

CONCERNING EARMARKS REMAIN IN THE FINAL APPROPRIATIONS MINIBUS

Matthew Dickerson and David Ditch
January 20, 2026

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees [released](#) the conferenced legislation for the fiscal year 2026 Defense; Homeland; Labor, Health and Human Services, Education; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bills.

This would be the final minibus package to complete the FY 2026 appropriations process ahead of the continuing resolution expiring on January 30, 2026.

Overall, it totals more than \$55.2 billion more than the equivalent House versions of the same four bills.

Unfortunately, the minibus includes millions of dollars in wasteful, concerning [earmarks](#) at a time when the [national debt](#) is nearly [\\$38.5 trillion](#). Below are just some of the examples of harmful earmarks that steer taxpayer funds to left wing activists, gender transitions and abortion providers, and other wasteful projects misaligned with Americans' priorities.

Earmarks for Left-Wing Activists

1. Schumer Provides Half a Million for Legal Aid for Immigrants

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) included \$500,000 for the New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) in New York City. NICE provides legal services for aliens to assist them in cases before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration Court.



IMMIGRATION

The NICE Legal Services Pro-Se Immigration Program offers members and their families **empowering legal education and guidance to assist them effectively in presenting their cases before USCIS and Immigration Court**. As part of the NICE Legal Service Division Pro-Se model, our organization conducts workshops and individualized immigration assessments through detailed intakes to better understand each participant's immigration history and identify possible legal pathways.

****THE NICE IMMIGRATION DIVISION PROGRAM IS LIMITED TO OUR MEMBERS (PRE-APPRENTICE AND ADVANCE).****

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Transportation, Housing & Urban Development

Program: Community Development Fund

Recipient: New Immigrant Community Empowerment

Project: \$500,000 for NICE Station – Community and Training Center

Sponsor: Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

2. Big Handout for Corporate-Backed Socialized Housing Activists

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) included a \$3 million earmark to the Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), a Brooklyn-based local activist group, for “community facility enhancements.” The FAC promotes increased welfare spending, economic and environmental regulations to burden private sector construction, and socialized housing.

The FAC participates in “community organizing” and “advocacy” on behalf of left-wing “justice” concepts related to race and environmental concerns in local development. The FAC also works for the socialization of housing by seeking to tighten New York’s economically damaging rent control rules and other housing regulations under the guise of “tenant organizing and advocacy.”

Stabilizing New York City

FAC is part of [Stabilizing New York City \(SNYC\)](#), a coalition comprised of a legal service provider and nineteen grassroots organizations that have come together to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing for the New Yorkers who need it most. This project combines legal, [advocacy and organizing](#) resources into a citywide network to help tenants hold [predatory equity landlords](#) accountable, and organize against harassment. We are funded by and work with the New York City Council and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

SNYC has organized and supported hundreds of tenant associations throughout the city. From this base, we have formed coalitions across building portfolios, built campaigns to thwart predatory equity tactics through direct and legal action, and forced unscrupulous landlords to make improvements and provide tenant protections across their portfolios. Investment in the SNYC program has helped build the city- and statewide tenant movement and SNYC tenant leaders led the historic campaign to [strengthen the rent laws](#). These leaders raised their voices to fight for the [rent law reform](#) and the protections they need for their homes and families.

Despite its socialistic policy work, the FAC [receives funding](#) from corporations such as Capital One, Citi, Con Edison, HSBC, and M&T Bank, further reducing the justification for a federal handout.

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Transportation, Housing & Urban Development

Program: Community Development

Recipient: [Fifth Avenue Committee](#), Brooklyn, NY

Project: \$3 million for Community Facility Enhancements

Sponsors: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) & Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Earmarks Steer Funds Towards Abortionists and Pediatric Gender Transitions

1. Rady's Rakes in Taxpayer Dollars for Children's Gender Surgeries

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA) included a \$2 million earmark for pediatric mental health services at Rady's Children's Hospital in San Diego. Rady's operates a [center](#) dedicated to pediatric "gender affirming care" including gender transition [surgeries](#) for minors. They are committed to continuing to perform those surgeries even after the Trump Administration's Executive Order "[Protecting Children From Chemical and Surgical Mutilation](#)." The funds used for pediatric mental health will almost certainly go towards sponsoring the gender transition of children or at least free up other funds for that effort.

NEWS > HEALTH

Rady Children's Hospital continues gender-affirming care while reviewing new executive order

Other hospitals, including Children's Hospital Los Angeles, have paused some treatments after administration's Jan. 28 statement



Rady Children's Hospital in Birdland on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025 in San Diego, California. (Alejandro Tamayo / The San Diego Union-Tribune)



By PAUL SISSON | paul.sisson@sduniontribune.com | The San Diego Union-Tribune



Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Labor Health and Human Services

Program: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Recipient: Rady's Children's Hospital, San Diego

Project: \$2,000,000 for pediatric mental health services

Sponsor: Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) & Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

2. Minnesota Health Clinic Harming Children

Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) included more than \$3 million dollars for Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Hennepin operates a pediatric gender and sexual health clinic that provides both mental and physical care to children, adolescents, and young adults. The clinic offers puberty blockers and hormone treatments, as well as referrals to surgeons and specialists for gender surgeries on children.

Location

Clinic & Specialty Center

Pediatric Clinic

715 South 8th Street, Level 3
Minneapolis MN 55404
612-873-9360

Clinic Offerings

Our team is comprised of physicians, psychologists, social workers and support staff who work together to provide optimal physical and mental health care during these formative years. We know that LGBTQ children who have nurturing and supportive families and health care providers have better outcomes than those who do not. We are here for you and your family.

Examples of services available

- Mental health care (individual and family therapy, diagnostic assessment and psychological evaluation)
- Pubertal suppression
- Gender-affirming hormone therapy
- Referrals to surgeons or subspecialists as needed
- Referral to community supports or resources as needed

Hennepin Healthcare was one of a select group of 303 healthcare facilities nationwide to be named **Leaders in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality** in 2017, and one of four facilities in Minnesota to be awarded Leader status.

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Labor Health and Human Services

Program: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Recipient: [Hennepin Healthcare](#)

Project: \$3,002,000 for substance abuse clinic

Sponsor: Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) & Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

3. A Helping Hand for a Children's Gender Transition Clinic

Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) included nearly \$1.6 million for the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center. Northern Light operates a gender clinic specifically dedicated to "children, adolescents, and young adults." They offer hormone therapy treatments to children for gender transitions.

Gender Clinic

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center is committed to caring for children, adolescents, and young adults with gender dysphoria, gender fluidity, or those who are questioning.

As a team, we provide evidence-based treatment and strive for excellence in our care of our patients. We also welcome opportunities to improve medical and mental health treatment of gender diverse and transgender children and teens in our community through collaboration, support, and education.

The Pediatric Endocrine Gender Clinic team consists of:

- Pediatric Endocrinologist (medical doctors who specialize in hormone therapy)
- Pediatric Psychologist

We also enlist the support of community-based psychotherapists to ensure that our gender diverse patients have support within their communities.

To start, patients and their families can expect an initial visit with the pediatric psychologist for an in-depth evaluation, with subsequent follow up with the pediatric endocrinologist after a few months. Patients will undergo comprehensive medical and psychological evaluations, which help our team provide individualized care.

Northern Light Pediatric Endocrinology
133 Corporate Drive, Bangor
207.275.4201

□ Gender Clinic

[Click here to reach our Northern Light Acadia's LBGQ+ page](#) for additional resources.

The Medical Center's 2024 "Overall Caring Spirit" award was provided to Mahmuda Ahmed, MD for "her transformative work at our Pediatric Endocrinology and Gender Clinic." Dr. Ahmed only treats infants, children, and young adults aged 18 and younger, where she helps socially and medically transition children.

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Labor Health and Human Services

Program: Health Resources

Recipient: Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center

Project: \$1,599,000 for labor and delivery equipment

Sponsor: Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)

Earmarks for Boondoggles

1. Schumer's Elevator for New York City's Elites

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) included a \$1 million earmark for New York City's Metropolitan Opera Association (Met Opera) to make elevators compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Met Opera is currently showing a version of the classic French opera *Carmen* that reportedly features “a wicked ICE agent abusing a tatted-up OnlyFans girl on a grey and dirty stage supposed to resemble the US southern border.”

The Met Opera has an annual budget of more than \$330 million and has assets of more than half a billion dollars, thanks to dozens of corporate, foundation, and individual patrons giving millions of dollars apiece, meaning it can make room in the budget to ensure its elevators are accessible to people with disabilities.

Assets	2024
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 7,292
Accounts receivable	4,211
Contributions receivable, net (notes 2 and 13)	100,021
Prepaid production and telecast costs	9,277
Other assets	8,305
Right-of-use assets (note 6)	3,610
Investments (notes 4 and 10)	285,354
Interests in split-interest agreements (note 4)	10,981
Property and equipment, net (note 5)	82,726
Total assets	\$ 511,777

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Transportation, Housing & Urban Development

Program: Community Development

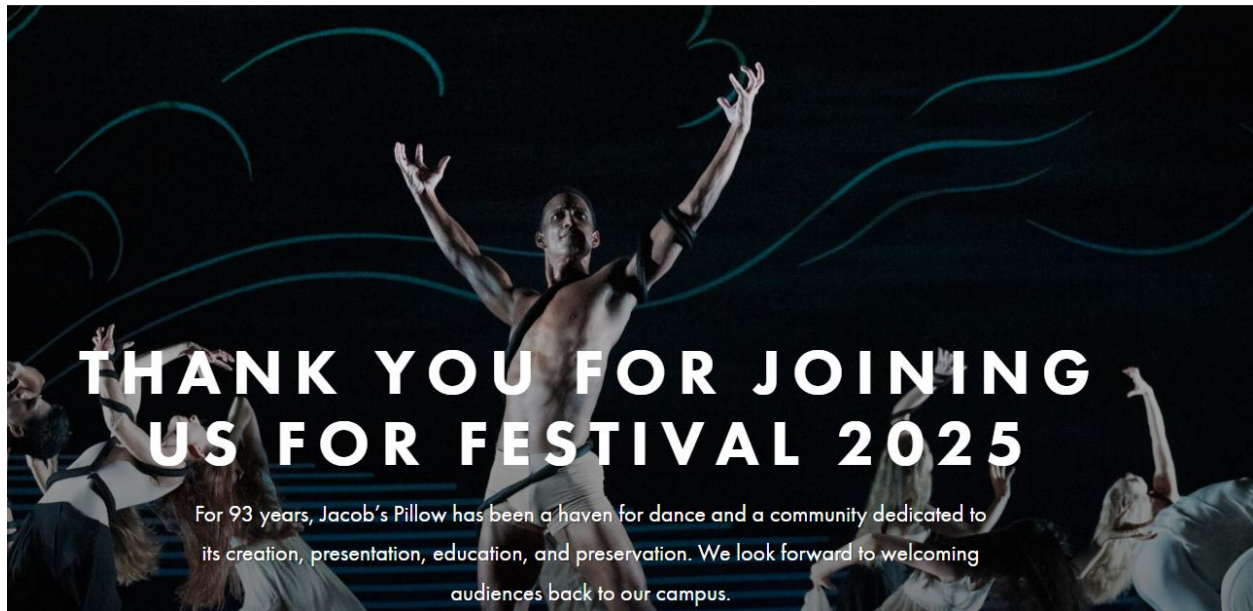
Recipient: Metropolitan Opera Association

Project: \$1 million for elevator modernization

Sponsor: Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

2. Featherbedding “Jacob’s Pillow” with Tax Dollars

Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) included a \$375,000 earmark for arts education to Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival (Jacob’s Pillow) in Massachusetts.



This follows a similar \$100,000 earmark to Jacob's Pillow in FY 2023.

Jacob's Pillow receives [financial support](#) from a slate of deep-pocketed foundations, including Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Ford Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. The group had [\\$76 million in assets](#) as of 2023.

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education

Program: Innovation and Improvement

Recipient: [Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival](#)

Project: \$375,000 for arts education

Sponsors: Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) & Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

3. Pedestrian Signals and the Homeless Industrial Complex

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) wants the federal government to give California a \$1.5 million earmark for pedestrian safety signals in San Francisco.

That this project would be funded through Highway Infrastructure Programs is telling. Congress has allowed the [Highway Trust Fund](#)'s focus to degrade, with local responsibilities such as street crossings and sidewalks qualifying for "highway" dollars.

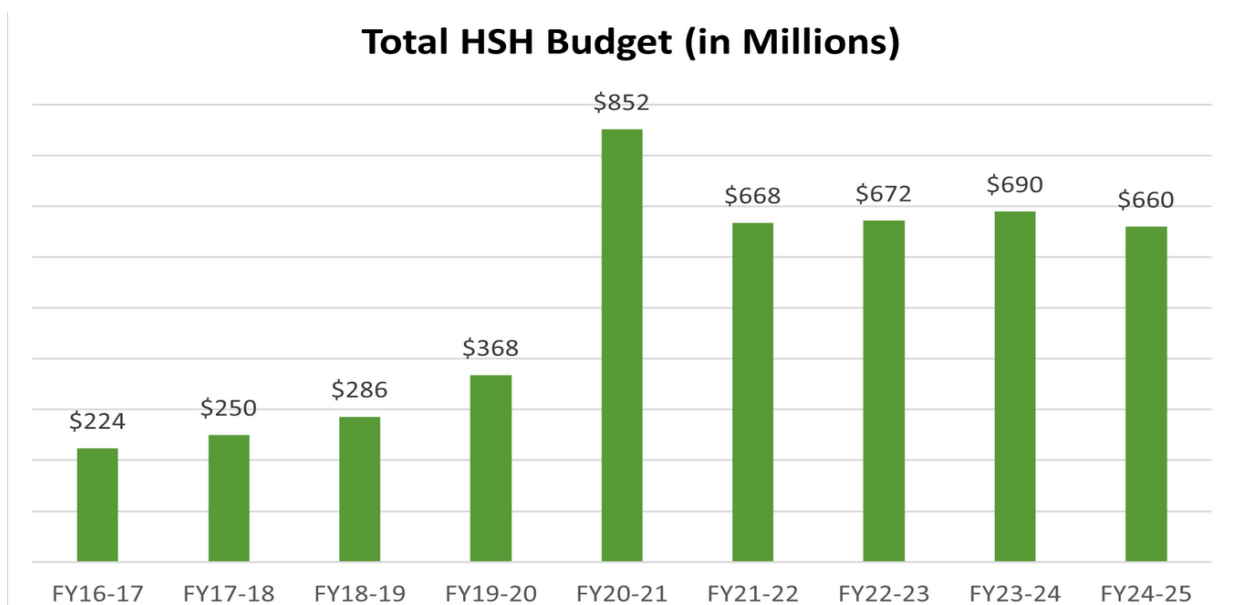
What makes this project stand out from similar transportation earmarks is its location: the infamous Tenderloin neighborhood. Situated in one of the wealthiest urban areas in

human history, the Tenderloin neighborhood is notorious as a focal point of [crime](#), [homelessness](#), [drug use](#), [public defecation](#), and other types of disorder.

This is not due to neglect or a lack of taxpayer-funded resources – quite the opposite. California spends [billions of dollars](#) per year on homelessness.

HUD spends \$72 billion a year, mostly on affordable housing, and progressive states spend billions more each year. **California spent \$24 billion to reduce homelessness in the last five years, but there are more homeless.** The Administration even **granted California a waiver** to use **federal Medicaid funds to help the homeless** obtain housing. Meantime, drug rehab centers in the state are closing because of inadequate government reimbursements.

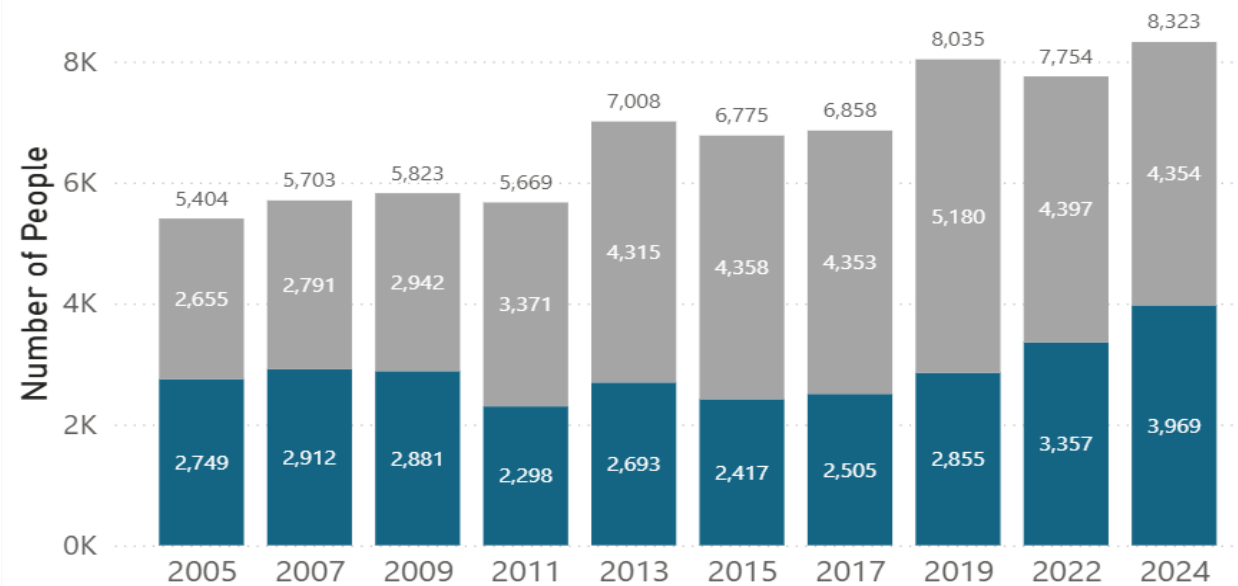
San Francisco's Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) department has received a [budgetary windfall](#) in recent years.



The spending is remarkably high when compared to the [number of homeless individuals](#) in San Francisco. The HSH department's budget is roughly \$80,000 per year per homeless person.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness during each PIT Count, 2005-2024

Sheltered/Unsheltered: ● Sheltered ● Unsheltered



This spending, however, is not addressing the problem effectively. The city government expects that only one in four homeless people entering the system will become housed.

**HSH estimates 4 households become homeless
for every 1 household housed**



The cause of this remarkable and ineffective expense is a combination of bureaucratic overlap and a collection of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often referred to as the Homeless Industrial Complex.

Presently, besides the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, at least five other departments work with the homeless population.

And there are more than 200 nonprofits working with the homeless that are funded by city agencies.

The homelessness NGOs have become a political force in the city. Taxpayers and businesses in the area are pushing back against activities such as handing out drug consumption tools, which attracts addicts to distribution locations.

Tenderloin residents sue SF in effort to stop distribution of harm reduction kits

By [Lyanne Melendez](#) 

Monday, September 8, 2025 2:11AM



Federal legislators should understand that paying for local responsibilities such as street infrastructure makes it easier for irresponsible governments to waste money elsewhere. Thus, while the \$1.5 million Tenderloin safety signal project is not a direct subsidy for the cadres of ineffective NGOs operating in and around the neighborhood, it has the same effect.

The question is not whether there should be functional pedestrian crossings in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood. Instead, the question ought to be who should pay for the infrastructure. San Francisco has sufficient resources to cover the cost, yet it has inappropriately sought Sen. Padilla's help in securing federal tax dollars instead.

Earmark Details

Bill: Senate Transportation, Housing & Urban Development

Program: Highway Infrastructure

Recipient: California

Project: \$1.5 million for pedestrian safety signal upgrades in Tenderloin neighborhood

Sponsor: Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)