

**Gender Equity Coalition**  
Priorities for FY25 Appropriations

May 22, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Cole, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress deliberates on Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations, we, the undersigned members of the Gender Equity Coalition (GEC) and our partners, urge Congress to fund vital programs that directly impact the health, safety, and well-being of women, youth, LGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive people, and their families, at the highest level possible.

The GEC convenes 120 organizations to mobilize national grassroots and legislative action on the most pressing issues impacting gender justice from reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy to racial justice, from economic security to immigrant rights to civic engagement, from gender-based violence to disability justice to LGBTQIA+ rights, and so much more.

As organizations committed to intersectional gender and racial justice, we see the real-world consequences your funding decisions have every day on the communities we belong to, stand with, and humbly serve. The policies and programs we name in this letter are essential measures to help address the many inequities people of all marginalized genders – women, 2Spirit, trans, intersex, and gender-expansive people – face in this country.

As Congress considers FY25 appropriations, the GEC is concerned that the caps on discretionary funding put in place by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (P.L. 118-5) will have detrimental impacts on essential services and programs. These programs have a disproportionate impact on women, youth, people of color of all marginalized genders, and low-income families lives.

**Economic Security for Workers, Caregivers, and Families**

Recent years have seen advances for economic security for individuals and families alike, but there is so much more work to be done. The Child Tax Credit reduced child poverty by nearly half in just one year, but it has since expired with an uncertain future, precipitating a doubling of child poverty. Additionally, while the gender wage gap has narrowed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act and other civil rights laws, the wage gap persists—and has barely budged in the last

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decade. We have also seen dangerous tax cuts for wealthy people and corporations, which put the sustainability of essential programs like WIC and SNAP at risk. We call on Congress to protect economic security for workers, caregivers, and families with at least:

- \$325 billion in FY25, or \$500 billion over the 10-year scoring window, to fund a permanent, comprehensive, a minimum 12-week paid family and medical leave program
- \$13.05 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
- \$10 billion for a new First-Generation Down Payment Assistance program, with grants targeting people who are socially or economically disadvantaged
- \$910 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to ensure proper enforcement of our nation's employment anti-discrimination laws
- Permanent expansion of the Child Tax Credit
- Protection of the remaining funding in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to enable the IRS to increase enforcement efforts to hold wealthy tax cheats accountable
- Robust funding for the enforcement of labor and employment rights for workers by the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
- Increased funding for the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, including \$1.5 million for state paid family and medical leave research, analysis, and evaluation grants
- Twice the current funding for the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)
- Increased funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Rejection of attempts to cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as part of the reauthorization of the Farm Bill
- Full funding to renew and expand Housing Choice Vouchers
- A robust allocation of funding for the maintenance of quality public housing
- Increased funding for and protection of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's fair housing programs
- Dedicated funding to support the unhoused and those in need of assistance to cover the cost of rent
- Robust funding for programs advancing the economic success of future generations, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Youth, Workforce Pathways for Youth, Youthbuild, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), apprenticeships, and increased funding for Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
- Increase funding for Title II Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants to at least \$500 million

### **Health, Reproductive Rights, and Bodily Autonomy**

We have seen consecutive, record-breaking years of legal and legislative attacks against the

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agency and bodily autonomy of patients of all ages and restrictions on access to safe, quality, and often life-saving care when and where it is needed. To make meaningful progress in protecting the health, reproductive freedom, and true bodily autonomy of women and LGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive people, Congress must provide adequate funding for essential programs, including:

- At least \$150 billion to fund Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services
- \$512 million for Title X (The Family Planning Services and Population Research Act) and \$150 million for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
- Additional funding for Black Maternal Health research and policy solutions
- Expanded funding to close the Medicaid gap coverage, a key step to reducing racial health disparities
- Funding for research related to sexual and reproductive health care issues
- Increased funding to support breastfeeding families in hospitals, workplaces, and the community
- Funding to strengthen access to quality, affordable mental health services, especially for our youth
- A set aside of 10% of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant funding for violence prevention activities
- Increased funding for programs that will improve school and community supports for youth safety and well-being, including Project Prevent, Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grants, School-Based Mental Health Services Grants, and non-law enforcement initiatives under Project AWARE
- Increased funding for the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights to enable robust enforcement of the ACA 1557 rule, HIPAA Privacy Rule, and related programs

### **Programs to Reduce and Address Gender-Based Violence and Increase Public Safety**

In times of crisis and recovery, survivors of gender-based violence – including domestic, dating, and sexual violence, and stalking – need to be able to turn to reliable and fully-funded prevention and support programs. Congress must ensure these programs have the resources needed to support these members of our community when they are at their most vulnerable by committing at least the following:

- Funding for evidence-based, community-focused safety programs proven to decrease incarceration rates and reduce violence in our communities, including \$5 billion for CDC grant programs focused on community violence intervention and prevention, neighborhood mediation programs, and safe passage to school programs
- \$2 billion for the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) with no transfers to programs not authorized under the VOCA statute

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- \$2 billion for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) to prosecute illegal firearm traffickers and prevent guns from falling into dangerous hands
- \$20 million for the Violence Against Women Health Initiative
- A total of \$1.24 billion for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs across the board
- \$600 million for the Administration for Children and Families to sustain Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) and Domestic Violence Shelters, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, support for a Culturally Specific Public Health Approach for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CSPHA), Sexual Assault Technical Assistance Initiative, and the Sexual Assault Partnership Demonstration Initiative
- \$142.75 million for the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Rape Prevention and Education program, DELTA - Preventive Health Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances program, Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant (PHHSBG) Sex Offense Set-Aside, and Bree's Law (to address teen dating violence)
- \$75 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Specific Housing Program
- \$60 million to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) for gun violence research
- \$51 million for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to support the continued implementation of enhanced background checks
- Increased funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund grant programs that encourage and expand mobile crisis response teams, effective community-based alternatives to armed police
- Funding for the establishment of a "Division on Community Safety" within the Department of Health and Human Services, including funds for the Division to support communities working to implement safety programs

### **Justice for Immigrants and Their Families**

Despite important, measurable contributions to our communities, our society, and our country, immigrants and their families continue to be denied protections against violent crimes, including human trafficking, domestic violence, and exploitation in the workforce because of their immigration status. Congress can help protect immigrants and their families by providing at least:

- \$500 million for the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to address the backlog of immigration applications, including \$22 million in funding to ensure the timely processing of survivor cases, such as VAWA, U visa, T visa, and Special Immigrant Juvenile applications
- The inclusion of language that recaptures unused U visas from fiscal years 2001-2009 and allows them to be applied to the current U visa backlog

### **Access to Safe, Quality Education for Students of All Ages**

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Students deserve to be supported, respected, and empowered to learn in school. If students are denied the tools and resources they need to succeed, our country will never achieve its full potential. Congress must invest in our shared future by investing at least:

- \$18.8 billion for Title I under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- \$17.47 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start
- \$14.6 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including \$974.8 million for early intervention services under Part C and at least \$683.5 million for preschool special education services under Part B, Section 619
- \$2.3 billion for Title II under ESEA
- \$1.41 billion for Title IV-A under ESEA
- \$940 million for Title III under ESEA
- \$500 million for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program
- \$280 million to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
- An additional \$185 million for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program
- \$39.8 million for mental health programs
- Full funding and support for the Community Eligibility Provision, National School Meals Program, Healthy School Meals for All, and other critical nutrition programs to increase access to healthy, no-cost school meals for all students
- Increased funding for the Fostering Diverse Schools Program and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program to foster diversity in schools and in the educator workforce
- Increased funding to ensure students and their families have access to services like the Full-Service Community Schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and 21st Century Learning Centers that work to reduce educational barriers and improve the well-being of students

While the road towards gender equity is long, adequate funding for these programs will have an immediate impact on the lives of women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive people across the country. To achieve this, Congress must also stand firm against all poison pill riders on appropriations bills – including anti-abortion riders such as the Hyde and Weldon Amendments, attempts to further restrict abortion access for military service members and veterans, and attempts to limit the rights of or prohibit implementation of regulatory protections for students who are survivors, LGBTQIA+, and pregnant and parenting – which only serve to cause harm to our most marginalized communities.

We urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to fully fund programs that lead our country towards a future in which all women, LGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive people, and their families have the full opportunity to thrive.

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Sincerely,

9to5

Advocates for Youth

All\* Above All

Alliance for Girls

American Association of University Women

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

Black Women's Health Imperative

Care in Action

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

End Rape On Campus

Esperanza United

Feminist Majority

Feminist Women's Health Center

Futures Without Violence

Girls Inc

Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!)

Gutmacher Institute

Illinois Accountability Initiative

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Institute for Women's Policy Research

One Fair Wage

Jahajee Sisters

Jewish Women International

Just Solutions

Justice and Joy National Collaborative (formerly National Crittenton)

Justice for Migrant Women

Legal Momentum

Medical Students for Choice

MomsRising

Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity

Mujeres Latinas en Acción

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Council of Jewish Women

National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund

National Network to End Domestic Violence

National Organization for Women

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National Organization of API Ending Sexual Violence  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Resource Center On Domestic Violence  
National Women’s Law Center  
National Women's Political Caucus  
NMAC  
NOISE FOR NOW  
PERIOD.  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Power to Decide  
QueerDoc  
Reproductive Freedom for All (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice America)  
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)  
Shattering Glass  
Supermajority Education Fund  
Tahirih Justice Center  
The National Domestic Violence Hotline  
Trans Empowerment Project  
Trans Formations Project  
UltraViolet  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Women's Foundation California  
Women's March  
Women's Sports Foundation