

Statement of Principles for Women's Empowerment in the President's FY 2018 Budget

In his FY18 budget to Congress, President Trump has the opportunity to invest in real and impactful strategies that empower women to lead healthy and successful lives. However, given his administration's record to date on policies that impact women and early indications of the content of his budget, we share a profound concern that his proposal will strip away basic support for struggling families, reduce access to vital care and services, and disproportionately harm the health and wellbeing of people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, religious minorities, and low-income women and families. Cuts of this magnitude and breadth undermine women's "empowerment" in every sense of the word.

As organizations that advocate and work for the advancement and overall welfare of women and families, we join together to define a FY18 budget that in fact empowers women. At a minimum:

- **The President's budget plan must focus on improving the health of all women and families.** It must adequately fund access to quality, affordable health care, including reproductive health care; evidence-based health education; research; and public health efforts. This must include enabling women to seek services from the provider of their choice, including Planned Parenthood, and for programs to be unconstrained by ideological policy riders.
- **The budget must help women and families who are struggling to make ends meet and achieve economic security.** This means ensuring basic living standards through financial, housing, food, health, and nutrition assistance for those struggling the most. And it means creating a strong, inclusive, responsible, and sustainable paid family and medical leave plan that creates a true national standard.
- **All women and families must have a fair opportunity for educational and career success.** To that end, it is essential that the budget support accessible job training; educational opportunity; enforcement of critical civil rights laws that protect women and girls from discrimination; affordable, high-quality child care; and early childhood development – particularly for low-income families and in under-resourced communities.
- **The budget must adequately fund efforts to prevent and address violence against all women and girls.** This includes investing strategies to protect the rights of people of color, immigrants and LGBTQ communities to live and raise children free from state-sanctioned violence, and to provide for necessary legal assistance, housing, shelters, education, research, and training for survivors of intimate partner and gender-based violence.

The President's budget is a clear expression of the administration's values. Proposed investments or cuts reflect whether this President believes that every person in this country deserves a fair shot, or whether the American dream is only for a select few. For instance, if the President's budget includes funding to build a wall instead of proposals that break down barriers that have for too long limited the ability of every person to thrive, it will represent a fundamentally regressive vision for our country.

We also stress that the President's responsibility to support women will not be satisfied with mere rhetoric about "women's empowerment" and "investing in women," while simultaneously dismantling the policies and programs which are essential to so many women and families. The budget must also be assessed holistically, for no woman leads a single-issue life. Women and families will only thrive and succeed when people have the social, political, and economic power and resources to make

healthy decisions about their lives. Our elected officials play a critical role in leveling the playing field for women's empowerment.

It is against this standard that we fully intend to evaluate the President's forthcoming budget. If it succeeds on all measures, then so too will women in the United States. But if it fails on any, we will wholeheartedly reject it.