



*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*

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March 14, 2016

Chairman Kevin Brady  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Sander M. Levin  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin,

I am writing to express the strong opposition of The Arc of the United States (The Arc) to proposals to eliminate or reduce the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), including H.R. 4724, the “Reducing Duplicative and Ineffective Federal Funding Act”.

The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We have more than 650 state and local chapters across the United States. We are concerned that proposals to eliminate the SSBG could harm people with disabilities and their families, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The SSBG helps provide critical assistance to approximately 30 million people with disabilities, seniors, and children across the United States. Vital services that many people with disabilities and their families access under the SSBG include respite care and transportation; Meals on Wheels and other supportive services for seniors; child care and related assistance for children; and child protective services for at risk children. Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2012, approximately 11% of SSBG expenditures were for targeted “special services” for people with disabilities in 21 states.

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the SSBG can provide invaluable supports not available from other sources, and can help leverage state and local funding to deliver essential services.

For example, in New Jersey the SSBG helps fund an Independent Living program operated by The Arc of Bergen and Passaic Counties. The program assists low-income people with developmental disabilities who are not receiving services and supports from state programs at the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Some are individuals with developmental disabilities on a waiting list for New Jersey DDD services, but most are individuals who have developmental disabilities but who do not qualify for New Jersey DDD services, for example because they are ineligible for Medicaid.

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Under the program, The Arc of Bergen and Passaic Counties receives referrals from homeless shelters, mental health providers, and other agencies and often provides emergency stabilization for referred individuals and families who are in crisis. The program provides people with developmental disabilities with individualized supports that they would not otherwise be able to access, such as:

- locating and maintaining housing;
- landlord relations;
- job search and employer/employee relations;
- budgeting, bill paying, and other financial challenges; and
- accessing medical and mental health care.

SSBG funds leverage matching County contributions as well as funding from the Community Development Block Grant. Without the SSBG portion, the program would not be viable.

New Jersey's program is an example of how the SSBG can fill gaps in a state's service continuum and act as a lifeline for people with disabilities. Eliminating the SSBG would reduce essential funding at a time when many state and local budgets continue to experience ongoing financial pressure and many people with disabilities, seniors, and families are in urgent need of assistance.

In closing, The Arc believes that eliminating or reducing the SSBG would significantly harm people with disabilities and their families. We strongly oppose proposals to cut or eliminate this important and unique program, and we urge you to protect and preserve the SSBG.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

T.J. Sutcliffe  
Director, Income and Housing Policy

cc: Members, Committee on Ways and Means