

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Budget Committee Adopts Cuts in Spending

On May 7th, the Budget Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut spending on domestic programs in order to prevent automatic spending cuts to the defense budget.

Under current law, there will be automatic spending cuts to the federal budget, known as a “sequester”, that will take effect on January 2, 2013 unless Congress takes action to prevent them. This would result in a 10% reduction in Department of Defense programs and an 8% cut in certain domestic programs, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and education.

The automatic spending cuts are triggered by the failure last fall of the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction’s failure to come up with a plan to reduce the \$1.2 trillion budget deficit. If the cuts are enacted in January 2013, about \$55 billion will be subtracted from the Defense budget with an equal amount coming from non-defense pro-

grams. (See the *August 2011 edition of Public Policy Notes* for more information on the Committee.)

According to the website of the House Budget Committee, their plan would:

- Stop fraud by ensuring that individuals are actually eligible for the taxpayer benefits they receive.
- Eliminate government slush funds and stop bailouts.
- Control runaway, unchecked spending.
- Restrain spending on government bureaucracies.
- Reduce waste and duplicative programs.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the House cuts would eliminate 1.8 million from the rolls of the Food Stamp program. They would also eliminate the Social Services Block Grant and modify Medicaid.

“We propose to stop fraud in the Food Stamp program by

ensuring that individuals are actually eligible for the taxpayer benefits they receive,” according to Paul Ryan, Chairman of the Budget Committee.

Both **Democrats and Republicans** agree that action should be taken to avoid “across the board cuts”; however, there are very different points of view about how this should be accomplished.

Republicans are advocating spending cuts: Democrats are advocating additional taxes on high-income taxpayers.

At this point, only the House Committee has adopted a plan. No one expects the plan to get through the Senate process; however, the House has established a position on which to base negotiations as the process moves forward.

Automatic cuts will affect ALL federal discretionary programs. **We’ll keep you posted.**

For more specifics on the proposed cuts, go to <http://budget.house.gov>

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Inside this issue:

CDC Immunization Awards/WV	2
Awards AL and AR	2
Awards FL and GA	2
Awards KY and LA	3
Awards NC and TN	3
Awards VA and TX	3
Rebuild America Act	4
Populist Caucus	4
Early Learning	5

Enhance Your Public Policy Vocabulary

If spending exceeds the limits of the annual Budget Resolution and if Congress cannot agree on ways to cut back on spending, automatic spending cuts called “sequestration” take place.

Recognizing Immunization Champions—West Virginia



The Centers for Disease Control has initiated a new award in 2012 to “recognize individuals who make a significant contribution toward improving public health through their work with childhood immunization.” The award is intended to recognize individuals who are working at the community level.

This award will recognize up to one

Champion from each of the 50 states each year. Not every state was recognized with a Champion. **The SECA States of Mississippi, Oklahoma and South Carolina were not recognized in 2012.**

The following two pages include brief snapshots of the individuals selected in your state. For more complete bios, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/champions/profiles.html>. We'll begin with West Virginia.

Sharon Lansdale of Hurricane, West Virginia, is the President and

CEO of the Center for Rural Health Development. She is a strong advocate for maintaining the requirement for vaccinations to enter school and is opposed to non-medical exemptions. Her Center is the lead agency for the West Virginia Immunization Network.



Sharon Lansdale RPh

Alabama and Arkansas Champions



Tim Stewart, MD

Dr. Tim Stewart of Huntsville, Alabama “is continuously seeking new ways to increase area immunization rates—both through immunization strategies

within his practice at Huntsville Pe-

diatric Associates and through advocacy and education among his peers. He currently serves as the area representative to the Executive Board for the Alabama Chapter of the AAP.

Dr. Richard Jacobs of Little Rock, Arkansas is a pediatrician with Arkansas Children’s Hospital. When Hillary Clinton was First Lady of Arkansas, Dr. Jacobs served as acting chair of the Arkansas Immunization

Task Force, one of the First Lady’s policy priorities. In 2000, he helped launch the Vaccine Medical Advisory Committee.



Richard Jacobs, MD

Florida and Georgia Champions

Dr. Parker Small of Gainesville, Florida is a physician affiliated with the University of Florida College of Medicine, Emerging Pathogens Institute. Dr. Small has developed unique systems to reach and vaccinate all children no matter where they live and is a creative

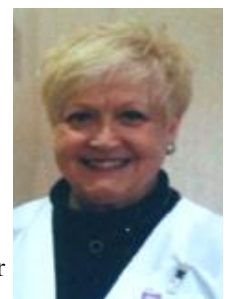


Parker Small, MD

teacher in providing and promoting immunization among new medical professionals.

Nancy Stackhouse, LPN, of Canton, Georgia works with the Cherokee County Health Department (North Georgia Health District). Her duties include review-

ing, inspecting and managing more than 7,000 immunization certificates at over 100 sites, including schools, pre-K, and daycare facilities. For eight years she has organized the “Back to School Immunization Weekend.”



Nancy Stackhouse, LPN

Kentucky and Louisiana Champions

Dr. Christopher Cunha of Crestview Hills, Kentucky is actively involved in vaccine advancement, speaking at community and medical events. He recently presented at the Let's Immunize Northern Kentucky Coalition Medical Assistant Program, focusing on immunizing for pertussis.



Christopher Cunha, MD

Dr. Cunha has acted as the collaborator

rating physician for the Northern Kentucky Health Department's School-Based Health Centers, working with nurse practitioners and registered nurses in inner-city and underserved schools.

Bonnie Hughes of Shreveport, Louisiana, is the Coordinator of the Shots for Tots Program of the Wilkes-Knighton Health System. She has helped to turn the first Back to School Bash into an annual event

and earned a Shots for Tots Pin Award in 2008.

She was instrumental in the development of the LINKS (Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide) that maintains statewide immunization records.



Bonnie Hughes

North Carolina and Tennessee Champions

Dr. Simeonsson of Greenville, NC travels throughout rural and underserved areas of Greenville each week to offer pediatric services to children. She's particularly focused on ensuring that children are age-appropriately immunized. She teaches at East Carolina



Kristina Simeonsson, MD

University's School of Medicine and shares her immunization knowledge with her students.

Dr. Weinberg of Nashville, TN is an Associate Professor at Vanderbilt University and is known as an innovator and advocate. Dr. Weinberg pioneered a system to link Vanderbilt's electronic medical

records with the state's immunization registry. Clinics can now upload information directly into the registry.



Stuart Weinberg MD

Virginia and Texas Champions

Dr. John Harrington of Norfolk, VA is an associate professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School and Chief of General Academic Pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of King's Daughters. He is actively engaged in the recog-

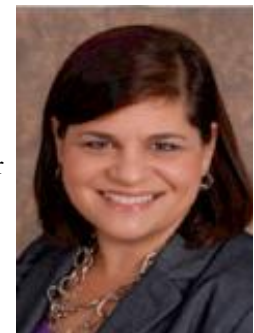


John Harrington, MD

nition, treatment and management of autism and works to allay fears about the safety of vaccines.

Anna Dragsbaek of Houston, TX is the President and CEO of The Immunization Partnership. Her early work in the Peace Corps created a passion for public health and immunization. With a degree in public

health law, she has focused her career on increasing immunization rates in Houston and throughout the state. Her work has led to significant improvement in state and local immunization registries.



Anna Dragsbaek JD

Rebuild America Act Introduced

On May 10th, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Congressman Bruce Braley (D-IA), co-chairs of the Populist Caucus, introduced the **Rebuild America Act**.

This Act, identical to a Senate bill previously introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), is promoted as “comprehensive legislation to rebuild the American middle-class.” The bill has “three overarching principles:

- ◆ Investing in America to Create Jobs and Future Growth.
- ◆ Creating Financial Stability and a Better Future for Middle-Class Families.

- ◆ Restoring Fairness to the Tax Code and Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility.”

The sponsors state that “this stands in direct contrast to the vision for America Republicans are pushing today: slashing the social safety net to fund tax cuts for the wealthy.”

Source: Press Release, Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro, <http://delauro.house.gov/release.cfm?id=3348>, May 10, 2012.

The bill includes a new program called **CCDBG Plus** that would authorize \$5 billion starting in FY 2013 through FY 2022 to expand access to high-quality child care pro-

grams for children whose families earn up to 200% of the poverty level. It also provides funds for improvements to child care facilities and to hire teachers in state or locally funded early childhood programs. Source: E-mail, hblank@nwlc.org, May 11, 2012.

For a copy of Congresswoman DeLauro’s press release, go to <http://delauro.house.gov>.

For a copy of Congressman Bruce Braley’s press release, go to <http://braley.house.gov>.

For a summary of the legislation, go to <http://www.nwlc.org>.

The Populist Caucus: Who and What?

As mentioned in the article above, the co-chairs of the House Populist Caucus introduced the Rebuild America Act on May 10, 2012.

The **Populist Caucus** was created on February 11, 2009 in the United States House of Representatives by Democrat Bruce Braley of Iowa. The Caucus includes 26 other Democrats in the House.

The Caucus lists its founding principles as:

- ⇒ “Fighting for working families and the middle class by creating and retaining good-paying jobs in America, providing fair wages, proper benefits, a level playing field at the negotiating table, and ensuring Americans have secure, solvent retirement plans.

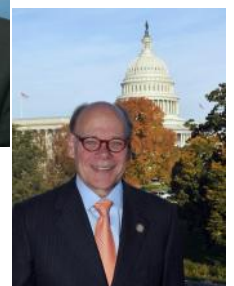
- ⇒ Cutting taxes for the middle class and establishing an equitable tax structure.
- ⇒ Providing affordable, accessible, quality health care for all Americans.
- ⇒ Ensuring quality primary education for all American children and affordable college education for all who want it.
- ⇒ Defending American competitiveness by fighting for fair trade practices.
- ⇒ Protecting consumers, so that Americans can have faith in the safety and effectiveness of the products they purchase.” Source: <http://braley.house.gov/issues/populist-caucus>

The Caucus has four members from SECA states.



Steve Cohen
Tennessee

Lloyd Doggett
Texas



Hank Johnson
Georgia



John Yarmuth
Kentucky

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Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern Children"

We're on the Web!
www.southernearlychildhood.org

How to Use This Newsletter

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you...You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

The Office of Early Learning: Meet the Director

A new Office of Early Learning has been created within the U.S Department of Education. It is the principal office that supports the Department's Early Learning Initiative with the "goal of improving the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for children from birth through third grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college-and-career ready."

The Office is headed by **Jacqueline Jones**, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. Jones joins the Department from the New Jersey State Department of

Education where she served as assistant commissioner for the Division of Early Childhood Education. Prior to state government, she worked for 16 years at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as a senior research scientist and director of early childhood research and development.

Jones earned her doctorate and master's degrees in communication science and disorders from Northwestern University, with a Bachelor of Arts in speech pathology from Hunter College.

As Director of the Office, Dr. Jones oversees a professional staff of 8 and the following programs:



Jacqueline Jones

- ◇ Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge
- ◇ Even Start Family Literacy Program
- ◇ Early Reading First
- ◇ Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program.

For more information about the Office of Early Learning, go to <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oel/index.html>