



Eric Bunn Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National President

Jeremy A. Lannan
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

April 19, 2023

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE) which represents over 750,000 federal and DC government employees, I urge you to oppose the “Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023” which raises the federal debt ceiling but causes egregious harm in the process.

As career federal workers, our members recognize the importance of responsible fiscal management. Our members support prudent budgetary and tax policies to ensure that the federal government can continue to meet public needs in the future. At the same time, we should recognize that the government’s recent large deficits primarily result from large-scale COVID-19 relief programs that were designed to shore up the private sector economy and were enacted without tax increases to defray their costs. Deficits are not the result of growth in federal agencies or employment; federal civilian employment remains less than it was in the 1960s, although the U.S. population has nearly doubled. Federal workers have continued to maintain public safety and provide public service throughout the pandemic, even as their wages have lagged behind inflation and continued to trail the private sector.

In recent letters to the House Appropriations Committee, a number of federal agencies have pointed to the irreparable harm that will result from a budget plan that rolls back discretionary spending to FY 2022 levels, without taking account of recent inflation as well as the essential growth of the military and veteran budgets. Of particular note:

- The Social Security Administration reports that it would need to close field offices and reduce opening hours and increase waiting times for disability decisions by a whopping 30%.
- The USDA forecasts \$250 million in cuts to the Food Safety and Inspection Service, whose inspectors work tirelessly inside factories to prevent foodborne illness. Since federal law requires food inspection, the Department predicts a collateral effect on food production, costing the food industry up to \$400 billion or more and presumably increasing already high food prices.
- At the Department of Transportation, cuts would reduce funding of the Federal Railroad Administration to the lowest level since 2015 and force the agency to RIF “at least 175 personnel, including upwards of 75 railroad safety inspectors” – all at a time when the public in Ohio and across the country is rightfully demanding more rail safety, not less.



- The Department of Homeland Security would be forced to reduce hours of service at Sea and Land Ports of Entry, undermining efforts to restore the supply chain and combat inflation. Efforts to interdict deadly opioids would suffer. DHS states point-blank that the impact of proposed cuts means “likely increasing the amount of fentanyl entering the country.”
- The Transportation Security Administration, which interacts with and safeguards more than two million passengers *per day* reports that the cuts would result in furloughs of front-line staff, with wait times at larger airports surging to “in excess of two hours” as the reductions eviscerate the agency’s much needed efforts to improve Transportation Security Officer staffing, pay, and retention.

These are but a few examples of the myriad harms to the American public that would predictably follow the misnamed “Limit, Save, Grow Act.” AFGE urges you to oppose this bill and to support an immediate increase in the debt ceiling to avoid a default, and then to engage in a necessary bipartisan discussion of future budgetary policy.

Sincerely,



Julie N. Tippens
Legislative Director