November 18, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Leahy:

On behalf of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), I am writing regarding the Committee’s release last week of all twelve fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills. CUNA represents America’s credit unions and their more than 120 million members.

Credit unions have interest in several programs and report language included in these bills and as we continue to endure the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis, adequate funding for key programs is essential. We offer these views understanding that omnibus consideration of these bills is underway.

**Community Development Financial Institutions Fund and Community Development Revolving Loan Fund**

The Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund and the Community Development Revolving Loan Fund (CDRLF) are important programs that facilitate credit unions’ improving their members’ financial well-being and advancing their communities. CUNA has urged Congress to appropriate $300 million and $2 million, respectively, for these two important funds in FY 2021. Unfortunately, the President’s budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 does not include any funds for these programs. The Senate legislation released proposes $262 million for the CDFI Fund, but includes no new funding for the CDRLF. We were pleased that the House of Representatives passed legislation on July 31st that included $273.5 million for the CDFI Fund, an increase of $11.5 million over fiscal year 2020, and $2 million for the CDRLF. As these bills are reconciled, we encourage Congress to support the House-passed funding level.

In addition, CUNA supports a one-time appropriation of $1 billion for the CDFI Fund to combat the economic impact of the COVID-19 epidemic. This funding was included in the House-passed HEROES Act (H.R. 6800).

**Cooperative Development Program**

The Cooperative Development Program (CDP) is a global initiative that focuses on building capacity of cooperative businesses and cooperative systems for self-reliance, local ownership, and sustainability. The Credit Union National Association is also a member of the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), which is the leading trade association and development organization for the international credit union movement, representing over 89,000 credit unions in 117 countries with $2.1 trillion dollars in total assets serving 260 million members. WOCCU has successfully operated several programs funded through the CDP in Afghanistan, Haiti, Ukraine, Guatemala, Mexico, and Kenya, among other places.

CUNA strongly supports the Committee-endorsed funding level of $20 million for the Cooperative Development Program, administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, for fiscal year 2021.

As the House and Senate move to reconcile their positions on these funding levels, I respectfully urge you to fully fund these three critical programs.
The House-passed Financial Services and General Government appropriations bills includes report language to which we offer the following views:

**Payments Security**
Credit unions strongly support the enactment of a national data security and data privacy law that includes robust security standards that apply to all who collect or hold personal data and is preemptive of state laws. We firmly believe that there can be no data privacy until there is strong data security. So, we appreciate the inclusion of important language in the Homeland Security Appropriations bill report that directs the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to do a risk assessment “on vulnerabilities in U.S. payments systems, including point of sale and online purchase systems, vulnerable to data breaches. CISA shall make an unclassified version of the assessment publicly available to help inform businesses and consumers.”

**Hemp Banking**
We appreciate language in the House-passed Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill that prohibits funding from being used to penalize a financial institution for providing service to hemp-related businesses.

**Postal Banking**
Finally, we have deep reservations regarding language in the report accompanying the House-passed Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill that encourages the United States Postal Services to carry out pilot programs to expand its postal banking services. America’s credit unions were created to promote thrift and provide access to credit for provident services. Rather than relying on the postal service to enter a complicated and highly regulated market, Congress ought to encourage and facilitate credit unions expanding service to more Americans.

On behalf of America’s credit unions and their more than 120 million members, as well the World Council of Credit Unions, thank you for recognizing the importance of these pro-credit union programs.

Sincerely,

Jim Nussle
President & CEO