

Clean Budget Messaging Guidance for Allies

The FY 2018-2019 omnibus funding package, due by March 23, is very likely to be the last must-pass legislation before the 2018 midterms. Accordingly, Republicans in Congress are expected to use this opportunity to force through as many harmful riders as possible on a wide range of issues that progressives care about. These measures must be opposed. No poison pill riders are acceptable – and it is important for the public, the press and lawmakers in both parties to hear this message over and over again.

The Clean Budget Coalition encourages you to weave in messaging opposing all ideological policy riders on any spending package in your public statements and in visits to the Hill during the next few critical weeks. If you are writing or talking about the omnibus, here are some simple messages you can easily add that call for a clean budget.

Spending bills are meant to fund our government, not ram through unrelated and controversial policies. Instead of doing their jobs and funding our government, unscrupulous lawmakers are injecting unrelated and controversial issues into the appropriations process. Special favors for big corporations and ideological extremists have no place in government funding legislation.

Most corporate and ideological riders are a ploy to block popular public protections. Rolling back Wall Street reforms, blocking clean air and water protections, and attacking women's health care have nothing to do with funding our government. These unpopular measures could not become law on their own merits – even with Republicans controlling both chambers of Congress and the White House. They don't belong in the omnibus.

Americans have a right to expect a clean budget with no harmful riders. Lawmakers need to stop playing partisan games with the budget process. We should pass a clean budget with no harmful riders, one that protects our families and communities.

There is a difference between partisan policy riders that hurt the public and policy fixes with bipartisan support that will help many. Protecting Dreamers is needed to deal with a national emergency created by the president. Both sides of the aisle agree that this issue must be fixed to prevent irreparable damage to hundreds of thousands of young immigrants and their families. The need to deal with the DACA crisis is best equated with disaster relief or the CHIP extension. There is no argument that many in this nation are suffering, and when people suffer legislative packages to deal with the problems must be passed.

Poison pill riders should never be traded for additional funding for programs or measures we might otherwise support. Though it is tempting to consider ideological policy riders as ripe for negotiation when seeking money for important priorities or pursuing popular policy provisions, that temptation must be resisted. Using poison pills as a barraging chip must not happen because it always will end with progressives negotiating against ourselves. That is why the Clean Budget Coalition advocates for the exclusion of all ideological policy riders.

Please visit CleanBudget.org for additional resources.

Call Script

Please call your two senators and member of Congress. When you call, be polite but firm. Make sure to say that you are from your home state.

Hi, my name is ____ and I'm calling from (City, State). I'd like to leave a message for Senator / Representative ____.

I'm calling to express my concern about the hundreds of harmful poison pill policy riders that are attached to appropriations legislation. These measures are just special favors for ideological extremists and big corporations, and they have no business being part of legislation that is supposed to fund our government.

Please keep the inappropriate poison pill riders out of the appropriations bills, and pass a budget that protects our families and communities. Thank you.