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Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

**EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
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RANKING MEMBER – SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INVESTIGATIONS, OVERSIGHT, AND REGULATIONS

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

December 1, 2015

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you continue your work on the FY2016 appropriations bill for, I respectfully request that you lend your support for the following programs:

Veterans

VA Supportive Services for Veterans Families

Support services are integral for veterans transitioning into back into civilian life, especially low-income veterans and their families. A successful transition means veterans can go on to live full lives after serving their country. Programs like VA Supportive Services for Veteran Families provide supportive services to very low-income veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing. This funding provides a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability and is utilized by organizations throughout North Carolina's 12th District, which is home to 37,000 veterans and their families. Funding this program at its authorized level of \$300 million will allow it to continue making positive impacts in the lives of veterans around the country.

Homeless Grant Per Diem Program

Too often when our service members return home, they are not provided with the support they need and deserve. It is important that we continue our commitment to veterans by ensuring they have a place to call home and the tools necessary to lead fulfilling lives.

The Homeless Grant Per Diem Grant Program supports grants and per diem funds to organizations that provide emergency housing to homeless veterans. These funds are instrumental in developing supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. Veterans in North Carolina's 12th District have benefited tremendously from this program. In order to maintain this important assistance, I request that this program be funded at its authorized level of \$250 million.

FEMA

Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)

First responders play a critical role in protecting citizens around the country, and having access to the proper resources is crucial to the successful execution of their jobs. The Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program (AFG) assists in meeting the emergency and response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. It is supported by fire departments throughout the 12th District. To better ensure that these resources remain accessible, I request that this program be funded at \$340 million, which is in line with FY2015 funding levels.

SAFER Grants

Firefighters expose themselves to a great deal of danger with every emergency they respond to. Despite the risk, there are many men and women who step up to the challenge, and we must ensure they are adequately trained. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER) were created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. This program is very crucial in assisting firefighters in staffing and maintaining operational standards for responding to emergencies in the community. To maintain local, high-skilled firefighters, I request that this program be funded at \$340 million, which is in line with FY2015 funding levels.

Justice

Regional Information Sharing System (RISS)

The Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Program provides services and resources that directly impact law enforcement's ability to successfully resolve criminal investigations and prosecute offenders while providing the critical officer safety support necessary to keep the men and women of our law enforcement community safe.

RISS supports efforts against organized and violent crime, gang activity, drug activity, terrorism, human trafficking, identity theft, and other regional priorities, while promoting officer safety. RISS offers full-service delivery from the beginning of an investigation to the ultimate prosecution and conviction of criminals.

At a time when the safety of our citizens and law enforcement are threatened both domestically and internationally, we must ensure that our law enforcement agencies have the resources necessary to protect our citizens and themselves. I request that RISS be funded at \$30 million which is in line with the enacted levels for fiscal year FY2015.

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG)

The JAG program provides support to states, tribes, and local governments to support a broad range of activities aimed at preventing and controlling crime based on local needs and conditions. Some of these activities include technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and information systems for criminal justice for any one or more of the following purpose areas:

- law enforcement programs;
- prosecution and court programs;
- prevention and education programs;
- corrections and community corrections programs;
- drug treatment programs;
- planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs; and
- crime victim and witness programs (other than compensation).

The JAG Program is absolutely critical to law enforcement agencies in the 12th District. By guaranteeing the safety of our officers, we are guaranteeing the safety of our communities. I request that this program be funded at \$388 million which is in line with the President's FY2016 request.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

The COPS program awards grants to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to advance the practice of community policing, which is instrumental to building mutually trusting relationships between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. Ensuring that all stakeholders work together to address our nation's crime challenges is critical to the safety of our communities and law enforcement. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources. I request that COPS be funded at \$303.5 million which is in line with the Department of Justice's FY2016 budget request.

Water Development

Water Infrastructure Restoration

Frequent incidents of combined sewer overflows into rivers and streams, as well as water main breaks in the nation's largest cities, impact our local and national economies.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) are vital to improving the quality of drinking water and protecting public health. This funding is critical for water systems experiencing a threat of contamination due to aging infrastructure systems, such as those within North Carolina's 12th Congressional District. These programs have been proven successful and effective. I urge that the CWSRF and DWSRF be funded at \$1.1 billion and \$1.2 billion, respectively.

Transportation

TIGER Grants

TIGER Grants continue to have a significant impact around the country through investments in transformative projects that provide significant and measurable improvements over existing conditions. The awards recognize projects nationwide that advance key transportation goals such as safety, innovation, and opportunity. TIGER Grants have also had a major impact in North Carolina's 12th District for projects like the Lexington Depot and Union Station rehabilitation in Winston-Salem. I request that you fund TIGER Grants at a minimum of \$500 million, which is in line with FY2015's enacted funding levels.

Capital Investment Grants Program

The Capital Investment Grants Program provides funding that has been critical in advancing many important New Starts and Small Starts projects across the country. To maintain the same level of success and ensure these projects are completed in a timely and cost effective manner I request that this program be funded at \$3.3 billion, which is line with the Federal Transit Administration's FY2016. This funding will support the continued work on the LYNX Blue Line Extension and City LYNX Gold Line Phase 2 in Charlotte.

Urbanized Area Formula Grants

These transit grants are an important source of funding for capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation related planning. Furthermore, it allows funding to be locally directed. This program also provides additional support to other sources of funding from the Federal Transit Administration through additional flexibility. I request that you provide enough funding to support the FTA's FY2016 request of \$4.56 billion.

Transportation Alternatives Program

Transportation Alternatives provide the resources necessary to expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience. Projects like bike and pedestrian infrastructure and safety programs, scenic overlooks and turnouts, vegetation management, and historic preservation provide healthier and more environmentally safe options to driving motorized vehicles. These programs also have a positive impact on communities. I request that you provide enough funding to support Federal Highway Administration's FY2016 request of \$847 million.

Airport Improvement Grants

The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Improvement Program provides grants for airport planning and development purposes and remains integral to airports around the country. These important grants allow airports to make improvements that include enhancing airport safety, capacity, security, and alleviate environmental concerns. This program has played an enormous role

in North Carolina's 12 District by enabling us to keep up with a rapidly growing aviation community. I ask that this program be funded at \$2.7 billion, which is in line with FAA's FY2016 budget request.

Contract Tower Program

The Federal Contract Tower Program, in place for over 30 years, has exemplified how the private sector and Federal government can form and implement a working partnership aimed at improving air traffic safety. Federal contract towers supplement FAA-staffed facilities around the country, buttressing a unified national air traffic control system and playing a vital role in connecting smaller airports and rural communities with the national air transportation system.

The contract tower program is one of the FAA's most cost-effective programs. Contract towers handle approximately 28 percent of the nation's air traffic control tower operations but account for only 14 percent of the FAA's total tower operations budget. Congress has clearly demonstrated numerous times—in bipartisan and bicameral fashions—the merit and need for the federal contract tower program. To ensure the continuation of the Contract Tower Program in FY2016, I urge you to maintain full and dedicated funding for the program.

Housing

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a critically important program that provides communities all across our country, particularly within North Carolina's 12th District, with important resources to address unique community development needs. Specifically this program aids in housing rehabilitation, economic development, and infrastructure improvements.

Unfortunately, CDBG funding has been cut by 30% over the last several years. As you consider funding levels for the remainder of FY2016, I respectfully request that you fund CDBG at \$2.8 billion which is in line with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's FY2016 budget request.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program has been an essential source of funding for many affordable housing developments. HOME has created over 1 million affordable homes and has stimulated the economy by creating more jobs. According to Department of Housing and Urban Development, 18 jobs are preserved or made for every \$1 million in HOME funds. Further, the HOME Advocacy Coalition estimates that, on average, each HOME dollar leverages more than \$4 in other public and private resources. As you consider funding levels for the remainder of FY2016, I respectfully request that you fund CDBG at \$1.2 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership program which is in line with Department of Housing and Urban Development's FY2016 budget request.

Fair Housing Initiatives Program

Fair housing is an issue that continues to plague many American cities. Many potential homeowners are shut out of the housing market by varying levels of prejudice within the home buying process. It is for this reason that it is extremely important to support and fully fund federal fair housing initiatives. The Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) is a program that provides fair housing organizations with resources to assist victims of housing discrimination. As you consider funding levels for the remainder of FY2016, I request that you fund FHIP at \$45.6 million which is in line with the President's FY2016 request.

Choice Neighborhoods

Choice Neighborhoods is an important program that offers competitive grants to revitalize severely distressed neighborhoods throughout our country. This program focuses on revitalizing neighborhoods with affordable housing that benefit middle and low income families. With the HOPE VI program phased out, Choice Neighborhoods has filled an important void in the revitalization of low income neighborhoods by providing adequate affordable housing. As you consider funding levels for the remainder of FY2016, I request that you fund Choice Neighborhoods at \$248 million which is in line with the President's FY2016 request.

Education

Innovative Approaches to Literacy

Literacy is essential for all of our students and the cornerstone for their success in the classroom and throughout their lives. Ensuring our students have access to evidence-based literacy programs is critical, especially our low-income students. Without these important investments many of our students will receive the important skills necessary for lifelong success. For these reasons, I request the Fund for the Improvement of Education, which houses the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program, be funded at \$41.9 million. This request is in line with the Department of Education's FY2016 budget request.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE provides significant foundational resources to CTE programs that educate our workforce, including both new entrants and those looking to transition into new fields. These programs have played an important role in the continued growth of our economy and exist in every Congressional District. As the economy continues to strengthen, consistent funding for CTE programs will be instrumental in lowering our unemployment rate and having a skilled workforce. To maintain the success of CTE, I request that it be funded at \$1.3 billion, which is in line with the Department of Education's FY2016 budget request.

Health

Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

There are currently 1.2 million people living in the United States with HIV, with approximately 50,000 new infections every year. And while we have made great gains in treating HIV and AIDS,

inadequate health insurance coverage makes treatment difficult for low-income individuals. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program works to fill this treatment gap by working with cities, states, and local community-based organizations to provide services to an estimated 536,000 people each year who do not have sufficient health care coverage or financial resources to cope with HIV disease. In order to maintain the level of service that this important program provides, I request that it be funded at \$2.3 billion, which is in line with the Department of Health and Human Services FY2016 budget request.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. I realize that federal funding faces many constraints, but I ask that you keep these important programs in mind as they are of great benefit to North Carolina's 12th District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alma Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress