

## **YWCA RECESS PLAN: APRIL 2017**

As Congress recesses for two weeks from Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup>, YWCAs have a prime opportunity to engage your legislators while they are home in their district. To maximize our collective impact, we hope you'll focus your recess activity on the FY2017 and FY2018 federal budget, and on keeping up the momentum to preserve the Affordable Care Act.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2017 AND 2018 BUDGET PROCESSES**

#### **Background and Timeline**

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Congress has not yet completed the FY2017 budget process and the new administration has released an FY2018 [federal budget proposal](#). Serious concerns remain that these federal budget processes will result in cuts to domestic discretionary funds, including funding streams that directly impact YWCAs. Many YWCAs rely on federal funding to support their housing, child care, safety and security, job training, and other services. Each day, these services make a difference in communities across the country. The budget process promises to be complicated, and [much is at stake](#).

YWCA USA has developed a [Budget Advocacy Toolkit](#) to assist you in educating allies and local stakeholders about the good work that YWCA is doing in your community, and laying the groundwork to activate their support for your programs in the federal budget battles that lie ahead.

As you begin sharing with stakeholders about the value of your programs, keep these messaging strategies in mind:

- Speak specifically about the positive impact the funding has on your community and engage community partners.
- Don't get bogged down in numbers -- focus on stories, people, successes, and the value of your program.
- If your lawmaker is supportive of keeping your funding stream safe, be sure to not only thank them in advance but also express that you want them to fight hard for this.
- Keep it positive - don't go hard hitting until or unless it becomes necessary. Rather focus on need, impact, and positive outcomes.
- When possible, have the people helped by your program speak directly to its importance rather than sharing their stories second hand.

#### **Action Items**

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- Write an [op-ed](#) for your local or regional paper that outlines the importance of this funding. Look to [YWCA USA's statement](#) on the administration's budget proposals for additional points to highlight in your op-ed.
- [Connect with your Member of Congress](#)
  - Invite your MOC to tour your facility
  - Invite your MOC to a community forum or event
  - Request to meet with your MOC 1:1
- **Use Twitter and Facebook.** Use #DontCutHerOut to highlight the positive difference federal funding streams make in your community, and the impact of lost federal funding, especially programs currently targeted by the administration.

## AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

### Background and Timeline

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Your voices have made a difference in preserving the Affordable Care Act (ACA) so far, but efforts remain underway in Congress to repeal this important legislation. We need you to continue to urge Congress and the administration to defend the protections afforded to women and families through the ACA. There are many other vehicles through which Congress could make detrimental changes to the ACA. Please stay vigilant in your conversations with Members of Congress – and make sure to thank your representatives and senators who are on record supporting the ACA!

### Action Items

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- **Attend a Town Hall or Rally in Your Community:** Find out whether there are any town halls with Members of Congress scheduled near you. The Town Hall 2018 Project maintains a [calendar](#) of events throughout the country. Also, [reach out](#) to your members of Congress to see if they are holding additional events that you and/or your clients and constituents may attend.
- **Letter to the Editor Tool:** Use the Protect Our Care Coalition's new [letter to the editor tool](#), which helps consumers and advocates draft LTEs to their local newspaper sharing how they would be affected by repeal of the ACA.
  - **Tools to Amplify Your Message:**
    1. Protect Our Care Coalition [Website](#)
    2. [State Specific](#) Fact Sheets and Infographics
    3. [Share Your Story](#)
- **Schedule in-district meetings.** Recess is a great time to meet with your Representative and/or Senators while they are back in the district. Gather a group of advocates, clients, or colleagues and schedule to meet with your members of Congress to share your stories about why the Affordable Care Act

and quality accessible health care are important to your YWCA, its clients and the community as a whole.

- **Take action through YWCA's Action Center.** [Write a letter](#) to your representative and senators, urging them to vote against any effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act that does not preserve the same coverage and protections for women.
- **Use Twitter and Facebook.** Explain why the ACA and quality, accessible healthcare are important by using Twitter and Facebook to amplify your message. [Tag your members](#) of Congress in your social media posts, and use #ProtectOurCare.

### Sample Facebook Post:

[YWCA association name or I] supports the Affordable Care Act ("ACA"/"Obamacare"). Repealing the ACA without a viable replacement plan risks far too much for women and families across the country. Women depend on the ACA for health insurance policies that are not more expensive than those of men, protections for birth control and maternity care, and quality health insurance coverage, regardless of preexisting conditions. [Tag Senator of choice] accessible, affordable, quality care is a necessity!

### Sample Tweets:

Thank you [your legislator's Twitter handle] for supporting women by fighting to preserve the ACA! Your efforts to #ProtectOurCare are appreciated!

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] Medicaid's essential health benefits are critical for the health of women and girls. #ProtectOurCare

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] #ACA has opened access to healthcare for 9.5 million women and dropped uninsured rates for women of color. #ProtectOurCare

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] Repealing the #ACA will send us back to when women pay more than men for health insurance, just because of their gender. #ProtectOurCare

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] Repealing the #ACA could force women to pay more for less coverage. #ProtectOurCare

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] Repealing the #ACA could roll back protections for birth control, #reprohealth, and maternity care. #ProtectOurCare

[Your legislator's Twitter handle] Repealing the #ACA could take away health insurance from over 30 million people. #ProtectOurCare