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Sr. Simone Campbell Responds to President's "Skinny Budget"

Skinny Budget is the opposite of a faithful budget

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This morning, President Trump released his "Skinny Budget" – a plan light on details but full of devastating cuts that would harm the most vulnerable people in our society.

In response, **Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, known for leading the Nuns on the Bus trip to speak out against Congressman Paul Ryan's budget proposals, said,** "Donald Trump campaigned claiming that he was going to 'Make America great again,' but in reality, the devastating cuts in his proposal breaks those promises and would harm the lives and livelihoods of Americans all across the country. Further, the President's budget choices on housing, healthcare, homeland security, and the census all disproportionately affect the same group of people – women, people of color, and all at the economic margins."

Sr. Simone continued, "**NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice instead calls for a Faithful Budget, which acknowledges that when people at the economic margins do better, we all do better.** The President's Budget is not a faithful budget; it eviscerates funding for housing, doesn't fund the census, and creates more demand for mass deportation and detention while funding a massive and impractical border wall."

"The President's Budget does not reflect the values and priorities of everyday Americans. It does nothing to mend the gaps in income and wealth inequality, and instead will widen the gaps between the wealthiest and those at the economic margins of our communities," Sister Simone concluded. "It's no surprise that President Trump would prioritize the wealthiest in our nation, but **Congress must ignore this 'Skinny Budget' preferencing 'fat cats' and prioritize common sense and compassion in housing, census, and homeland security funding as they move forward with FY2017 budget negotiations.**"

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NETWORK, a national Catholic Social Justice lobby, which educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation, has a more than 40-year track record of lobbying for critical federal programs that support those at the margins and prioritize the common good.

NETWORK Priorities for a Faithful Budget to finish FY2017

Housing

Housing is a basic human right and a moral issue. A safe residence is essential in order for a person to meet other human needs. Currently, housing is not affordable for people with low to moderate incomes and many spend too high a percentage of their income on rent for inadequate and dangerous dwellings.

NETWORK Lobby calls on Congress to increase funding for housing vouchers by \$1.8 billion over the 2016 funding level, which will ensure funding for the same number of vouchers used in 2016. Without this increase, approximately 25,000 households will lose assistance. In the 2017 Continuing Resolution, 108,522 vouchers have already been cut.

NETWORK Lobby calls on Congress to increase funding for housing for extremely-low-income households. Congress should reform the Mortgage Interest Deduction to lower the maximum on which the deduction can be taken from \$1,000,000 to \$500,000 and invest the savings in acquisition of housing units for low-income families

Census

In preparation for the 2020 Census, NETWORK supports an increase in funding for the Census Bureau. Past decennial censuses frequently undercount communities of color, people experiencing poverty, immigrants, young children, Native Americans, and rural residents. The systematic undercounting of these communities decreases their access to federal funding and proportional representation. The Census Bureau must receive increased funding to conduct necessary tests to improve the counting of vulnerable communities and prepare for 2020.

NETWORK Lobby calls on Congress to increase funding for the remainder of FY2017, and meet the Census Bureau's budget request. Congress should assure the Census Bureau that it will receive a sufficient increase for FY2017 so the Census Bureau can move forward with thorough planning and preparations on schedule.

Homeland Security

NETWORK rejects the proposition that more money should be spent on immigration enforcement (detention, deportation, and/or a border wall). The federal government spends more enforcing our immigration laws than on all other federal enforcement combined. Since the creation of DHS in 2003, the Customs and Border Patrol budget has more than doubled, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement spending has grown 85%. **NETWORK Lobby calls on Congress to reject additional increases to Homeland Security funding.** Increases are unnecessary when we already have miles of physical barriers, surveillance tools, thermal imaging sensors, stadium lighting, ground sensors, staff and drones as part of our vast infrastructure policing our southern border. Additional spending is unneeded and wasteful.