

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building  
Room 284  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Room 219  
Washington, DC 20510

June 18, 2018

Dear Senator Rubio and Chairman Hatch:

As organizations committed to improving the public's health, we are writing to express our opposition to using the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund) to offset projected spending in the Puerto Rico Economic Empowerment Act. While we wholeheartedly recognize and support the goal of providing economic support to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of several public health disasters, we believe it would be harmful to cut critical public health funding to do so.

As Puerto Rico, Florida, and other parts of the country have responded to recent natural disasters, the Zika outbreak, and other public health threats, the Prevention Fund has been a critical source of funding for state, local, territorial, and tribal public health departments and others at the community level. In fact, two thirds of the Prevention Fund goes to those jurisdictions. Today, the Prevention Fund comprises 12 percent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) budget. CDC initiatives supported by the Prevention Fund are core public health activities such as sustaining the public health laboratories that investigate infectious disease outbreaks like Zika and Ebola; supporting childhood immunizations; and providing services to older adults at risk of developing diabetes and other preventable chronic diseases. Florida, Utah, and Puerto Rico alone have received over \$188 million from the Prevention Fund for such activities. It is no exaggeration to state that the health of the residents in communities throughout the nation would be negatively affected by the proposed redirection of the funding.

Congress has already tapped the Prevention Fund for purposes unintended under the original authorization. While the original authorizing language designated as much as \$2 billion a year in new investments to modernize our prevention and public health efforts, as a result of previous legislative actions, less than half of that is available in the current fiscal year.

As a result of these decisions, public health spending is still below pre-recession levels, having remained relatively flat for years. Each year, even with passage of the FY 2018 Omnibus Spending Act, which added significant new funding, the Prevention Fund has helped to offset or prevent more serious cuts to the CDC budget – and ultimately to budgets at the state, territorial and local levels - due to the spending caps. The future scheduled growth of the Prevention Fund

will allow public health to make up some of this lost ground and increase investments in innovative programs aimed at better preparing the nation for future health challenges.

Reducing our nation's ability to prevent illness and injury will likely cause children and families to become sicker and our nation's health care costs to grow even faster. We will be more successful in our efforts to control the rising costs of health care if we invest in keeping Americans healthy in the first place. We urge you to remove this provision from the Puerto Rico Economic Empowerment Act. Thank you.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days

A World Fit For Kids!

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Advocates for Better Children's Diets

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association for Dental Research

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Council on Exercise

American Diabetes Association

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

The Arizona Partnership for Immunization

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

California Public Health Association-North

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

ChangeLab Solutions

Coalition for Health Funding

Community Activist

The Consortium

Cooley's Anemia Foundation

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

Endocrine Society

Every Child By Two

Health Resources in Action

HealthBEX, LLC

Healthcare Ready

HIV Medicine Association

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Immunize Nevada

Infectious Diseases Society of America

Iowa Public Health Association

Kent State University

Lake County Health Department and  
Community Health Center

Louisiana Public Health Institute

March of Dimes

MaryCatherine Jones Consulting, LLC

National Association of County and City  
Health Officials

National Association for Health and Fitness

National Association of Chronic Disease  
Directors

National Association of Counties

National Coalition on Health Care

National WIC Association

Prevent Blindness

The Prevent Cancer Foundation

Prevention Institute

Public Health Foundation

Public Health Institute

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Safe Kids Oakland County

Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe States Alliance

The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of  
America

Society for Public Health Education

Specialty Pharmacy

Spina Bifida Association

Trust for America's Health

Washington State Department of Health

WelCore Health, LLC

West Valley Neighborhoods Coalition