



Easter Seals

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**Easter Seals Statement
Ways and Means Committee
US House of Representatives
Hearing on Tax Reform and Charitable Contributions
February 14, 2013**

Easter Seals shares the urgency for the federal government to be fiscally responsible and to strengthen our nation's economy. It is Easter Seals position that to achieve long-term economic stability, deficit reduction proposals must take a balanced approach. The federal deficit can only be reduced for long-term success by decreasing government spending, reforming entitlement programs and increasing tax revenue. While we know that people with disabilities disproportionately rely on government services to access education, health, job training and other services, our experience also demonstrates that government alone cannot meet the needs of people with disabilities. It is imperative that private companies and individuals participate in creating solutions that truly change lives.

Charitable giving is essential for Easter Seals to meet its mission of providing exceptional services to children and adults with disabilities and their families so they can live, learn, work and play in their communities. These revenues help children with mild disabilities access life-changing services that may only be available to children with significant disabilities. They also can help an adult with a disability who may be on a waiting list for support get the piece of technology that will enable him to get a job today.

Like many non-profits, during the economic downturn, Easter Seals has seen an increase in the number of individuals who need our services but who do not have the means to pay for them. Independent Sector reports; "From 2007 to 2010, charitable giving declined by almost \$24 billion as Americans struggled to navigate a difficult economy. Federal and state budget cuts have further overburdened and diminished the capacity of non-profits and have disproportionately affected those least able to help themselves."

Easter Seals strongly supports the current tax treatment of charitable contributions and urges Congress to promote changes to the tax code that increase incentives for charitable giving.

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