

February 19, 2013

House Ways and Means Committee  
Washington DC

**Re: Imposition of Limitation on the Charitable Deduction**

Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri delivers vital help to Missouri's most vulnerable citizens. We provide counseling and other mental health services to uninsured and underinsured individuals and families who desperately need help and cannot afford to pay for it. Our youth mentoring programs serve nearly 500 children ages 6-18 each year, teaching them skills that they use to deescalate violence and bullying in their schools and homes. Our staff meets with countless young women every year facing unplanned pregnancies to assist them by teaching them parenting skills or guiding them through the process of placing their babies with loving, adoptive families.

Our caring and generous donors make this work possible. Due to the economic downturn and a decline in state funding, charitable contributions from individuals have never been more important for us than they are now. We rely heavily on the support of our donors to finance our daily operations, and the charitable deduction plays a vital role in encouraging their support. The charitable deduction reduces the financial burden of donating money and makes it more likely that our donors will continue to give. Imposing limitations on such deductions would likely cause many donors to cut back on their contributions at a time of critical demand.

In light of countless recent acts of violence in our country by individuals suffering from mental illness, our work has never been more relevant than it is now. The support of our donors is imperative to our ability to continue delivering services to those who are least able to help themselves. The charitable deduction strongly influences the amount and frequency of our donors' willingness to give. We, at Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri, respectfully urge you not to impose a limitation on the charitable deduction so that our donors will continue providing the critical funding that is necessary for us to improve the lives of Missouri's most fragile citizens.

Respectfully submitted,



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