



Appropriations Bills Advance FCNL's Domestic Priorities

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The House passed several spending bills for fiscal year 2020 in June—including the Labor Health and Human Services (Labor-H), Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD), Commerce Justice Science (CJS), Interior Energy and Water, and State Foreign Operations (SFOPs) appropriations bills. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill passed out of committee and next moves to the floor of the full U.S. House. These included important wins for our work in support of economic justice, Native Americans, criminal justice reform, environment, gun violence prevention, immigration, and more.

Poverty and Economic Justice

Robust support for anti-poverty measures were included in the Labor-H and T-HUD appropriations bills. We are particularly encouraged to see increases for:

- **Child Care:** An additional \$2.4 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDB) for a total of \$7.7 billion (a 45 percent increase). Access to quality, affordable childcare is essential for parents to be able to stay in the workforce and for young children's healthy development. There is an enormous gap in resources for child care, and even this additional \$2.4 billion is not enough to cover all eligible children.
- **Early Education:** An additional \$1.5 billion for Head Start, a 15 percent increase.
- **Energy Assistance:** \$150 million more for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for a total of \$3.8 billion. LIHEAP helps millions of low-income families afford to heat and cool their homes.
- **Higher Education:** The maximum Pell Grant increased to \$6,345, a \$150 increase per student.
- **Housing:** Enough funding to renew all existing contracts for Housing Choice Vouchers (\$23.8 billion) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (\$12.59 billion), and an increase for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for a total of \$3.6 billion. CDBGs provide communities with resources to address a wide range of needs, including ensuring decent affordable housing and creating jobs through economic development.

Support for Native American Communities

Many of the programs that support Native American communities are funded through the appropriations process. A couple key highlights that FCNL has been tracking:

- **Support for Victims of Violent Crime:** The CJS bill includes a five percent set-aside of the Crime Victims' Fund for tribes. This fund provides grants to support victim services and victim compensation to cover medical care, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages.
- **Violence Against Women:** The House doubled funding for the Office on Violence Against Women for tribal governments, allocating \$10 million. They further increased funding by \$1 million for the Indian Health Services Domestic Violence Prevention Program.
- **Indian Health Service:** A sizeable increase of more than half a billion dollars was allocated to Indian Health Service (IHS) for a total of \$6.34 billion. This includes \$964 million for IHS Facilities (a \$85 million increase). All IHS programs in the Labor-H spending bill got an increase, aside from the Indian Health Care Improvement Fund, which was flat funded. Finally, the House approved a \$81 million for Urban Indian Health, a \$30 million increase.

Criminal Justice Reform

The CJS bill includes critical investments for criminal justice reform, including:

- **FIRST STEP Act:** \$75 million was allocated for implementation of the [FIRST STEP Act](#) to support programs such as educational and occupational training in prisons.
- **Second Chance Grants:** \$106 million was designated for Second Chance grants (a \$19 million increase). Second Chance grants support programs and work by state, local, and tribal governments and nonprofit organizations to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for people returning from state and federal prisons, local jails, and juvenile facilities.

Energy and Environment

Overall, we saw robust and increased funding for environmental and climate programs in the House spending bills.

- **International Climate Response:** Funding for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was preserved. No funding was permitted to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement.
- **U.S. Environmental Protections:** There was bipartisan support for limiting offshore drilling, protecting the social cost of carbon (a metric used to quantify the benefits of addressing climate change), and protecting Obama-era regulations on methane and other greenhouse gas emissions.

Gun Violence Prevention

The Labor-H and CJS bills included funding to study the effects of gun violence and to enforce community safety programs.

- **Firearms Research:** \$50 million was designated for firearm injury and mortality prevention research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute of Health. This [funding is critical](#) to understanding the scope of this problem and uncovering meaningful data that will inform public policy.

- **Increased enforcement:** The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) received \$1.44 billion, a 9.3 percent increase over last year's budget. This funding bolsters the existing background check system, assists community-based violence intervention programs, and directs ATF to release comprehensive statistical data on gun trafficking for the first time in nearly two decades.

Immigration

Several House spending bills included important provisions related to immigration.

- **Protections for Mixed-Status Families:** The T-HUD appropriations bill included language to prevent the administration's proposed rule to evict mixed-status immigrant families (households where some but not all people are documented) from assisted housing.
- **Reuniting Separated Families:** The Labor-H and DHS bills ensure that unaccompanied children under the care of Health and Human Services (HHS) can be reunited with loved ones without fear of deportation.
- **Protections for kids in U.S. custody and ending family detention:** These bills also prohibit the administration from using any funding to escalate family or child detention and deportation by undermining the *Flores* settlement agreement or the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPRA). The *Flores* ruling prohibits DHS from keeping children in detention for more than 20 days. The TVPRA provides certain procedural protections for children who enter the country without documentation.
- **Pushing Back on Expanded Detention:** The immigration detention system has expanded by more than 50 percent since fiscal year 2016. The DHS spending bill includes positive steps forward, including:
 - Lowered detention beds and an end to family detention
 - Restricting overspending on detention
 - No additional Border Patrol agents
 - Prohibiting the use of federal funds for border wall construction
 - And defunding numerous anti-immigrant executive actions that erode the safety and vibrancy of our communities

Census Funding and Citizenship

Finally, the House appropriated funding for the 2020 census and included language to prevent the administration from including a question about citizenship. FCNL [believes](#) that including the question would cause inadequate representation, unfairly target immigrants, and skew resources away from those who need them most.