

SAVE for All

Strengthening America's Values and Economy for All

Statement of Principles

SAVE for All – Strengthening America's Values and Economy for All – is committed to preserving and strengthening our federal capacity to expand opportunity and enable all Americans to obtain economic security. We include national and local advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based organizations, labor, civil rights groups, and policy experts.

Throughout our history, the federal government has played an essential role in spurring economic growth and increasing opportunity for its people. Federal support made the railroads, interstate highways, and land grant colleges possible. The G.I. Bill opened up education and improved living standards for millions of veterans and their families. Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, and Medicare have made Americans more secure, saving us from deep poverty from economic downturns, old age, or illness.

But now, instead of harnessing federal resources to foster economic progress for all, some in Congress would leave the federal government unable to respond to economic emergencies or provide a jumpstart for new gains. In the name of deficit reduction, some call for massive cuts in funding for education, public health, affordable housing, and other vital domestic programs while maintaining unaffordable tax cuts and unsustainable military spending. Some would place limits on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid that would darken the future for millions. Such cuts run counter to American values of opportunity and security for all. They also ignore the lessons of history: that a strong federal role is needed for broadly shared economic progress.

In a January [Greenberg/Democracy Corps poll](#), fully 41 percent of respondents said that they or someone in their immediate family had been unemployed in the past year. This disturbing figure explains why Americans overwhelmingly believe that strengthening the economy and spurring job creation should be the nation's immediate top priority. The widespread and growing pessimism about the nation's future is understandable given the painful losses so many families have experienced. The undersigned organizations share this concern. We believe the federal government must use its resources to create the conditions for economic recovery for the benefit of all. Only by creating jobs and building economic security can we move our nation forward.

We agree that the long-term federal deficit must be addressed. We believe the nation can and should reduce the deficit over time through a balanced approach that includes equitable increases in revenue and thoughtful reductions in expenditures that do not serve the public interest, including wasteful military spending that does not add to our security. In short, Congress should focus on the policies that will hasten the economic recovery and build a strong foundation for our shared future. This responsible approach will place the nation on firm fiscal footing for economic expansion that benefits everyone.

If Congress tries to reduce the deficit primarily by slashing funding indiscriminately and reducing the scope of critical federal programs, it will weaken us as a nation by threatening the health and development of millions of low-income children, risking harm to seniors and people with disabilities, and reducing the incomes of many millions of families. The result will leave us more economically insecure. The federal government would stand by helplessly as family incomes erode further, and poverty and inequality rise even beyond today's unacceptably high levels. Instead, the federal government must be an engine for shared prosperity.

Together, we call upon the Obama Administration and Congress to:

- **Protect low- and moderate-income people in budget and deficit reduction proposals** by opposing cuts in or the elimination of effective services, while supporting expansions necessary to respond to growing need.
- **Prevent multi-year appropriations caps** that force harsh reductions in domestic/human needs services.
- **Prevent damaging structural changes in essential programs.** Examples of such changes include block-granting Medicaid or limiting Medicare by converting its benefits to fixed vouchers. Such proposals would make recessions deeper and cause ours to be more of a two-tiered health system in which only those who can afford it would benefit fully from advances in medical care.
- **Reject efforts to adopt a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget.**
- **Support deficit reduction plans that include additional revenues drawn from equitable sources,** and oppose the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction framework of two-thirds spending cuts and only one-third revenue increases. The proportion of revenues in a deficit reduction plan can and should be increased substantially beyond the Bowles-Simpson proposal. Imposing deep cuts in services will cost jobs, inflict additional hardship on millions of Americans, and prevent a sustainable economic recovery.
- **Oppose rules and statutory changes that favor tax cuts** over important domestic investments by not allowing an investment to be paid for by a revenue increase, while permitting new tax cuts to be adopted without any requirement that they be paid for at all.

Ours is a rich and great nation with virtually unlimited potential. Yet in 2009, 100 million people – one-third of our nation – were living in or near poverty, with incomes below about \$44,000 for a family of four. The United States should be a country where all are afforded economic opportunity and the ability to live in dignity. Realizing our potential requires investments in the infrastructure for success: education, food and nutrition programs, job training opportunities, work supports, affordable housing, and other human needs programs while simultaneously maintaining a robust social safety net to help those who fall on hard times.

We cannot leave so many with so little means to participate in our economy and expect the nation to be able to move forward. **Strengthening America's Values and Economy for All** requires saving the federal government's capacity to address our needs and keep our promises.