

Dear President Obama, Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to ask you to oppose any funding bill that contains inappropriate and ideological policy riders.

Appropriations bills are being used to undermine essential safeguards through “policy riders” – provisions that address extraneous policy not funding issues, and are slipped in to appropriations bills to win approval as part of must-pass funding legislation. These are measures that the public opposes, and the President would likely veto as standalone legislation. The American people support policies to restrain Wall Street abuses and ensure safe and healthy food and products, to provide for clean air and water and keep workplaces safe, to prevent consumer rip-offs and corporate wrongdoing, and to ensure continued access to vital health care services.

These inappropriate riders are being inserted to advance the priorities of special interest donors and supporters. They have become the “new earmarks,” but they are actually far worse than the old earmarks, because they have vastly greater reach and consequence for the American people. Some Members of Congress have even gone so far as to say they are willing to shut down the entire government over outrageous policy riders like the defunding of Planned Parenthood which provides health services to millions of low-income Americans.

Below are just a few of the many examples of wildly inappropriate policy riders which have been attached to the FY16 funding bills to serve the narrow interests of particular industries at the expense of public health, safety, workers’ rights, financial security, science, and the environment. These legislative proposals would:

- Prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from updating one of our most important air quality standards-the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone (Senate EPA Interior).
- Prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing or enforcing a rule that would ensure retirement savers are getting sound financial advice on their retirement savings (House Labor HHS).
- Force the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to redo a study on forced arbitration, a tactic increasingly used by corporations to deny consumers and or employees access to the courts to settle disputes (House Financial Services).
- Eliminate any funding for the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, created by Congress to provide federal agencies with scientific evidence to improve the safety, affordability and accessibility of health care to the American public (House Labor HHS).
- Bar the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from issuing a final rule, years in the making, to protect workers from toxic silica dust until it spends up to \$800,000 on an unnecessary scientific study to provide “epidemiological justification” for imposing exposure limits, ensuring further delay and more diseases and deaths. When the new rule is established, it will prevent 700 deaths a year and 1,600 new cases of silicosis annually (Senate Labor HHS).
- Roll back rules by the National Labor Relations Board to modernize and streamline the election process, block the Board's efforts to ensure that workers can negotiate with companies that control their wages and working conditions, and strip workers in

commercial operations on tribal lands from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act (House Labor HHS).

- Weaken a pending Food and Drug Administration rule on liquid nicotine and flavored cigars by exempting these tobacco products currently on the market from any regulation; this will limit the agency's ability to protect children and teens from these harmful products (House Agriculture FDA).
- Block the Securities and Exchange Commission from requiring publicly traded companies to disclose their political spending; derail the IRS from defining political activity for nonprofits, and prevent the administration from requiring federal contractors to disclose their political spending (House Financial Services).
- Continue to block rules that would place limits on the number of hours truckers could work without an adequate rest break despite safety concerns that trucker fatigue causes serious crashes and significantly increase truck size and weight limits. (House and Senate Transportation HUD).
- Eliminate the recently finalized Environmental Protection Agency rule defining which waters are subject to protections under the Clean Water Act (House and Senate Energy and Water).
- Block science-based protections under the Endangered Species Act for numerous species, including the iconic gray wolf (House Interior EPA).
- Roll back financial regulations in areas ranging from protections against irresponsible mortgage lending to limits on excessive borrowing by large banks, to undermining the effectiveness of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Senate Financial Services and General Government).
- Prevents the Food and Drug Administration from improving generic drug safety labeling so that it better protects patients (House Agriculture FDA).
- Prevent the administration from cracking down on contractors that don't comply with workplace laws (House and Senate Labor HHS).
- Place arbitrary restrictions on evidence supporting a healthy diet from the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and undermine nutritional standards for school foods provided to millions of American schoolchildren (House and Senate Labor HHS Agriculture FDA).
- Roll back the Federal Communications Commission's strong Net Neutrality rules, or put barriers in place that prevent the FCC from enforcing these protections for Internet openness and affordability (House and Senate Financial Services).
- Zero-out funding for private fair housing enforcement grants; prevent the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Justice from enforcing a rule that provides a unified standard for challenging discriminatory housing policies and practices; and prevent HUD from implementing a rule to empower local policymakers to create local solutions to address persistent barriers to fair housing choice (House CJS, Transportation HUD).
- Eliminate any funding for the Title X Family Planning Program, cutting the preventive care — including family planning services, well-woman exams, lifesaving cancer screenings, birth control, and testing and treatments for sexually transmitted infections — that nearly 4.6 million people currently rely on (House Labor HHS).

We urge Members of Congress and Senators to oppose flawed funding proposals such as the non-exhaustive list of examples above if they come to the floor. We further urge the administration in the strongest possible terms to oppose any eventual omnibus funding package that includes these or other dangerous legislative proposals. If included in a final package, any ideological policy riders would undo key safeguards and protections for Main Street.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

AcademyHealth

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates)

AIDS Action Baltimore

Alaska Wilderness League

Alaska PIRG

Alliance for a Just Society

Alliance for Retired Americans

American Association for Justice

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Council on Exercise

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFLCIO)

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

American Sexual Health Association

American Thoracic Society

Americans for Financial Reform

Arizona Consumers Council

Arizona PIRG

As You Sow

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN)

B.Komplete, LLC.

Blue Green Alliance

Breast Cancer Action

California Reinvestment Coalition

CALPIRG

California Project LEAN

Campaign for America's Future

Caney Fork Headwaters Association

Center for Auto Safety

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Community Change Action

Center for Effective Government

Center for Food Safety  
Center for Justice & Democracy  
Center for Media Justice  
Center for Progressive Reform  
Center for Responsible Lending  
Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH)  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)  
Common Cause  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health (ConnectiCOSH)  
ConnPIRG  
Consumer Action  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Federation of California  
CoPIRG  
Color of Change  
CREDO  
Cumberland Counties for Ecojustice  
Daily Kos  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Demos  
Earthjustice  
Economic Policy Institute  
Employee Rights Advocacy Institute For Law & Policy  
End Hunger Connecticut!  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Energy Action Coalition  
Farmworker Justice  
Florida PIRG  
Fight for the Future  
Foundation for Healthy Generations  
Franciscan Action Network  
Free Press Action Fund  
Friends of AHRQ  
Georgia PIRG  
GreenLatinos  
Greenpeace  
Hepatitis Foundation International

ICWUC Health and Safety Department  
Illinois PIRG  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
Iowa PIRG  
Jewish Women International  
KidsAndCars.org  
KyotoUSA  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University.  
League of Conservation Voters  
Main Street Alliance  
Maine Public Health Association  
Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network  
Maryland PIRG  
MASSPIRG  
Massachusetts Consumers' Council  
Mental Health America  
Missouri Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
MoPIRG  
NAACP  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)  
National Association of Consumer Advocates  
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials  
National Center for Health Research  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition of STD Directors  
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)  
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families

National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
NCPIRG  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility Of United Church of Christ  
New Progressive Alliance  
New Rules for Global Finance  
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)  
NHPIRG  
NJ PIRG  
NJ Work Environment Council  
NMPIRG  
Nonprofit VOTE  
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance  
Ohio PIRG  
Oregon PIRG (OSPIRG)  
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)  
PennPIRG  
People for the American Way  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
PIRG in Michigan (PIRGIM)  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Prevention Institute  
Progressive Campaign Change Committee  
Public Citizen  
Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association  
Public Knowledge  
Public Justice Center  
Rachel Carson Council  
Real Food for Kids – Montgomery and Healthy School Food Maryland  
Rhode Island Council on Occupational Safety and Health (RICOSH)  
RIPIRG  
Safe Climate Campaign  
SafeWork Washington  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Shape Up America!  
SMART-TD (International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, Transportation Workers,  
Transportation Division)  
Sierra Club

Society for Public Health Education  
TexPIRG  
The Arc  
The National Consumers League  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Trauma Foundation  
Truck Safety Coalition  
Trust for America's Health  
U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW)  
U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG)  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities  
Voices for Progress  
VPIRG  
Washington State Public Health Association  
WashPIRG  
Western Nebraska Resources Council  
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health  
Wider Opportunities for Women  
WISPIRG  
Workers Defense Project (Texas)  
Worksafe