

Commissioner McDonough Draft Testimony
U.S. Rep. McCollum Listening Session
Friday, March 9, 2018 (around 10:15 a.m.)
Impact of Proposed Trump Budget: Select Changes

- Good morning. I'm Jim McDonough, chair of the Ramsey County board of commissioners. Thanks to you and your staff, Representative McCollum, for coordinating this event and the opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed Federal budget today.
- Minnesota is one of a dozen or so states that passes along many of its federal mandates to counties. When federal funding is cut – especially for these mandated programs – problems are merely passed down from the feds to the states and in MN's case, to the counties.
- Ramsey is MN's second most populous county with more than 540,000 residents.
- Counties deliver safety net services for vulnerable populations. Our staff manage large caseloads in programs for the elderly; the disabled; for neglected and abused children; for the indigent who lack health care and housing.
- Many of the cuts in the proposed Federal budget target programs designed to help these populations as well as no income, very low and moderate-income individuals and families to meet basic needs – employment, shelter, food and health care.
- About half of our budget and resources at Ramsey County are for Social Services programs. Currently, Ramsey County Social Services has about 40,000 cases – not including those served in our Mental Health or Detox Centers.
- Public Safety and Public Health are also partially funded by counties – more so as federal and state funding is decreased.
- Taken together, the proposed budget cuts being proposed by the President and considered by Congress, attack these basic needs and guarantee that a

large segment of our population will see the stability they work so hard to piece together, slip away.

- What does the Trump Administration propose for health and human services?
 - For Medicaid – Chop and Block. Cut the budget and give states a block grant based on per capita allowances. This pits groups of recipients against each other and pushes out moderate income people who have no other avenue for getting affordable, decent health care.
 - TANF (temporary assistance for needy families program) – the proposed budget would cut it by 10 percent putting a burden on the state and counties to provide services. Fewer families will receive any help at all.
 - SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and other food programs, would be cut by 22% next year, add work requirements and provide surplus food commodities in government food boxes.
 - Programs completely eliminated would include:
 - The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) – flexible funding which counties use to support many of their human services programs for vulnerable adults and children.
 - LiHEAP, which provides home energy assistance to individuals and families
 - The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which states, counties and cities use to support the development of subsidized and market-rate housing.
- Other programs that would be cut include:
 - The Workforce Investment Act funds, which states and counties use to support employment, including
 - Adult employment – cut by 40% under the Trump proposed budget
 - Dislocated workers, cut by 47%
 - Youth activities, cut by 40%
- Let's look at one program facing complete elimination: the Social Services Block Grant

In 2018, Ramsey County received around \$6.8 million from Minnesota and \$3.6 million from the federal government in these flexible block grants.

In Ramsey County we use this funding to address the needs of the most vulnerable:

- assisting families in crisis.
- helping adults with life skills.
- children in and leaving foster care.
- families who have adopted children.

A multi-million dollar reduction in just this program could not simply be solved by tightening our belt or by increasing caseloads. It would require the discontinuation of programs aimed at prevention and early intervention.

It would likely require lay-offs and would certainly result in longer wait times for evaluations and service delivery. Combined with other proposed cuts, it would also very likely require property tax increases.

- Ramsey County and Minnesota are not places where we turn our backs on our vulnerable elderly and children. We don't neglect basic human needs and basic respect. The programs I have mentioned here today need their funding maintained.
- Thank you Congresswoman McCollum for your work on our behalf in Washington.