Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diane Black
Chairman, Budget Committee
B-234, Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Chairman Black,

As Members of the New Democrat Coalition, we are committed to advancing policy solutions that will help create good-paying jobs, make the economy work better for everyone and keep our country safe. We were very concerned with President Trump's shortsighted budget proposal that lacks a vision for how to do so and would instead undermine these aims. As you consider priorities for the FY 2018 budget, we encourage you to focus on including fiscally responsible policies that will modernize our economy, strengthen the middle class and maintain our global competitiveness.

In particular, we encourage you to address six key policy areas:

Rebuild our Infrastructure and Responsibly Reform our Tax Code – Federal infrastructure spending does not meet the tremendous demand in communities across the country. Our roads and bridges are badly in need of repair while our energy grid and communications networks need updates to fully bring them into the 21st century. Likewise, our tax system has become outdated and cumbersome and puts American businesses at a disadvantage when competing around the world. We support pursuing a large investment of at least $1 trillion in infrastructure and reforming our tax code in a fiscally responsible manner. We encourage you to include such an investment in the FY 2018 budget, financed by significant direct federal spending and deemed repatriation included in comprehensive tax reform.

Strengthen Cutting-Edge Research – Ten years ago, Congress came together in a bipartisan way to pass the *America COMPETES Act*, which authorized an increased commitment to federal investment in research and development. Unfortunately, since that bipartisan recognition of the need to invest in research, funding has not kept up with the need. Scientific research and innovation form the bedrock of economic growth and development. For America to maintain its place as the international leader in scientific advancement and the discovery of groundbreaking technologies, we need to increase our investment in research in all fields and strengthen our commitment to improving STEM education. We support increasing federal funding for innovative development initiatives and other government research conducted though agencies such as the National Science Foundation and Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy.

Invest in Live-Saving Cures – While legislation like the *21st Century Cures Act* and previous increases in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are a positive start, we must double down on vital investments to save lives through advancements in medicines. The investments we make to advance cures will not only improve the lives of millions of Americans, but reduce budget constraints on our healthcare system and spur economic growth. For example, each year chronic diseases cost the U.S. economy $1.7 trillion. We encourage you to fully fund the National Institutes of Health at $40 billion and fund other health research organizations at

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similarly robust levels. Medical breakthroughs like those the NIH facilitates help save lives, foster scientific progress and reduce long-term health costs.

Secure the Cyber Domain – The future of our nation's security will depend on our ability to operate effectively in the cyber domain. The Internet and online resources are indispensable for business, government services, and communication networks. Unfortunately, our online activities face increasing threats from nation-states, criminal rings, and cyber "hacktivists" intending to disrupt and disable critical systems and data. We encourage you to make significant investments in building the cyber workforce, strengthening public-private partnerships, protecting privacy, and improving federal capacity to lead on cyber policy.

Reform our Immigration System – We need an overhaul of our immigration system that secures our border with commonsense measures, brings undocumented migrants out of the shadows, revamps our visa system and supports U.S. businesses and farmers. Comprehensive immigration reform has the potential to reduce the deficit by more than $900 billion and create hundreds of thousands of American jobs. We support a budget that includes this kind of reform, which will spark economic growth by improving the visa system and attracting the world's top talent.

Replace the Sequester and Address our Long-term Fiscal Challenges – Our nation's debt continues to grow at an unsustainable rate and now exceeds $20 trillion. On our current trajectory, mandatory spending will continue to increase while discretionary defense and non-defense programs continue getting squeezed out. However, we should replace the blunt instrument of the sequester and pursue a bipartisan, long-term, balanced approach to address structural causes of our growing deficits and debt, including appropriate increases in revenue and reforms to mandatory spending programs.

Continuing to pass budgets without addressing these pressing problems is short-sighted and irresponsible. We urge you to include commonsense policies that will grow our economy in the upcoming budget and look forward to working with you to do so.

Sincerely,

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell
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Gerald E. Connolly
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Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Norma Torres
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable John Yarmuth