September 24, 2015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the over 170,000 members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you to support immediate action to keep the government open at the end of the month. In addition, I urge you to end sequestration in Fiscal Year 2016 and oppose efforts to defund Planned Parenthood.

Adding a provision to defund Planned Parenthood to the short-term continuing resolution under consideration today (S.Amdt.2669 to H.J.Res.61) is yet another politically motivated attack on women’s access to health services. Every year 2.7 million women and men rely on the wide range of health services the organization provides, including birth control, cervical cancer screenings, and STD testing and treatment. PPFA health centers are vital service providers in their communities, ensuring that the family planning needs for those on federally-funded health programs are met. For many low-income women and women of color, PPFA is their main health care provider.

In addition to ensuring the government stays open, Congress must stop sequestration and invest in the services people need. Cuts as a result of sequestration take a direct toll on our communities. The last time sequestration was in effect, school districts across the country lost billions of dollars in federal education funding. That meant larger class sizes, elimination of after-school programs, fewer teachers, and fewer resources for students who need the most help. We also saw cuts to other important programs such as food assistance programs for women and children, cancer screenings, services for domestic violence survivors, and federal funding for low-income schools.

Again, I urge you to take immediate action to keep the government open. I also urge you to end sequestration and oppose efforts to defund Planned Parenthood.

Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record for the 114th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Anne Hedgepeth, government relations manager, at 202/785-7724 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President of Government Relations