

November 8, 2005



The Honorable FIRSTNAME LASTNAME, M.C.
United States House of Representatives
ADDRESS
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative LASTNAME:

We are writing to urge you to oppose the budget reconciliation bill that is expected to be considered by the House this week. The undersigned organizations represent a total membership of 430,000 and help provide direct services to over 5 million Texans. As advocates for the environment and some of the most vulnerable people of Texas, including the elderly, children, and people with disabilities, we are deeply concerned about where the reconciliation process is headed.

We believe that action must be taken to address the federal budget deficit, but it must be done in a spirit of shared sacrifice. The reconciliation process that Congress has set in motion places the full burden of budget-cutting on domestic programs, and uses those savings to help finance yet more tax breaks that our nation can ill afford — including some that benefit primarily wealthy Americans. As a result, the deficit will be even higher after the reconciliation process has been completed, not lower.

Under the provisions passed by House committees, \$54 billion would be cut from programs and services that will affect families who are already struggling to make ends meet. Health care for seniors, children, and people with disabilities will be cut, as will food stamps, and free and reduced-price school lunches, child support collection, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) assistance for the elderly and people with disabilities, and foster care and adoption assistance for abused and neglected children. Placing the burden of these cuts on working families and children flies in the face of the notion of shared sacrifice. The budget also allows oil companies to drill in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of America's great wildernesses, harming wildlife and the native Gwich'in people.

Once again, we urge you to vote "no" on the budget reconciliation bill when it reaches the House floor later this week. A "yes" vote would represent an unfortunate vote of confidence for the entire reconciliation process, which is likely to yield higher deficits and harmful cuts in health care, food stamps, student loans, and other supports for our nation's most vulnerable families. This legislation is not in the best interests of the people of Texas, and we would be deeply disappointed if you were to lend your support to it.

Sincerely,

American Federation of State, County
and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

Center for Public Policy Priorities

Communications Workers of America/
Texas State Employees Union Local 6186

Education Austin

National Council of Jewish Women

People For the American Way,
Texas/Southwest Region Office

Progressive Collective,
University of Texas at Austin

Texans for Public Justice

Texas AFL-CIO Texas AFL-CIO

Texas Association of Planned Parenthood
Affiliates

Texas Federation of Teachers

Texas Freedom Network

Texas Impact

Texas Public Interest Research

Texas State Teachers Association/National
Education Association

United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO

Women's Health & Family Planning
Association of Texas

