

Legislative Update



January 2023

- 1. President Biden signs FY 2023 omnibus spending bill, including increases for select CDC and HRSA programs**
- 2. President Biden signs the APHA-supported Respect for Marriage Act into law**
- 3. Senate resolution declares racism a public health crisis**

President Biden signs FY 2023 omnibus spending bill, including increases for select CDC and HRSA programs

On Dec. 29, President Biden signed the [FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) into law. The bill funds all federal health programs and includes the 11 other annual appropriations bills that fund all other parts of the government ranging from education to nutrition to defense. Prior to its passage, APHA [issued a statement in support of the measure](#).

While the bill falls short of providing the level of funding APHA and other health advocates had requested for agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration, the legislation does provide key increases for some programs and also avoided the need for a long-term continuing resolution that brings uncertainty and makes it more difficult for health agencies and their grantees to protect the public's health. The bill increases funding for CDC by \$760 million in FY 2023 for a total of \$9.2 billion. This funding would help strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure and workforce as we continue to combat COVID-19 and other public health threats. The increase would also support critical programs to address many of our most pressing public health challenges including data modernization, chronic diseases (e.g., heart disease, cancer and diabetes), health disparities and inequities and global health protection. The bill would also provide an increase of \$900 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration for a total of more than \$9.4 billion in FY 2023. Community health centers, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program and Title VIII nursing programs are among the HRSA programs receiving increased funding under the bill.

A [summary](#) of the Labor-HHS-Education bill's provisions and the [explanatory statement](#) that provides details about specific funding levels for CDC and HRSA programs is available on the House Appropriations Committee website.

In mid-November, APHA led two letters urging Congress to provide the highest possible level of funding for both CDC and HRSA. APHA, joined by members and other supporters of the CDC Coalition, [wrote to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders](#) reiterating their request for \$11 billion for CDC in FY 2023 and urging Congress to provide no less than \$10.45 billion for the agency, the level provided in the current versions of the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Education bills. Additionally, APHA was joined by members of the Friends of HRSA in [sending a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders](#) urging them to provide at least \$9.39 billion in discretionary funding for HRSA in any final FY 2023 bill.

We thank all the APHA members and other public health advocates who weighed in with their members of Congress urging them to support CDC and HRSA funding in FY 2023.

President Biden signs the APHA-supported Respect for Marriage Act into law

On Dec. 13, President Biden signed the [Respect for Marriage Act](#) into law.

On Dec. 8, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Respect for Marriage Act (H.R.8404) by a vote of [258-169](#), with one member voting present. Importantly, the legislation would guarantee the federal rights, benefits and obligations of marriages in the federal code, repeal the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act, and affirm that public acts, records and proceedings should be recognized by all states.

On Nov. 29, the U.S. Senate passed the bill by a vote of [61-36](#). Twelve Senate Republicans joined 47 Democrats and both independents in voting for passage of the bill. Three members were absent for the vote. Prior to the Senate vote, on Nov. 15, APHA was joined by several APHA Affiliates and other leading health, education and human services organizations in [sending a letter to members of the Senate](#) urging support for the bill.

In 2015, APHA and Whitman Walker Clinic, Inc. [submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court](#) urging the court to require states to recognize same-sex marriage. The court ultimately ruled in favor of marriage equality, which APHA had argued leads to better health and longevity.

Senate resolution declares racism a public health crisis

On Dec. 20, APHA and 176 other organizations [endorsed the introduction of a Senate resolution](#) declaring racism a public health crisis. Introduced by Senators

Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Alex Padilla (D-CA), the resolution outlines the effects of systemic racism on the health of communities of color and points out that existing racial and ethnic inequities were exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution also encourages concrete actions to fight health disparities including dismantling practices that perpetuate racism and addressing neglectful and apathetic policies.

Advocates can check out [APHA's list of racism declarations](#), which is a list of the 21 states, 89 counties and 147 cities that have declared racism a public health crisis, and use this resource to encourage their local governments to do the same.

Additional APHA advocacy news

Given the rapid pace of action in Washington, D.C., we wanted to highlight additional issues we have weighed in on recently. Those include:

- [APHA letter to the U.S. Senate](#) in support of S. J. Res. 56, the war powers resolution that would end any unauthorized U.S. military support of the Saudi Arabian-led war in the Republic of Yemen (Dec. 13)
- [APHA letter to Secretary of State Blinken](#) regarding the arrest of Turkish Medical Association president Fincanci (Dec. 7)