

Laura Gordon: We will get an update from on the 2020 appropriations from Caitlin Peruccio, she's a Legislative Assistant to Representative Rosa DeLauro.

John Clymer: I'm very excited to pass the microphone to our next speaker, who is Caitlin Peruccio. Caitlin is on the team, the very effective team of Representative Rosa DeLauro, who's the Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services and Education. And Caitlin is going to give us an update on the work of that committee and where things stand. Caitlin?

Caitlin Peruccio: Hello. Well, thank you so much for having me on today. Rosa is very sorry that she was unable to join, but we are very excited that the full Appropriations Committee passed the FY 2020 Labor HHS Appropriations bill last week, and so hopefully, will be on the floor sooner rather than later, and hopefully avert a government shutdown for at least the Department of Health and Human Services.

Within this bill, we had significant increases for a number of programs that are of great importance to you all. And I'll start off with the CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Division. We were able to include a \$20,000,000.00 increase this year for a total of \$161,000,000.00. We were given an allocation that, in short, we were able to make some real, significant investments in CDC this year compared to past years.

And another program that is of importance to you all, I know, is the WISEWOMAN program that helps the uninsured and under women. We put in a \$25.6 million increase for a total of \$46.7 million, and this means the WISEWOMAN program will be able to be implemented in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

So, going forward, it looks like we'll be on the floor in June at some point, and we're confident that we'll be able to get this passed through the House of Representatives, so this is where your help comes in. We will need the Senate to write a bill that has similar funding levels for these wonderful programs, or else some tough choices will have to be made. We know that these are critical investments that should've been made a number of years ago, and we're making them now.

So, I would ask that you contact your member of the House to support the Labor HHS bill on the house floor, but then to reach out to the Senate so that they adopt the House levels.

And then moving forward, before—not to get ahead of ourselves with the Labor HHS bill is, right now, we don't have a budget deal. So, we do encourage you to reach out to your members of Congress to support a budget deal that has, hopefully, parity for non-Defense discretionary spending so we're at the same level as Defense spending. You know, if we don't have a budget deal, we'll have to go back to sequestration levels, which would be horrific for everyone involved. And so, we do ask that you urge your members of Congress to support a budget deal that ensures we have the increases need for Labor HHS, but then also to support the levels for these specific programs over in the Senate.

John Clymer: Alright, thank you very much, Caitlin. Thank you, first, for your work in getting the bill passed through the subcommittee and the full committee.

Caitlin Peruccio: Thanks.

John Clymer: We're excited, so congratulations.

Caitlin Peruccio: Thank you!

John Clymer: And there definitely is a lot of work ahead of us.

Caitlin Peruccio: Yeah.

John Clymer: So, just to be clear, the ask that you gave is (1) for folks to contact their Representatives and Senate members and urge that the budget be passed and that it allow for increases in HHS and particularly the increases for the Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and WISEWOMAN that you mentioned. And then second, to reach out to Senators and urge them to support funding levels similar to those in your bill. Is that correct?

Caitlin Peruccio: That's correct. It's very possible that the Senate bill will write to lower levels since we don't have a budget deal yet, although I have a hard time seeing how they can oppose these levels, *[Laughter]* because we know this funding for the Heart Disease and Stroke Division is much needed, given the incidence throughout the country.

So, it's just critically important that we do have that budget deal, but then also that the Senate make similar investments like we have in our bill. And usually, we're at the end of the pack. We're usually in July, so it's nice to come at the beginning of May.
[Laughter]

John Clymer: It is! Absolutely. So, I just want to underscore a point that you made, Caitlin, which is—we're really not talking about big increases in spending here. What we're really talking about is making up for lost time and bringing in investments that should've been made in the past to address and prevent the leading cause of death.

Caitlin Peruccio: Absolutely. Like I said, if we don't have a budget deal, we'll go back to sequestration levels, which I know is horrific for—that was before my time on working on the Hill, but it just set back our biomedical research as well as implementing programs that help us track different diseases as well as prevention activities. So, we can't go backwards. We just need to keep moving forward.

And so, all of your help would be significantly appreciated because that will be coming up sooner rather than later, and it's so critically important.

John Clymer: Alright.

Caitlin Peruccio: We can stop investing in these programs once we have a cure for everything, *[Laughter]* but until then, we need to keep spending this money.

John Clymer: Right. Well, thank you, Caitlin, and thanks to Chairwoman DeLauro, as well.