

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Room 3E880
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

On January 10, 2023, House Republican Leadership reportedly unveiled a plan to cap fiscal year 2024 discretionary spending at the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. The details of this policy have not been publicly released—some reports have described the policy as returning defense spending to its 2022 level, other reports have suggested that only nondefense programs would be cut, and it is not clear how this plan would impact the \$31 billion increase to Veterans Medical Care that was enacted into law by the 2023 omnibus. With the introduction of this plan as the 2024 appropriations process gets underway, it is incumbent on Members of Congress to understand its potential impacts. As such, I am writing to agency heads across the federal government for an analysis of what such cuts will mean to services impacting the American people.

A preliminary examination of this blueprint suggests this proposed policy would harm communities across the country and our national security interests around the world. My analysis indicates that taking discretionary spending back to the fiscal year 2022 level could roll back bipartisan efforts recently enacted to lower the cost of living for hard working families; create better-paying jobs; support federal, state, and local law enforcement; strengthen our national security; and protect our environment. This includes the funding of the following authorized bipartisan efforts in the fiscal year 2023 omnibus: the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2022, the Honoring our PACT Act of 2022, and the CHIPS Act of 2022.

Given these potential outcomes, the American people and Members of Congress deserve to know the real impact this policy would have on the economy, their neighborhoods, and other essential government functions that keep people healthy and safe. For example: How will these cuts impact the cost of living? How will they impact first responders' ability to keep our communities safe? How will these cuts affect our national security and global interests around the world? How will schools function under these cuts? How will these cuts impact food safety and the number of inspections? Will they decrease the quality of care and resources we are able to provide our Veterans? How will they impact projects underway to fix our infrastructure? How will these cuts affect our environment and our ability to combat climate change?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Please respond to this request in writing no later than February 3, 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosa L. DeLauro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a stylized "L" and "D".

Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations