

Budget Caps

Congress passed the Budget Control Act in 2011 to help reduce the federal debt by limiting all federal government spending—including education—through automatic budget caps and requiring across the board cuts if those caps are exceeded. Without Congressional action to raise the spending caps, all discretionary¹ funding will face automatic cuts over the next two years, which will dramatically impact federal investments in education.

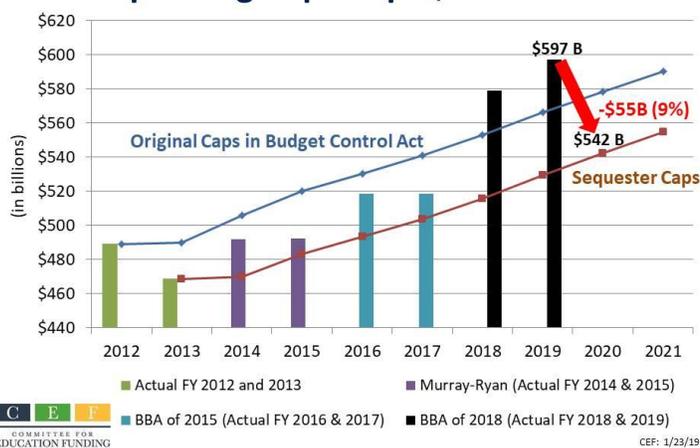
Three separate times over the past several years, Congress has worked in a bipartisan manner to raise the caps and ensure critical federal resources are provided to both defense and non-defense discretionary programs, including education. National PTA believes that the long-term success of our nation depends on increased investments in our education system and opposes these automatic education spending cuts. **National PTA urges members of Congress to:**

Raise the Budget Caps

The fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget caps established by the 2011 Budget Control Act must be raised to avoid automatic spending cuts to education and protect existing federal investments in education.

- Without an increase in discretionary spending caps, domestic spending will endure a \$55 billion cut. This will result in a nearly \$20 billion cut to education, health and workforce funding, and a 10% reduction in annual discretionary spending overall.
- If Congress does not take action, there will be 10% less for IDEA funding, dollars to foster family engagement, or resources to support professional development for teachers.
- There is precedent! In FY 2018, Congress raised the budget caps which provided an additional \$2.6 billion in funding for education overall from FY 2017 and allowed the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program (SFEC) to be fully funded at its authorized amount.

Threat for 2020: Non-Defense Discretionary Spending Cap Drops \$55 billion



¹ Discretionary spending is funding for federal programs that must be renewed each year to keep government agencies open and the programs in this category operating. These programs are known as “discretionary” because the laws that establish those programs give Congress the ability to set the funding levels each year.

Increase Investments in Public Education

Recent polling from POLITICO and Harvard University found that almost three-fourths of the public identified increased federal spending on public elementary and secondary education as an “extremely important priority.” It’s time we prioritize our investments in our children.

- Congress must ensure programs that support low-income students and students with disabilities—such as Title I and state grants for special education services—receive substantial funding. More resources also must be provided for educator professional development in Title II, English learners in Title III, safe and supportive schools, technology and access to college and career counseling, STEM, music and arts, civics, IB/AP, computer science through Title IV-A, and the SFEC program in Title IV-E of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Research shows that a 10% increase in Title I-A funding per student would provide schools with more resources to strengthen student outcomes, including increasing the likelihood of students’ completing high school, earning higher wages as adults, and escaping poverty in adulthood.
- For instance, from 2010 to 2015, low-income student enrollment grew by 4%, making these students constitute a majority of all public-school students. Despite the increase in low-income student enrollment, Title I funding for schools essentially remained the same, meaning there were fewer funds to go to a larger number of students. Congress must fully fund Title I to adequately support the increasing number of low-income students and ensure all schools, regardless of zip code, are equitably funded.
- IDEA state grant funding has remained around the same level, even though the number of students with disabilities attending public schools has increased by more than 2%. This has resulted in a net cut to special education funding, bringing the percentage of the Federal commitment to just 14.9% of the 40% promised by Congress.
- Congress promised to fully fund IDEA and they must follow through on that promise. Our association urges Congress to put IDEA on a path to full funding. PTA has consistently supported the IDEA Full Funding Act and looks forward to working in a bipartisan manner to pass this legislation.
- Federal funding for public education programs has remained at approximately 2% of the Federal budget for decades, despite the increase in public school enrollment and the rising cost of education resources and services. When accounting for inflation, enrollment, and student needs, federal investment in K-12 is actually lower than 2008 pre-recession levels.