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Where Does America Go From Here?

Women's Leader Says Nation Needs to Reconsider Priorities In the Wake of Deal to Avert Federal Default

Statement of Debra L. Ness, President, National Partnership for Women & Families

“The deal is done, both chambers have now voted. Today, President Obama will sign an unprecedented bill into law and the immediate catastrophe of the United States government defaulting will be averted. But the country will be living with the consequences of this deal for decades to come.

By agreeing to unprecedented spending cuts without additional revenues – not even modest tax increases on the wealthiest billionaires and corporations – lawmakers have set in motion a series of events that are almost certain to result in devastating cuts to the safety net programs that protect the most vulnerable women and families. On the chopping block in the months ahead will be essential programs like Head Start, medical research into breast cancer and other deadly diseases, implementation of health reform, family planning, child care, nursing home care, nutrition assistance, education, housing and other programs that support Americans who need help the most.

The programs and priorities at risk will be those that have long defined our core values as a nation. At stake in the decisions that lie just ahead is the future of the middle class, the economic security of families, and what we stand for as a country.

We all get sick, get old, lose jobs, and hit hard times. Government's role in helping during those rough patches – with health care and other basic supports – is now uncertain.

Tea Party values are not America's values. We will be looking to lawmakers to restore the priorities that Americans support and re-establish the federal agenda this country deserves.”

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The National Partnership for Women & Families is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care, and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at www.nationalpartnership.org.