and deaths. When the new rule is established, it will prevent 700 deaths a year and 1,600 new cases of silicosis annually (Senate Labor HHS).
- Roll back rules by the National Labor Relations Board to modernize and streamline the election process, block the Board's efforts to ensure that workers can negotiate with companies that control their wages and working conditions, and strip workers in commercial operations on tribal lands from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act (House Labor HHS).
- Weaken a pending Food and Drug Administration rule on liquid nicotine and flavored cigars by exempting these tobacco products currently on the market from any regulation; this will limit the agency’s ability to protect children and teens from these harmful products (House Agriculture FDA).

- Block the Securities and Exchange Commission from requiring publicly traded companies to disclose their political spending; derail the IRS from defining political activity for nonprofits, and prevent the administration from requiring federal contractors to disclose their political spending (House Financial Services).
- Continue to block rules that would place limits on the number of hours truckers could work without an adequate rest break despite safety concerns that trucker fatigue causes serious crashes and significantly increase truck size and weight limits. (House and Senate Transportation HUD).
- Eliminate the recently finalized Environmental Protection Agency rule defining which waters are subject to protections under the Clean Water Act (House and Senate Energy and Water).
- Block science-based protections under the Endangered Species Act for numerous species, including the iconic gray wolf (House Interior EPA).
- Roll back financial regulations in areas ranging from protections against irresponsible mortgage lending to limits on excessive borrowing by large banks, to undermining the effectiveness of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Senate Financial Services and General Government).
- Prevents the Food and Drug Administration from improving generic drug safety labeling so that it better protects patients (House Agriculture FDA).
- Prevent the administration from cracking down on contractors that don't comply with workplace laws (House and Senate Labor HHS).
- Place arbitrary restrictions on evidence supporting a healthy diet from the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and undermine nutritional standards for school foods provided to millions of American schoolchildren (House and Senate Labor HHS Agriculture FDA).
- Block enforcement of the Department of Education's 'gainful employment' regulation that protects students and taxpayers from career education programs that consistently leave students with debts they cannot repay (House and Senate Labor-HHS).
- Roll back the Federal Communications Commission's strong Net Neutrality rules, or put barriers in place that prevent the FCC from enforcing these protections for Internet openness and affordability (House and Senate Financial Services).
- Zero-out funding for private fair housing enforcement grants; prevent the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Justice from enforcing a rule that provides a unified standard for challenging discriminatory housing policies and practices; and prevent HUD from implementing a rule to empower local policymakers to create local solutions to address persistent barriers to fair housing choice (House CJS, Transportation HUD).
- Eliminate any funding for the Title X Family Planning Program, cutting the preventive care — including family planning services, well-woman exams, lifesaving cancer screenings, birth control, and testing and treatments for sexually transmitted infections — that nearly 4.6 million people currently rely on (House Labor HHS).

We urge Members of Congress and Senators to oppose flawed funding proposals such as the non-exhaustive list of examples above if they come to the floor attached to the omnibus funding package. We further urge the administration in the strongest possible terms to oppose any funding package that includes these or any other dangerous legislative proposals. If included in a final package, any ideological policy riders would undo key safeguards and protections for Main Street.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

AcademyHealth

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates)

AIDS Action Baltimore

Alaska PIRG
Alaska Wilderness League
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association for Justice
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Council on Exercise
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFLCIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Sexual Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Americans for Financial Reform
Arizona Consumers Council
Arizona PIRG
As You Sow
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN)
B.Komplete, LLC.
Blue Green Alliance
Breast Cancer Action
Bright Lines Project
California Project LEAN
California Reinvestment Coalition
CALPIRG
Campaign for America's Future
Caney Fork Headwaters Association
Center for Auto Safety
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Community Change Action
Center for Effective Government
Center for Food Safety
Center for Justice & Democracy
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Media Justice
Center for Progressive Reform
Center for Responsible Lending
Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH)
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Coalition for Health Funding and the Friends of AHRQ

College Access & Success and its Project on Student Debt
Color of Change
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health (ConnectiCOSH)
ConnPIRG
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Federation of California
CoPIRG
CREDO
Cumberland Counties for Ecojustice
Daily Kos
Defenders of Wildlife
Democracy 21
Demos
Earthjustice
Economic Policy Institute
Employee Rights Advocacy Institute For Law & Policy
End Hunger Connecticut!
Endangered Species Coalition
Energy Action Coalition
Environmental Action Center
Environmental Working Group
Farmworker Justice
Fight for the Future
Florida PIRG
Foundation for Healthy Generations
Franciscan Action Network
Free Press Action Fund
Friends of AHRQ
Georgia PIRG
Green America
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace
Harrington Investments
Hepatitis Foundation International
ICWUC Health and Safety Department
Illinois PIRG
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Science and Human Values
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Iowa PIRG
Jewish Women International
KidsAndCars.org
KyotoUSA
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University.
League of Conservation Voters
Main Street Alliance
Maine Public Health Association
Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network
Maryland PIRG
Massachusetts Consumers' Council
MASSPIRG
Mental Health America
Missouri Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Montana Environmental Information Center
MoPIRG
NAACP
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
National Center for Health Research
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association (NEA)
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network

National Women's Law Center
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
NCPIRG
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility Of United Church of Christ
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New America's Open Technology Institute
New Progressive Alliance
New Rules for Global Finance
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
NHPIRG
NJ PIRG
NJ Work Environment Council
NMPIRG
Nonprofit VOTE
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Occupational Health Clinical Center
Ohio PIRG
Oregon PIRG (OSPIRG)
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)
PennPIRG
People for the American Way
Physician Assistant Education Association
PIRG in Michigan (PIRGIM)
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Prevention Institute
Progressive Campaign Change Committee
Public Citizen
Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association
Public Justice Center
Public Knowledge
Rachel Carson Council
Real Food for Kids – Montgomery and Healthy School Food Maryland
Rhode Island Council on Occupational Safety and Health (RICOSH)
RIPIRG
Safe Climate Campaign
SafeWork Washington
School-Based Health Alliance
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Shape Up America!
Sierra Club
SMART-TD (International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, Transportation Workers,
Transportation Division)
Snake River Alliance

Society for Public Health Education
TexPIRG
The Arc
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The National Association for College Admission Counseling
The National Consumers League
The Wilderness Society
Trauma Foundation
Truck Safety Coalition
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW)
U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG)
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
United Steelworkers (USW)
United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities
Voices for Progress
VPIRG
Washington State Public Health Association
WashPIRG
Western Nebraska Resources Council
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health
Wider Opportunities for Women
WISPIRG
Workers Defense Project (Texas)
Worksafe