

A Cold, Drafty Valentine for Low Income and Working Families in President Trump's Proposed Budget

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Trump calls for elimination of Legal Services Corp and home energy assistance; supports drastic cuts and changes to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Washington - President Trump's proposed budget once again seeks to eliminate funding for programs that have bipartisan support that help rural families, elders, struggling families and veterans, according to advocates at the National Consumer Law Center. Additionally, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Consumer Bureau) would be severely weakened due to drastic cuts and changes to weaken its independence.

"Legal services programs serving urban and rural areas in every state around the country are there for veterans, seniors and struggling families when they need legal help to transition from military service, to save their homes from foreclosure, to protect the Social Security funds they need to buy food, or to stop domestic violence," said **Rich DuBois, executive director of the National Consumer Law Center**. In the words of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, the Legal Services Program 'pursues the most fundamental of American ideals, and it pursues equal justice in those areas of life most important to the lives of our citizens,'" **he added.**

LSC has broad bipartisan support, and the proposed elimination of LSC last year was opposed by the heads of over 150 law firms in all 50 states, 185 leaders of corporate legal departments, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators.

"The budget proposes drastic cuts to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and changes that would weaken its independence from Wall Street lobbyists," **added Lauren Saunders, associate director of the National Consumer Law Center.**

The proposed budget would also eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the low-income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) program — three safety net programs that protect the health and safety of low-income families who have trouble paying their energy bills, and provide the core funding for the front-line community groups that deliver these programs in all 50 states.

"President Trump's proposed budget for FY 2019 leaves poor elders, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children out in the cold by zeroing out funding for three critical health and safety programs," **said Olivia Wein, staff attorney with the National Consumer Law Center.** "We urge Congress to have a heart and adequately fund these essential programs."

LIHEAP and WAP are targeted to help vulnerable populations, including the elderly and families with young children, which are at risk from severe health complications, including death, from frigid winters and sweltering summers. LIHEAP provides bill assistance for families so they can afford essential home heating and cooling to stay safe. WAP provides cost-effective long-term measures to

make drafty homes weather-tight and lower energy bills year after year. CSBG funds community action agencies that are the front-line service agencies that deliver LIHEAP and WAP assistance.

“As a candidate, President Trump said he would work for ordinary families but his draconian Valentine’s week cuts will result in heart ache for regular Americans, especially our most vulnerable families,” **added Saunders.**