



September 6, 2023

Senate Majority Leader Schumer and House Minority Leader Jeffries,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge you to support only a funding package that honors the debt ceiling agreement and contains no poison pill riders.

Leader Schumer, in your [July 9th Dear Colleague letter](#) on the upcoming work period, you stated, “One of our most fundamental tasks will be to deliver on the deal that President Biden and Congress agreed to in June to fund our government and protect key investments in infrastructure, U.S. competitiveness, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, our veterans and more.”

Regarding the bipartisan debt ceiling agreement earlier this year, [Leader Jeffries, you accurately said](#), “And at the end of the day, any spending agreement that is arrived at by the end of the year has to be consistent with the resolution of the default process — otherwise, what was it all for?” You continued, “Because now all we're engaging in is right-wing theater designed to jam extreme, painful cuts down the throats of the American people. And Democrats will not let it happen.”

We agree. The bipartisan debt ceiling agreement was itself a painful compromise for communities who deserve additional investment and support, rather than arbitrary caps and harmful restrictions. That pain is precisely why we forcefully oppose additional concessions to Republicans seeking to make further cuts or enact disastrous policies. The only responsible path forward is to pass a government funding package funded at least to the level of President Biden’s debt ceiling agreement and without harmful GOP policy riders. This not only shields our families and communities from further GOP extremism now, but does not reward the reckless cycle of hostage-taking that some Republicans have engaged in.

We have serious concerns about the intent of House Republicans to weaponize the September 30th deadline for government funding to inflict yet another manufactured crisis on our families and communities. We ask that you forcefully reiterate that this repeated hostage-taking by the GOP will not be rewarded. It is abundantly clear that a responsible government funding package that can clear both chambers of Congress will require Democratic votes, so that package should not be a vehicle for the austerity demands of the Freedom Caucus or the extreme policy riders from the Republican party.

Despite the bipartisan agreement to avoid a default negotiated under the leadership of President Biden and leaders from both parties, many Republicans have made it clear they will not uphold their end of the agreement. The Republican-led House Appropriations committee marked up appropriations bills at drastically lower levels than outlined in the agreement — [cutting billions of dollars](#) from critical programs like k-12 and early childhood education, public health, affordable housing, and environmental protection. Republicans have also included [a host of dangerous, extreme policy riders](#) on everything from restricting reproductive rights, to demonizing the LGBTQ+ community, to infringing on the local governance of the people of DC. To be sure, Republicans know these toxic, unpopular policies

and funding cuts would not pass through Congress if they faced standalone votes, so their plan is to use the threat of a government shutdown to jam through their catastrophic agenda.

This represents a straightforward abdication of the debt ceiling agreement Speaker McCarthy negotiated. Even House Republicans recognize this. In response to the harsh cuts, [Rep. Don Bacon \(R-NE\)](#) said, “I feel like we’ve made a deal with the president. And yes, I would have liked to have had more cuts, but when you make a deal, you make a deal.”

Yet, even with draconian cuts and extreme policy riders, House Republicans seem unable to pass even partisan appropriations bills. To date, just one of the twelve appropriations bills has passed on the floor (which received zero Democratic votes). There’s nothing to indicate that Speaker McCarthy will be able to come to a negotiating table with a good faith offer from his party that could result in a bipartisan compromise, but instead he will be the mouthpiece for the most extreme demands of the right-wing of his conference. This is incredibly dangerous. Saying the quiet part out loud, [Rep. Bob Good \(R-VA\)](#), a member of the Freedom Caucus, said, “We should not fear a government shutdown. Most of what we do up here is bad anyway.”

As you return from the August recess, we urge you to continue to make your and the Republican position crystal clear to the public and your colleagues in Congress, and commit that any government funding legislation passed with Democratic votes in either chamber will protect President Biden’s deal and omit GOP poison pills.

As always, we appreciate your leadership. Our organizations and movements are prepared to fight alongside you against yet another instance of Republican hostage-taking.

Respectfully,

Indivisible
MoveOn
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Working Families Party
Social Security Works
ACLU People Power Fairfax
AFGE 3331
AFGE Council 238
AFGE Local 1236
AFGE Local 3347
AFGE Local 3607
AFGE Local 534
AFGE Local 704
American Federation of Teachers
Americans for Financial Reform
Avodah
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Pittsburgh
Campaign for America's Future
Care in Action
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Health Progress
Center for Popular Democracy
Children's Defense Fund
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
Community Change Action
Daily Kos
DC Vote
Demand Progress
Demos Action
Economic Opportunity Institute
Family Values @ Work
Friends of the Earth
Groundwork Action
Immigration Hub
JustLeadership USA
Keshet
Labor Campaign for Single Payer
Main Street Alliance
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
MomsRising
MPower Change Action Fund
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Nurses United (NNU)
National Women's Law Center
NextGen America
Our Revolution
People's Action
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Prosperity Now
Public Citizen
Revolving Door Project
Stand Up America
Take on Wall Street
Union of Concerned Scientists

United We Dream Network
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Voices for Progress
VoteVets
Voto Latino
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
#WelcomeWithDignity