

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (OH-03)
Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Resolution Testimony
Thursday, March 2, 2017 @ 10:00 AM

Thank you Chairwoman Black and Ranking Member Yarmuth. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Budget Committee today.

The Federal budget is a blueprint for our nation and is a statement of our national priorities. Unfortunately, President Trump's proposal to increase defense spending by \$54 billion while decreasing non-defense programs by the same level will hamper our nation's ability to meet the needs of the American people. I implore this Committee to view such drastic cuts to non-defense discretionary spending with extreme caution, and urge investment in maintaining and increasing healthy living, affordable education, and a strong infrastructure – so that all Americans – not just a select few – have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

Education:

Our budget should reflect a serious, sustained investment in our nation's ability to compete well into the 21st century. If we want to position ourselves to propel our nation forward, we must recognize the importance of education in our workforce's ability to compete in an ever growing, ever changing economy. Providing children with access to high-quality, early childhood development is a cornerstone of human development and puts them on an early path to success, and at the same time, dismantles the too-often-traveled school-to-prison pipeline in communities of color. Moreover, the door to higher education should not be slammed shut simply because of skyrocketing tuition costs. We must make greater progress toward improving cost for higher education; we must robustly invest in education in order to create an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top. We must maintain and continue Pell Grants and TRIO programs to help make higher education affordable and accessible to students.

Affordable Housing:

Serving on the Financial Services Committee's Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance and as a life-long leader in developing affordable housing solutions in Ohio, I believe it is critically important for our budget resolution to include allocations that sustain current rental assistance for low income families, and fully restore the number of Housing Choice Vouchers that have been arbitrarily cut under sequestration. This would help curb the homelessness epidemic in our country, especially in our veteran communities, and assist the more than 11 million people who pay more than 50% of their incomes on rent. Safe, affordable housing, Section 8 voucher programs, opportunities for homeownership, support for community development are priorities that I believe our nation would be proud to see included in the FY18 budget resolution.

Infrastructure:

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the United States has a significant backlog of overdue maintenance across our infrastructure systems and a pressing need for modernization. However, we also have an opportunity in this budget resolution to improve the current condition of our nation's infrastructure in a smart way. As we look to rebuild our crumbling bridges, roads, and dams, we should also consider implementing policies that allow technology to help our constituents move safely and easily and provide access to jobs. In my Ohio Third Congressional District, in the City of Columbus, we are able to do just that – with its implementation of the Department of Transportation's Smart City Challenge grant. The Central Ohio transportation partnership is one of the nation's epicenters for intelligent transportation systems to improve safety, enhance mobility, create ladders of opportunity for those who have been left behind, and address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As Members of Congress, let's create a budget resolution that creates jobs and economic growth, fosters innovation and creativity, and increases the quality of life for working families while solving our nation's most pressing challenges.

Thank you, Chairwoman Black. I yield back.