



June 10, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Representative Boehner,

On behalf of the members of the American Public Human Services Association I write with utmost urgency to urge you to oppose the Administration's proposed cut of \$260,235 million in offsets to the Social Services Block Grant. This reduction is in addition to the Administration's budget request that already calls for a \$500 million cut; bringing the total proposed FY 2009 reductions to over \$760 million.

During the welfare reform debate of 1996 Congress reduced the SSBG funding to \$2.38 billion for 5 years, with the intention to return it to its former level of \$2.8 billion in 2003. These reductions were agreed to at a time when members of both parties and both chambers were looking for avenues to balance the federal budget. SSBG made a significant contribution to deficit reduction and was to be restored to its full funding in 2003 when the fiscal condition improved. Unfortunately, Congress did not live up to its agreement and further reduced the SSBG in 1998 to \$1.7 billion. SSBG has remained at that funding level ever since. The budget cuts and lack of funding to keep up with inflation over the last ten years have already forced social services providers to discontinue services to children, families, the elderly and people with disabilities. Further reductions to this program, in tandem with cuts already made to programs serving these populations, will place families in harm and force communities to eliminate additional services and impose drastic cuts on those that remain.

SSBG has already contributed to deficit reduction and imposing additional cuts to SSBG will have serious consequences. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to reject the Administration's reduction to this critical source of funding for our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry W. Friedman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

Jerry W. Friedman
Executive Director
American Public Human Services Association

Cc:

The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Jim McCrery
The Honorable David Obey
The Honorable James Walsh
The Honorable Robert Byrd
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Kent Conrad