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CCAO/NACo FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Protect Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid

CCAO/NACo members support maintaining the federal-state-local partnership structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services. We also oppose cuts, caps, block grants or any other measures that would further shift federal and state Medicaid costs to counties. We encourage harmonizing current Medicaid law with the Affordable Care Act to ensure individuals in pre-trial custody in county jails can continue to receive adequate and evidence-based health care in a responsible fashion.

Support Key Federal Investments that Promote Local Job Creation and Economic Growth

CCAO/NACo members support fully funding key federal programs and investments that support the nation's future economic growth, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs, the Economic Development Administration (EDA), investments in local workforce development programs such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and investments in highway, transit, aviation, port and water infrastructure development.

Equally important, we support investments in programs that support the federal safety net, including Medicaid, social services, justice and public safety programs, and other domestic programs that are essential to creating and maintaining jobs in healthy, safe and vibrant communities.

Pass the Marketplace Fairness Act

Passage of S.336, H.R.684- the Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013- would permit states and local governments to collect sales and use taxes on remote sellers. This legislation as a result of a U.S. Supreme Court Decision (Quill Corp. v. North Dakota (1992)) in which the Court ruled that states may only collect sales taxes by retail merchants that have a physical presence in each state unless Congress acts to authorize the collection of sales taxes from a remote seller (out of state, catalogue, and internet sellers). The legislation give states the choice of becoming a member of the Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement, a multi-state effort to establish uniform standards for the collection of sales taxes, or as an alternative, adopt minimum simplification requirements to qualify for collection of sales taxes from remote sellers.

Oppose Any Move to Cap Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

CCAO/ NACo members oppose any proposals to hamstring the financing of local infrastructure projects by changing the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds. Municipal bonds provide a low-cost and efficient way for cities and counties to finance much of America's critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, airports, water and sewer systems, and roads and bridges.

Support Revenue Sharing and Payment in Lieu of Taxes Programs

CCAO/NACo members support extending full mandatory funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program as well as legislative efforts to reform and fund the expired Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. PILT compensates counties for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries.

Oppose Unfunded Mandates

CCAO/NACo members are constantly vigilant against legislative or regulatory initiatives that undermine local government decision-making authority and contribute to reductions to our economic prosperity and workforce. We oppose any new unfunded or underfunded mandates or federal initiatives that fail to protect county investments, including efforts which seek to undermine the authority of state and local governments with respect to public pension and retirement benefits reform, as well as efforts to use federal environmental and other statutes to overregulate county projects and programs.

Protect County Revenue and Investment Strategies

CCAO/NACo members support the preservation of the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for infrastructure and development. Furthermore, we support legislative initiatives that permit the collection of sales and use taxes from remote sellers. However, we oppose any efforts that would preferentially treat any industry seeking to create its own special immunity from state and local taxation.

Support Rural Development Initiatives and the Farm Bill

CCAO/NACo members support federal investments in rural development and will work to prioritize and increase the flexibility of these investments through a Farm Bill reauthorization and funding for USDA Rural Development programs. These programs assist rural counties in their efforts to partner with all sectors to develop water-wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband, electric, housing, renewable energy and capital for businesses.

Support Change in Transit Funds Usage Restrictions

A provision in the transportation bill, passed in late June, largely lifts restrictions on spending federal funds for public transit agencies that operate fewer than 100 buses at peak times. Such agencies can use as much as 75 percent of their federal allocation on operating costs. However, new language developed by the "100 Bus Coalition" rule signed into law on July 6, inadvertently allows the Federal Transit Authority Section 5307 operating funds only to be used for operations for fixed route services; Yet, a number of Ohio county transit systems are primarily demand response. Legislative action is necessary to amend that language as soon as possible so there is flexibility for systems operating as demand response.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) support federal policies and programs that provide the tools, resources and solutions needed to spur job growth, improve quality of life and increase the economic competitiveness of America's local counties and communities.

The nation's 3,068 county governments provide the essential building blocks to create health, vibrant and safe communities. This includes supporting and maintaining key public infrastructure, transportation and economic development assets; creating and sustaining a skilled workforce to meet the needs of private industry; ensuring public health and public safety needs to protect our citizens; and implementing a broad portfolio of federal, state, and local programs in a cost-effective and accountable manner.

At a time when federal, state, and local budgets have been slashed, counties have had to balance their budgets yet continue shouldering so many of the critical programs and services that people, industry and communities depend upon. Therefore we urge Congress and the Administration to establish a balanced approach to deficit reduction.