

# DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

March 30, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We, the leadership of the Democratic Women's Caucus, write today to first congratulate you both on being named Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee. We are pleased to see women leading this important Committee and discussions around the federal budget. As you continue your work on the 2024 appropriations bills, we ask that you especially consider the impact this process has on women and girls across the United States of America. We do not believe these should be partisan issues; rather, these are investments that will make our economy and our communities thrive. Red or blue, women need our help and attention, and it is our duty not only as Members of Congress, but as women in Congress to advance gender equality and allow women to compete in our economy on an even playing field. Below you will find a snapshot of just some of the priorities we hope you will include and make significant investments in.

## ***Women in the Economy***

Women are a critical piece of the economic health of our country. This is why we must make robust investments in child care to meet the needs of working families and ensure that family caregivers, who are overwhelmingly women, are able to access care services for their loved ones. There are many programs within the federal government that can drive economic advancement for women and families, which will in turn, grow and strengthen the American economy and ensure all women, including women of color, women of historically marginalized communities and immigrant women, all have the opportunity to thrive. For example, this includes:

- Significantly increasing Child Care Development Block Grant funding to help ensure states improve access to high-quality and affordable care.
- Robustly funding Head Start, Early Head Start, and other early childhood programs so our youngest learners can access essential education and developmental tools.

- Investing in paid family and medical leave so women can take the time they need and return to the workforce without the stress of losing their job and essential income.
- Strong investments in home and community-based services so our most vulnerable and their caregivers are adequately supported.
- Securing language and funds to protect and support domestic workers from labor exploitation, who are overwhelmingly women and are employed in private homes as nannies, housekeepers, and health aides.
- Investments in DOL's Women's Bureau and Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program to help ensure all women have equal opportunity in the workforce, and that those who do business with the federal government fulfill the promise of equal employment opportunities for all.
- Funding the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and other housing programs so women can have better access to homeownership and safe and affordable rental options.
- Providing robust funding for the Women's Business Center program and for other programs that deliver entrepreneurial development opportunities for women.
- Supporting workforce development programs and educational programs to ensure all women have equal access to lucrative and fulfilling careers.
- Funding IDEA, STEM programs and other educational initiatives so our young girls have access to quality educational opportunities to set them on a path of success for their future.

### ***Violence Against Women***

We all know the statistics too well, one in four adult women experience physical abuse and one in six experience sexual violence. It is our duty to protect every single woman and girl regardless of race, religion, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, geographic, location or age. To be safe is a basic human right, and we must robustly fund programs and initiatives to keep women and girls safe, provide survivors with support, and equip our communities with the necessary tools. Investments to end violence against women, for example, include:

- Fully funding the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which includes various programs that aim to end violence and support women through a whole-of-government approach and effort.
- Supporting all programs and initiatives across the federal government such as the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, Family Violence Prevention & Services Act Program, and the Domestic Violence Hotline.
- Providing support for the use of forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis and other methods to help close unsolved cases and identify victims.

### ***Health***

Women have long felt the pernicious effects of health inequity. There is a need for robust investments in quality, affordable health care including maternal and reproductive health so every woman can access the care they need. Restrictions to woman's health care, nutrition, and lifesaving research negatively impact not just their lives, but their families, their communities, and our country and economy as a whole. Investments in women's health include, for example:

- Robustly funding all federal programs that provide services to pregnant women and the research necessary to combat the tragic reality that the U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate of all our peer countries, which is three times higher for Black moms. Women are dying; we must act.
- Excluding the Helms and Hyde amendments and funding all programs that help women access reproductive care.
- Increase funding for the Title X Family Planning Program to provide women with access to family planning services and high-quality health care including reproductive health care.
- Fully funding programs and initiatives to address the mental health crisis that is disproportionately impacting adolescent girls and providing support for mental health services for all women.
- Supporting nutrition programs by fully funding the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and other programs that ensure women and their children do not go hungry and can always access healthy nutritious foods.
- Investing in programs that provide lifesaving research and solutions to diseases and risk factors that disproportionately impact women, such as the Peer Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program, the Multiple Sclerosis Research Program, endometrial cancer research, and polycystic ovary syndrome research.

### ***Women servicemembers and veterans***

Women who are and have served our country deserve our support and commitment as they fulfill their active-duty service and later transition to civilian life. For example, this includes investing necessary levels of funding so women veterans can access maternity care and other specific services they need. Additionally, we must support programs and offices that support women in active duty and justice for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

### ***Women and Girls Abroad***

We must continue our investments in women and girls around the world as a meaningful commitment to creating global security and a global economy where everyone can thrive. As a global leader, the United States must invest in building capacity in our agencies and programs to ensure that how our policies impact women and girls is always top of mind. For example, this includes:

- Providing robust funding to prevent and respond to gender-based violence worldwide. We must ensure women and girls around the world are protected and safe.
- Advancing women's economic empowerment and equality by funding programs that specifically help women participate in the economy and support trade capacity building so women can engage in the global market and build their own wealth. This also includes empowering adolescent girls and providing basic education programs.
- Continuing the United States' commitment to global peace and security by providing robust funds for initiatives led by the United Nations, fully implementing the Women, Peace and Security Act as well as the U.S. Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk

from Violent Extremism and Conflict and supporting agencies and offices such as the Office of Global Women's Issues.

- Supporting the Global Equality Fund at the State Department and the USAID Inclusive Development Hub's Protection of LGBTQI+ Persons so all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are protected.
- Providing robust funding for the Water and Sanitation Directive for USAID to Support long-term drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) Projects
- Consistent funding for the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account and the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account to assist women refugees and mitigating disasters across the world.

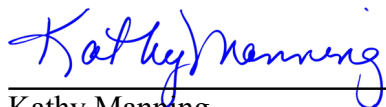
Thank you and we hope you will stand with us in supporting these and many other necessary investments to ensure all women finally have equal access to the opportunities, rights, and security needed to participate fully in our economy and society. These priorities are by no means a complete list of the ways in which we can and must support women through federal funding, and we stand ready to work together with you on behalf of all women.

Sincerely,



---

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress  
Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



---

Kathy Manning  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Policy Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



---

Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Policy Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



---

Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



---

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



---

Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress  
Chief Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus