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October 13, 2011

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction:

I am writing with two purposes in mind: to illustrate the consequences if the Joint Committee fails to agree on a balanced, long-term deficit reduction plan and to underscore the message that Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke recently issued to Congress.

In his Congressional testimony on October 4th, Chairman Bernanke urged Congress to slash budget deficits more than planned over the long-term but not to make cuts in the short run, undermining economic growth. He said:

> "One crucial objective is to achieve long-run fiscal sustainability. The federal budget is clearly not on a sustainable path at present. The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, formed as part of the Budget Control Act, is charged with achieving $1.5 trillion in additional deficit reduction over the next 10 years on top of the spending caps enacted this summer. Accomplishing that goal would be a substantial step; however, more will be needed to achieve fiscal sustainability.
>
> A second important objective is to avoid fiscal actions that could impede the ongoing economic recovery. These first two objectives are certainly not incompatible, as putting in place a credible plan for reducing future deficits over the longer term does not preclude attending to the implications of fiscal choices for the recovery in the near term."

I would emphasize that in all fiscal choices, it is imperative to focus on economic growth. When the economy weakens, revenues decline and safety-net spending increases. There is no way to transform a budget deficit into a surplus if our economy does not recover and if employment does not grow vigorously. I urge the Joint Committee to give serious consideration to the American Jobs Act and any other responsible proposals to promote economic growth, rebuild our deteriorating roads, bridges and other infrastructure, and create jobs in America.

I would also emphasize that everything must be on the table, including revenues, in order to reach long-term fiscal sustainability. If the Joint Committee excludes any major element of the budget, the Committee will be forced either to rely too heavily on sacrifice from the remaining elements or to lower the deficit reduction goal. Cutting too deeply from remaining elements or lowering the target will inevitably mean America does not achieve long-run fiscal sustainability.

The second purpose of this letter is to remind the Joint Committee that failure is not an option. I don't need to rehash the bleak prospects for our nation if Congress can't agree on a balanced, long-term deficit reduction plan. The independent commissions, whose reports gave birth to the Joint Committee, connected the dots from failure to reduce deficits to economic catastrophe. Moreover, the Budget Control Act made sure that if the Joint Committee could not agree, a special sequestration process would take effect to reduce deficits over 10 years.

To put sequestration in context, the Budget Control Act reduced the deficit by $2.4 trillion. The first $1.2 trillion results almost entirely from capping discretionary appropriations over ten years, from FY 2012 to FY 2021. The second $1.2 trillion in deficit reduction will either come from a balanced plan the Joint Committee develops, after careful consideration, or will come from automatic, across-the-board sequestration.

Sequestration will have consequences. The impact on our nation's defense and security, economic competitiveness, and health, if even one year of sequestration is allowed to take effect, has not been spelled out. Sequestration also impacts Medicare and other mandatory programs. As the ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, however, I will focus on only the sequestration of discretionary appropriations, and only on the first year of sequestration.

CBO estimates that, if the deficit reduction committee fails, the automatic enforcement process specified in the Budget Control Act would produce the following results in 2013:

- A reduction of 10.0 percent in 2013 on discretionary appropriations for defense (Function 050 programs), a $55 billion cut in FY 2013 defense appropriations to take effect in January of 2013, over the last ¾ of the fiscal year.

- A reduction of 7.8 percent in 2013 on discretionary appropriations for nondefense programs, resulting in a $39 billion cut in FY 2013 nondefense appropriations to take effect in January of 2013.

Defense

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned that sequestration "could pose a significant risk to national security" and would "literally undercut our ability to put together the kind of strong national defense we have today." He also noted that unemployment could spike one percentage point if sequestration took effect. "We'd be shooting ourselves in the head," Panetta concluded.

Office of Management and Budget Director Jacob Lew also noted that the across-the-board cuts would endanger our national security. The Defense Department "would almost certainly be forced to furlough large numbers of its civilian workers, training would have to be curtailed, the force reduced and purchases of weapons would have to be cut dramatically," Lew wrote.

Under the Budget Control Act, the President has the authority to exempt military personnel from sequestration. First, let us assume the President does not exercise that authority. In that case, the amount of the cut to military personnel would slightly exceed the entire FY 2011 enacted amount for Military Personnel, Marine Corps. At the Marine Corps rate per person, this translates into a

loss of funding for over 200,000 active duty service personnel. This level is twice the number of personnel presently deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan. A reduction of this magnitude would make it impossible to sustain current deployments and maintain a reasonable quality of life for service personnel. Problems noted during the war in Iraq would return including: extended tours and significantly reduced dwell time (time at home between deployments). It would also likely make it impossible for the US to maintain current overseas commitments in areas such as South Korea and elsewhere in the Pacific and in Europe. The nation would be forced to rethink its military commitments overseas, not based on any change in foreign policy or military strategy, but solely because of the limited resources imposed by this form of sequestration.

If we assume, instead, that the President exempts military personnel, the size of the across-the-board cut to the remaining elements of the defense budget rises from 10% to 13%. Reducing Operations & Maintenance accounts by 13% will severely constrain the resources for housing, training and equipping the troops. Base Operations Support (BOS) would be reduced by $3.1 billion and Facilities Sustainment Renovation and Modernization (FSRM) would be reduced by $1.3 billion under sequestration. The safety, efficiency and basic functioning of all military posts, camps and stations, is put at risk by so limiting resources to maintain structures, provide base security or utility services. Sequestration would reduce readiness training by at least $3.3 billion and limit the availability of combat related training such as home station and rotational exercises required to maintain the readiness of US forces. Another $1.6 billion would be cut from Training and Recruiting, harming efforts to recruit personnel, provide skill development training, professional development education and training, and effectively operate the Military Service academies and ROTC programs. Depot Maintenance would also be reduced by $1.6 billion under sequestration. This reduction would limit DoD's ability to maintain and modernize key weapon systems. Sequestration would severely degrade the Defense Department's ability to maintain a trained and ready force, and would similarly ensure that the condition of combat equipment and military facilities would deteriorate.

The fiscal year 2011 enacted level for the Defense Health Program is $29.7 billion which would be reduced by $3.9 billion under sequestration. This reduction is contrary to the premise of DoD exempting military personnel from sequestration and would be fundamentally unworkable because military personnel, their dependents and retirees are entitled to care.

The 13 % reduction to Procurement means 9 fewer UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and 5 fewer CH-47 Chinook aircraft, slowing Army plans to modernize its utility and heavy lift helicopter fleet. Up to 8 Stryker vehicles would be lost, hurting the Army's ability to keep Stryker brigades fully outfitted. Two fewer F-18G (Growler) aircraft would be built, impairing the fielding of electronic warfare capabilities. Sequestration will make it more difficult to avoid a carrier-based strike fighter shortfall by building 3 less F/A-18E/F aircraft. And one less P-8A would slow the Navy's effort to field new surveillance aircraft. Sequestration would cut $2 billion from the Shipbuilding and Construction, Navy account, and depending on allocation, remove at least one new vessel. Sequestration would also cut one Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) potentially disrupting the schedule of military space launches. For ground forces, the reduction would prevent the prompt reset of equipment used in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Research, Development, Test and Evaluation accounts would also be cut by 13%, reducing the number of Joint Strike Fighters by five and cutting $99 million in advance procurement, putting the production ramp at risk for aircraft planned in the outyears. Sequestration would cut $112 million for the Aerial Refueling Tanker program and potentially slow the EMD contract.

Sequestration would cut over $2 billion from military construction accounts. This across-the-board cut would render the entire Department of Defense construction program unexecutable; the FY 2013 FYDP includes 150 projects ranging from barracks to child development centers. A cut of this magnitude would also have a severe impact on employment in the construction industry.

The National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA) would also be subject to the more substantial defense reduction. Under sequestration, NNSA weapons activities would no longer have the budgetary resources to support the Nuclear Posture Review and New START implementation. NNSA would not have the resources to maintain a level of Emergency Readiness commensurate with threat conditions and would be unable to operate and respond in the current concept of operations timelines, adding significant risk to the first responders and public's safety in the event of a radiological or nuclear incident.

Defense nuclear nonproliferation efforts would also be constrained. NNSA would not have the resources to achieve a four-year lockdown of vulnerable nuclear material, leaving materials vulnerable to terrorist theft and undermining our national security.

Naval Reactor programs would be at risk, as well. One year of sequestration would delay, by a minimum of 3 years, the Spent Fuel Recapitalization project, the OHIO replacement, and the Land-based Prototype Refueling Overhaul. Each year recapitalization is delayed forces the Government to spend $88 million per year in temporary facilities. In addition to delaying the OHIO replacement, the reduction also eliminates the life-of-ship core, an effort to extend the life of the reactor to that of the submarine. This would necessitate building 2 more ships than the 12 currently needed to meet deterrence requirements. And delaying the refueling overhaul would reduce the output of trained nuclear operators by at least 33% (approximately 1,000 operators per year), leaving submarines and aircraft carriers inadequately manned for safe operations.

Homeland Security

A nearly 8 percent reduction of budgetary resources for Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will imperil our borders, reduce the level of security at airports, and actually increase the costs of detention.

The 7.8 percent cut to CBP's Salaries and Expenses account will result in about a 25 percent reduction in Border Patrol Agents. The U.S. would have 5,350 fewer agents working along the Southwest and Northern Border. This would reduce the number of Border Patrol agents to levels not seen since 2007 before violence and drug-trafficking deaths reached epic proportions in Mexico and we had fears of spill over violence. The cut would also result in a

7.5 percent reduction of CBP Officers (-1,600 officers) who work at our airports and ports of entry, a level not seen since 2008. This cut would significantly increase wait times at our Nation's already congested land ports of entry.

The reduction in TSA Aviation Security would result in an immediate hiring freeze because TSA would need to eliminate 9000 screener positions. This would cause massive delays at the nation's checkpoints and force TSA to eliminate many of the security layers it has developed in the past several years, following the attempted Christmas Day bombing and the Yemeni air cargo plot. TSA would not have sufficient staff to man its checkpoints and keep the new Advanced Image Technologies operating full time. (AITs are a technology that screens passengers for concealed weapons—both metal and nonmetallic--explosives, and other threats as compared to a metal detector that only looks for metal on a person's body.) At this reduced funding level, approximately 350,000 passengers a day will be screened using walk-through metal detectors, which cannot detect nonmetal weapons and explosives instead of by newer technologies, such as AITs, posing a considerable risk to the effective screening of the passengers.

Similarly, the reduction in TSA's air cargo program would stop progress being made to implement statutory requirements to screen 100 percent of all air cargo on passenger aircraft. Currently, all domestic air cargo is screened but not all international cargo coming into the United States is screened for explosives. The reduction would result in TSA stopping all new international cargo screening efforts to maintain domestic screening. Also, TSA would stop investments in new technologies that would be approved for private sector partners to use to more efficiently screen air cargo.

A reduction of approximately $440 million for Immigration and Customs Enforcement would result in the elimination of 550 criminal investigators and intelligence analysts and the closure of one visa security office overseas that works closely with the Department of State to examine visa applications for fraud. It would also prevent the planned expansion to additional overseas posts. Finally, it would significantly increase the amount of time criminal aliens stay in ICE detention facilities before they can be removed from the United States, resulting in increased detention costs to the federal government.

Public Safety

The Department of Justice would have to eliminate approximately 11,000 on-board positions, or 10 percent of its total personnel, including 3,700 FBI, DEA, ATF agents and US Marshals, along with 975 attorneys. This would severely impact investigations and prosecutions related to terrorism, drug gangs, gun-running, and violent crime. This loss of personnel would come on top of nearly 6,000 positions that have become vacant during the last year due to a hiring freeze required by funding cuts in FY 2011. In addition, DOJ would be forced to furlough all of its remaining personnel for an average of 25 days, equivalent to the loss of another 5,300 positions.

To absorb its share of cuts, the Federal Bureau of Prisons would be forced to cut 6,891 on-board correctional officer positions, a 19 percent reduction in total staffing and would be forced to furlough its remaining staff for 30 days. Because this scenario would bring the inmate-to-staff

ratio up from 4.95 to 6.52, it would create an unacceptable threat to health and safety at Federal prisons and could not be implemented. As a result, other areas of the Department would have to take an even larger cut. Funding to detain individuals awaiting trial or sentencing would be exhausted two months before the end of the year.

The Judiciary would be faced with a 7.8% reduction in resources resulting in a reduction of an estimated 7,800 court staff - a staffing loss equal to 36 percent of the workforce. As a result, the federal courts would be unable to supervise properly thousands of persons under pretrial release and convicted felons released from federal prisons, compromising public safety in communities.

The Judiciary would eliminate $33 million in security systems and equipment countermeasures requested by the US Marshals Service to provide adequate protection for the courts. This cut would also translate into a staffing cut of 453 Court Security Officer positions. Reductions of this magnitude would create security vulnerabilities throughout the federal court system.

Sequestration would force the Federal Aviation Administration's air traffic organization to lay off more than 2,000 employees, including more than 1,200 air traffic controllers, 525 technicians and 400 support staff. FAA would be forced to close 246 air traffic control contract towers. FAA would not replace more than 600 safety and aircraft certification inspectors that would be lost through attrition. Reduction in aircraft certification staff would delay the approval of new aviation products and the jobs these new products would create. FAA would need to furlough every single operations- funded employee for 3 days.

Sequestration would also cause significant delays of FAA's NextGen program which is needed to modernize an already aging air traffic control system. It would also delay programs to improve data communications between controllers and aircraft, implementation of runway status lights which is a safety device at airports, and the deployment of a 5th satellite to improve GPS approaches at airports.

Funding cuts would significantly impact the National Weather Service's forecasting capability. Cuts to NOAA weather satellite development would result in a 2- to 4-year period in which weather data from NOAA's polar-orbiting satellite would be unavailable, putting American communities at greater risk from tornadoes, hurricanes and other major weather events. In addition, up to 10 percent of the staffing and other resources for local weather warnings and forecasts would be eliminated. Together, these budget cuts would significantly reduce the accuracy of weather forecasts all across the country.

A 7.8% cut would harm programs to address Wildland fire. In Preparedness operations, sequestration would result in a more than $45 million cut and mean the loss of 60 FTEs. Timber stands would be at greater risk of catastrophic fire as hazardous fuels treatments would have to be curtailed. Firefighting operations (Suppression) would not be funded at the 10-year average, greatly increasing the risk of funding shortfalls. Such a likely shortfall would impact more than just the fire programs. With little carryover funds and a cut in the FLAME reserve fund, agencies would need to take funds from various no-year appropriation accounts, like construction, to make up the firefighting shortfall. This would mean that construction projects (and the resulting

jobs they entail) would have to be halted or delayed. Grants to rural fire departments would be curtailed and firefighting equipment purchases would be scaled back.

Sequestration would cut $194 million from the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water funds used to improve and repair water and wastewater infrastructure all over America. Christine Todd Whitman, the EPA Administrator under President George W. Bush, estimated that infrastructure needs of this sector topped $662 billion. An estimated 75 to 110 new agreements with communities, towns and municipalities would not be executed leaving them with outdated wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. It also represents a missed opportunity to add an estimated 4,800 to 10,700 engineering, construction and other support service jobs.

A sequestration-ordered 7.8% cut ($18.6 million) from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), and the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) would have significant impact on oil and gas production, safety and environmental protection, and revenue collection. Following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, significant reforms were instituted. To carry out these needed reforms Congress provided additional funds in FY 2011 as the first year of a multiyear effort to address the substantial shortcomings in drilling safety, environmental protection, and regulatory oversight that had been identified in the wake of the accident. A 7.8% cut would mean these agencies would have to reduce their FTEs, resulting in delays in the timely and thorough review of exploration and development plans, as well as a variety of permits. No additional safety inspectors could be hired and recently hired safety inspectors would need to be laid off, resulting in the potential for reduced safety and a greater number of accidents offshore. Ironically, a cut of this magnitude would means less revenue collected for the federal government, as well as the increased possibility of fraud as audits would have to be curtailed.

The safety of our food would be put at risk. Sequestration would reduce the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) funding by nearly $200 million below the 2011 level. This would lead to fewer FDA staff including those who inspect our domestic and imported foods. It would also lead to a sharp reduction in the number of samples of food and medical products coming into our country from overseas. In addition, FDA would be unable to implement recent legislation to improve the food safety system.

Our meat and poultry would be especially vulnerable. The Food Safety and Inspection Service at USDA is responsible for the safety of meat and poultry products. Sequestration would reduce its funding to below even the 2008 level. This would result in furloughs or shortages in federal inspectors at slaughter and processing plants. Since plants cannot operate without inspectors, the plants would have to operate fewer hours or close their doors. This will hurt plants, local economies, and workers, producers and consumers, as prices rise.

Protection of Financial Markets

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) regulates futures markets to protect against fraud and manipulation and to ensure open and financially sound markets. Under sequestration, CFTC would be funded at less than two-thirds of the President's request in FY

2012. The agency would lack the resources it needs to investigate high-risk traders and take action against Ponzi schemes. Industry registration applications and applications for regulatory exemptions would be delayed. Significantly less work would be done to implement the landmark Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act with the agency struggling to carry out its pre-Dodd-Frank responsibilities.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) would reduce personnel by roughly 235 FTE under sequestration. This reduction would force major cutbacks in every corner of the SEC, and would have a dramatic impact on the largest programs: enforcement, examinations, and disclosure. The implementation of rules for the OTC derivatives markets will be delayed, the number and scope of Enforcement investigations will be limited and exam coverage of the industry will continue to be extremely limited.

International Affairs

Cuts to international security cooperation would jeopardize our commitment to allies and partners. An almost 8 percent cut would significantly impair our ability to: ensure Israel maintains its technological/military advantage; train and assist Mexican authorities to fight violent cartels; provide counternarcotics efforts and secure our southern border; support assistance to over 130 nations in efforts to deny al Qaeda safe havens and promote stability and progress. Sequestration would undermine the civilian transition in Iraq and impede U.S. efforts in Afghanistan.

Cuts to global health funding would jeopardize the progress we are making in saving lives and building a better and more secure world for children and their families. A 7.8% reduction will result in lost opportunities and lives in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia - the neediest regions of the world. Eight million children and family members could be denied treatment or preventative interventions for malaria. 43,000 children and family members with tuberculosis could be denied treatment, of which 12,000 will likely die, based on average mortality rates. As a result of cuts to maternal and child health (MCH), 3,500 mothers could die and more than 40,000 children under five – of which 16,000 are newborns – could be at risk in the absence of highly effective child survival interventions, based on historical data. More than 900,000 undernourished children could be deprived of highly effective nutrition interventions, putting them at risk for stunting and child mortality. Further cuts to family planning and reproductive health programs could deny 8.5 million women access to family planning services, leading to 2.5 million additional unintended pregnancies. Evidence indicates this would result in 1.2 million more abortions, 28,000 additional newborn deaths, and 4,000 additional maternal deaths. A cut of 7.8% from FY11 levels would mean at least 223,000 new HIV/AIDS infections will not be prevented, and almost 1.1 million patients will lose access to life saving drugs. A cut in funding of 7.8 percent to HIV/AIDS treatment may result in an additional 191,000 children being orphaned.

The Food for Peace program, administered by USAID, ships U.S.-grown commodities to provide emergency and some non-emergency food aid around the world; about 75% of the commodities are shipped on U.S.-flag vessels. Sequestration would mean that up to 2.5 million people would lose access to desperately-needed, emergency food assistance. This would be a potentially

disastrous cut given volatile world food prices and recent famine in the Horn of Africa. Further, purchases of food from U.S. farmers and leases with U.S. shippers would drop dramatically.

Education

As many as 100,000 fewer children nationwide would be enrolled in Head Start – thereby losing comprehensive early childhood services. More than 30,000 Head Start employees could lose their jobs.

Title I Grants to School Districts would see a cut in excess of $1 billion, denying funding to an estimated 4,000 schools serving more than 1.6 million disadvantaged students. These funds pay for teachers, tutors, and after-school programs. Sequestration would mean job losses for approximately 16,000 teachers and aides.

The Department of Labor, Job Corps would need to reduce student slots by more than 4,600. A cut of this magnitude would also endanger the opening of any new center and could force the closing of centers. Job Corps provides a residential environment at 124 centers nationwide for at-risk youth to gain the education and skills they need to find and keep jobs, serve in the military or enroll in post-secondary education. Every dollar that a Job Corps center spends in its local area results in $1.91 in economic activity.

Impact Aid payments would be reduced to about 1,200 districts which serve approximately 950,000 Federally Impacted children, leading to more teacher layoffs and other cuts in services.

Special Education Grants to States/IDEA would face significant reductions under sequestration. States and school districts could be forced to lay off approximately 11,000 special education teachers and aides, as well as other staff serving kids with disabilities. More than 500,000 students with special needs stand to be impacted by this reduction in services.

Health, Science, and Innovation

Roughly 800,000-1,100,000 fewer patients would be served in Community Health Centers. Health Centers provide primary care and other basic services, with sliding fee scales based on ability to pay. They are an important source of medical care for the uninsured.

About 2,500-2,700 fewer National Institute of Health research project grants would be made to universities and institutes throughout the country for research into the causes and treatments of diseases like cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and epilepsy.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would have about $440 million less to prevent and detect outbreaks of infectious diseases like flu, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS and to improve prevention and screening for chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer. For example, sequestration of the budgetary resources for grants that help support immunization for people without adequate insurance coverage would mean that at least 22,000 children could no longer receive the recommended childhood vaccines though this program.

Funding cuts would cripple NASA's efforts to establish U.S. commercial capability to transport American astronauts to the International Space Station. These cuts would effectively extend the period of U.S. dependence on Russia and its Soyuz spacecraft for these flights, now that the space shuttle has been retired. Thus, the cut would not be a true savings, as the U.S. would need to pay Russia for additional Soyuz flights, at a cost of at least $63 million per seat.

Funding for the National Science Foundation would be cut by approximately $530 million compared to FY 2011, including a cut of $430 million from research grants and $67 million from STEM education programs. At this level, NSF would fund nearly 1,500 fewer research and education grants, supporting approximately 18,000 fewer researchers, students, and technical support personnel than it did in FY 2011.

Safety-Net Programs

Approximately 35, 000 low-income children of working parents would lose child care and development block grant assistance and many thousands more would experience a reduction in services. This would exacerbate the difficulty States are experiencing in serving low-income families at a time when State budgets are being cut. It also would set back State efforts to improve the quality of child care for our most vulnerable children.

If sequestration takes effect, it is estimated that 173,000 tenants would be evicted from their housing. In some rental markets, the income provided by Section 8 tenants wouldn't be replaced by new tenants, so landlords could lose income as well. The cut to the Homeless Assistance Grant account necessarily means reduced capacity to serve the homeless. Approximately 31,500 more people would be unsheltered if sequestration goes into effect.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program provides food packages for low-income elderly persons and low-income women, infants and children; a very high percentage of participants are elderly. It is available in 39 states, the District of Columbia and two Native American reservations. Based on current data, under sequestration, more than 47,000 of the approximately 596,000 current participants would have to be removed from the program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods to low-income, nutritionally at risk, pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5. Sequestration would reduce its funding to $300 million below the egregious levels in H.R. 1. Based on moderate projections of growth in participation and food prices, this would result in over a million participants being dropped from the rolls, a drop of eleven percent.

Sequestration would even cut Congress's capacity to serve our constituents. Under a 7.8% cut, each House Congressional Office would lose $108,000. Mid-level congressional staff (legislative assistants) earn $48,762 on average, according to the 2010 House Compensation Study. Members of Congress would have to eliminate more than 2 Legislative Assistants to live within these new levels.

These illustrative examples are by no means comprehensive but suggest the complications and challenges that sequestration would impose.

In conclusion, the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction must find a way to overcome partisan differences, agree on a balanced approach to long-term deficit reduction, focus on economic growth and job creation, and do no harm to the faltering economic recovery in the short-run. If you fail, dire consequences await our nation.

Sincerely,

NORM DICKS
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations