March 16, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sander M. Levin
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin,

The National Association of Counties (NACo), which represents all of America's 3,069 counties, strongly opposes the elimination of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) under H.R. 4724.

Many counties depend on SSBG to serve vulnerable children and adults within their communities, including those in ten of our nation's most populous states, where SSBG is directly passed through to counties. SSBG can be used for nearly 30 different types of services, but the most common use is for adult protective services (APS), according to a recent NACo-National Association of County Human Services Administrators survey. In fact, it is currently the only federal program authorized for APS besides the unfunded Elder Justice Act (enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act), and there is no alternative state or county APS funding stream sufficient to replace the loss of SSBG.

Child protective services are the second most common use of SSBG funds. In FY 2009, the last year for which data is available, SSBG served 22 million individuals nationwide, 47 percent of whom were children. Services provided to these vulnerable populations – children and seniors – aim to prevent and remedy abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Accordingly, we are deeply concerned that the loss of SSBG funds would lead to the elimination or sharp reduction of services, followed by staff reductions and the otherwise avoidable institutionalization of individuals who are currently receiving in-home services.

We hope you will take these factors into consideration and we thank you for considering our views. NACo's Associate Legislative Director Hadi Sedigh is available to provide additional information and can be reached at 202.942.4213 or hsedigh@naco.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director