Oppose Damaging Cuts
to Critical Federal Programs

May 25, 2011

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 100,000 bipartisan members and donors of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I strongly urge you to oppose H Con Res 34, which is the Senate version of the FY12 budget proposal put forth by Rep. Paul Ryan. The cuts would hurt average Americans and have a lasting, detrimental impact on America’s economy. As Congress grapples with tough budgetary tradeoffs, it is vital that Americans’ ability to access education and health care not be sacrificed by shortsighted, ideologically-driven budget cuts. Although AAUW recognizes that these are tough budgetary times, a balanced budget should not come on the backs of students, women, and working families in the name of helping America’s corporations get richer by lowering their taxes. This budget would slash critical programs Americans depend on, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and federal student loans.

Since our founding in 1881, AAUW has been committed to making the dream of higher education a reality for all women. We also are deeply committed to equal opportunity and civil rights enforcement, as well as protecting women’s access to “quality, affordable health care and family planning services.”

Under this plan, Medicare and Medicaid benefits and eligibility would be dramatically reduced, even as more Americans rely on them. More than 41 million women are enrolled in Medicaid, meaning one out of every ten women in the United States receives her health care through the program. In 2008, Medicare covered approximately 25 million women, covering key services such as inpatient hospital stays, temporary skilled nursing, and hospice care. Restricting access to these programs would hurt Americans who depend on them for their health needs.

Additionally, the budget proposal would cut federal student aid by up to 15 percent and 2 million recipients, just as students and their families are trying to figure out how to pay for college this year. Due to the recession, more students are seeking aid and additional people are returning to school to retrain, making additional Pell grant investments crucial. This is particularly important given that the Pell grant program was designed to help low-income students and their families achieve their college dreams. Cutting Pell grant award levels would deny this dream to millions of students.

Again, I urge you to oppose H Con Res 34, which would slash critical federal programs. Cosponsorship and votes associated with these issues may be included in the AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record for the 112th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Beth Scott, regulatory affairs manager, at 202/728-7617, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

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