



Easter Seals

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April 11, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

Thank you for releasing the Fiscal 2014 Budget Request. For nearly 100 years, Easter Seals has worked with the Federal Government to ensure that people with disabilities can live, learn, work and play in their communities.

Easter Seals shares the belief of your administration that the nation's path to fiscal security can best be achieved by a balanced approach. There are several positive elements of the Fiscal 2014 Budget Request. First, we are pleased that the budget offsets detrimental cuts caused by sequestration. Continuing the sequester cuts would make it almost impossible for us as a nation to address issues of importance to people with disabilities. We also support the priorities placed on early intervention, early childhood education, mental health services and brain science. Finally, we applaud the fact that the budget keeps the safety net provided by Medicaid in place for people with disabilities.

However, the budget does raise some concerns. For example, the chained CPI proposal, even with the good protections built in for low-income beneficiaries and long-time recipients could still result in decreased support for people with disabilities. In addition, we oppose the significant cuts to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and housing programs for people with disabilities. Some of the cuts to Medicare may also result in decreased supports for beneficiaries with disabilities. Finally, we believe the tax treatment of charitable contributions should not be altered in any way that might discourage giving.

Easter Seals appreciates the urgency for the federal government to be fiscally responsible and to strengthen our national economy. At the same time, we know that people with disabilities disproportionately rely on government services to live, learn and work in their communities. These services were created by government because the private market place would not meet the unique needs of people with disabilities.

We look forward to working with you as the final 2014 budget and spending bills are developed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Beh Neas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katherine Beh Neas
Senior Vice President, Government Relations