



Easterseals

Principles on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform

Approved by the Easterseals Board of Directors

October 20, 2017

Individuals with disabilities disproportionately rely on government services to live, learn, and work in their communities. These life-changing services and supports—such as health care, early intervention, education, job training, and long-term supports—are often only available through the federal government when the private marketplace is unable to meet the needs of people with disabilities. As a national provider of community supports and services for individuals with disabilities, Easterseals knows that timely access to appropriate services empowers individuals with disabilities to live with greater independence and to need fewer services and supports over their lifetimes.

Easterseals supports a rigorous debate on policies and strategies to grow the economy, improve our nation's fiscal health, and strengthen and protect social programs for our country's most vulnerable populations. Proposals related to the federal budget, tax reform, deficit reduction, and strategic investments may have a direct impact on the lives of children and adults with disabilities. Easterseals policy decisions on fiscal policy and tax reform will be based on the following principles:

- ✓ **Fiscal policy and tax reform proposals should improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.** Policymakers must consider the impact proposed changes would have on individuals with disabilities and their ability to access essential care and supports. Analysis should be independent (i.e., Congressional Budget Office) and based on generally accepted methodology.
- ✓ **Medicaid should not be cut or capped now or in the future to pay for deficits caused by tax reform.** Tax reform policies should not worsen the fiscal picture of Medicaid, which many individuals with disabilities rely on for their community care and long-term supports.
- ✓ **Fiscal and tax policy proposals should not decrease revenue to an extent that resources are inadequate to deliver effective services or to maintain current availability of services for individuals with disabilities.** Long-term fiscal stability is best achieved through a balanced approach that protects most-in-need Americans.
- ✓ **Strategic investments and deficit reduction proposals should be considered on a per-program basis.** Federal spending decisions must evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of each individual program. Across-the-board cuts, arbitrary caps on spending, and other sweeping deficit reduction measures do not distinguish between effective programs that ensure essential services and other programs that may no longer be necessary or effective.
- ✓ **Tax and fiscal proposals should be considered through regular order to allow policymakers and stakeholders sufficient time to review and provide feedback prior to votes being cast.** The process must be transparent, including full committee and floor consideration, to allow for a fair, bipartisan process.