March 14, 2013

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C.

Dear Representative:

AIDS United and our diverse partner organizations **strongly urge you to vote “No” on the FY 2014 House Concurrent Budget Resolution adopted by the House Committee on the Budget.** AIDS United, with more than 25 years of serving the interests of people living with and affected by HIV combines advocacy, strategic grant-making, and capacity building. In 2011 alone, AIDS United supported 250+ CBOs, serving over 10,000 people, and was the voice of thousands of activists in 27 states, DC and Puerto Rico.

This budget will, if enacted, result in rekindling the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States. The FY 2014 budget plan would necessarily result in a drastic reduction of Medicaid funding. In addition, the budget proposes repealing the Affordable Care Act and creating a “premium support” system for Medicare for those 54 and younger. Such a premium support system, similar to a voucher system, will essentially cap Medicare support at levels that are unlikely to cover the premium costs of people living with HIV. Altogether, these changes will deny health coverage to millions of Americans, including thousands of people living with HIV. Ultimately this means that many people living with HIV would not be eligible for Medicaid or lose eligibility. Many of those who would remain eligible will no longer have access to robust medical care or drug formulary needed to remain healthy.

Those who became ineligible for Medicaid or health exchanges would also find that safety net funding for HIV treatment and care such as the Ryan White Program would receive drastic cuts as part of the non-defense discretionary budget. In short, many would receive care only through emergency rooms and would likely be forced to turn to limited Prescription Access Programs or have no assistance at all. Such an outcome flies in the face of the latest HIV/AIDS research which shows that people living with HIV who are able through consistent treatment and care to reduce their viral load to undetectable levels also curtail their likelihood of transmitting the disease. As such, losing access to needed treatment and care will not only reverse the gains in lives and health of people living with HIV but will increase the number of new infections.

Additionally this budget will strongly curtail direct spending on HIV/AIDS prevention programs and other programs that provide health care, food and nutrition, housing, and other support services that are vital to the health and well being of people living with HIV/AIDS. Programs that support HIV-related research will also be curtailed or ended doing irreparable harm to efforts to stop new HIV infections, improve treatments, and end the HIV epidemic in America. All of this will take case in the context of the loss of other programs aimed at alleviating poverty, housing and health that will also affect people living with HIV.

*It must be stated plainly and clearly that this budget is unacceptable and must be rejected.* It is an irresponsible abdication of governance and it is beyond the line of decency. That it is presented as a serious proposal to address our country’s real issues of economic growth and well being is shameful.

A sound federal budget is crucial to the national response to HIV. Achieving such a response must occur through a balanced approach that includes revenue and does not harm vulnerable populations or destroy the safety net of programs for health care and economic security. AIDS United strongly urges every Member of Congress to reject this outrageous budget by **voting “No” on the FY 2014 House Concurrent Budget Resolution.**

Sincerely,



Ronald Johnson

Vice President of Policy and Advocacy