

Repeal the Job-Killing Budget Control Act

As our nation still reels from the economic devastation caused by reckless behavior on Wall Street, smaller federal budgets imposed since 2010 weakened the recovery and slowed job growth.

The cuts have hurt important programs. Annually approved federal spending (Non-Defense Discretionary Programs or NDD) – which funds everything from Meals on Wheels for seniors, Head Start that helps young children and parents, scientific research, funding for infrastructure projects, and much more – is now smaller than it was 2007 despite a growing population and massive needs that are going unmet. The cuts have already reduced spending 12 percent since 2010 – after inflation – even if sequestration is fully lifted in 2014.

More cuts are coming. If the Budget Control Act signed in 2011 continues, spending will fall over the next eight years to the lowest levels in half a century. Non-Defense Discretionary spending will be at the lowest level since 1962. Fewer and fewer resources are going toward medical and scientific research, education and job training, infrastructure, public safety and law enforcement, public health, weather monitoring and environmental protection, natural and cultural resources, and housing and social services.

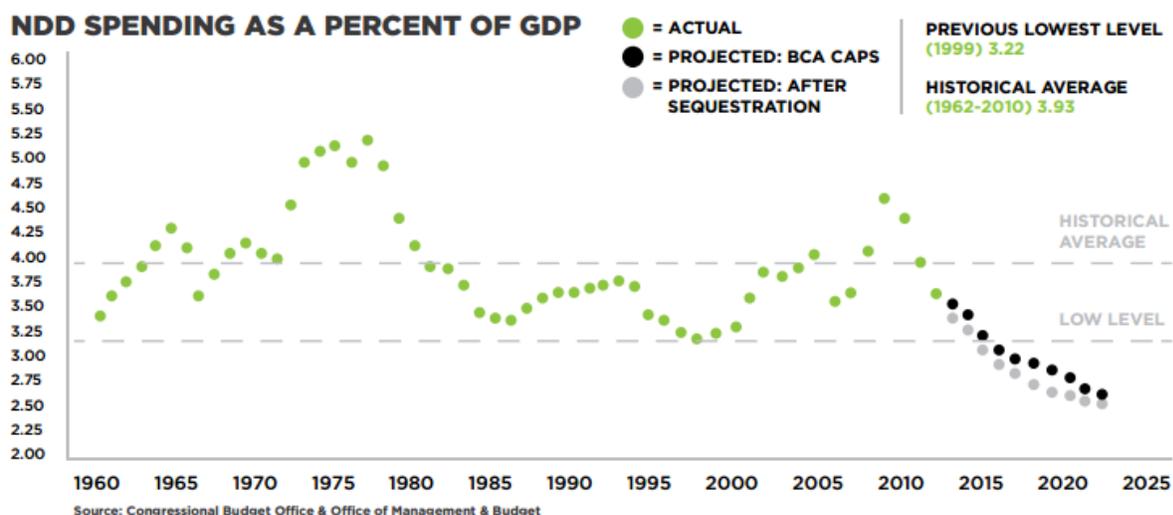
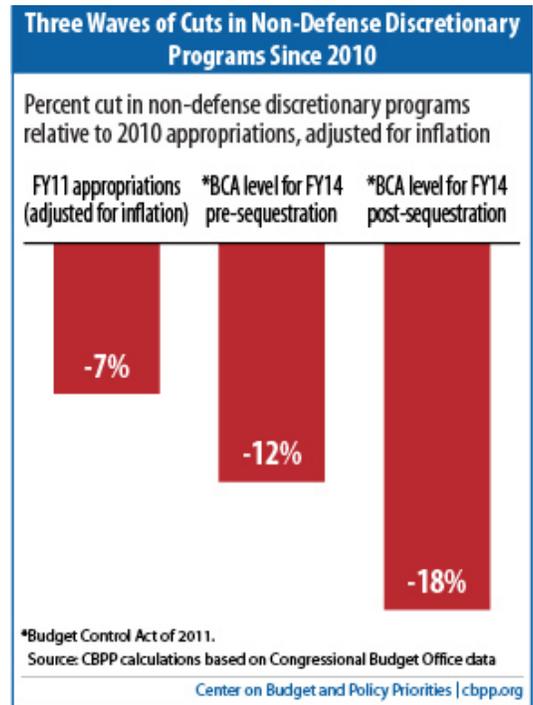


Chart source: NDD United

These cuts stop essential work from getting done.

The falling spending means we're shortchanging and even eliminating programs that improve the economy and global competitiveness, protect our safety and security, educate the next generation and prepare current workers, and protect and cultivate the natural, physical, and social environments in which every community and citizen needs to thrive.

Take public schools: More than 50 million children and staff learn, work, and live much of their waking hours inside the walls of America's nearly 100,000 public elementary, middle, and high schools. But nearly half of these public school buildings were built between 1950 and 1969. The average age of a U.S. school is over 40 years old. Some buildings are more than 100 years old. Many of the buildings have asbestos, mold, other indoor air problems, lead paint, poor lighting, and improper heating and air conditioning. Many are also overcrowded, lacking enough room for the student populations they already serve and that are projected to grow even further in the coming years.

But spending on public school repair, maintenance, building, and modernization is now half the level that existed before the Great Recession. The tab to get school facilities in good shape is conservatively estimated to be \$270 billion and may be double that.

In terms of overall infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers estimates the U.S. needs to invest an additional \$1 trillion by the end of the decade to repair and build infrastructure. This would more than pay for itself in improving the economy and decreasing health, safety, and other costs.

But this won't happen if the Budget Control Act stays in place.

These cuts cost jobs.

The shrinking of federal programs throws Americans out of work directly – and indirectly leads to more job losses in the private sector. An economics research company estimates 1.2 million jobs have been lost because of spending cuts since 2010. This is the only economic recovery in decades where the government has been cutting jobs instead of creating new ones until the recovery picks up substantial steam. The number of public sector workers as a percentage of the population is the lowest it's been since 1968.

Congress needs to repeal the job-killing Budget Control Act of 2011 and invest in America.