



November 5, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Murray and Ryan:

The undersigned organizations urge the members of the Budget Conference to arrive at a sensible and workable Fiscal Year 2014 budget that ends sequestration. The economic impact of the government shutdown, in conjunction with FY13 sequestration-level funding, upon the nation was significant for citizens, businesses and federal employees alike. Our country's economic viability stands to further suffer with the continuation of sequestration into FY14.

In only its first year, sequestration revealed the breaking point of several government services. At agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Weather Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense, it became immediately clear that public safety would be compromised by the furlough of meat inspectors, air traffic controllers, aviation safety inspectors, storm watchers, border patrol agents, military support personnel and other employees. A year later, the furlough of these same employees – and many others – is threatened by the continuation into FY14 of the next round of automatic budget cuts through sequestration.

Sequestration's financial impact on America's largest workforce has a rippling and sapping effect on the economic vitality of communities across the country. In the state of Washington, for example, four of the state's top 25 employers include the federal government, including Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Fairchild Air Force Base, where many of the state's 68,000 federal civilian employees work. In Wisconsin, 18,000 federal civilian employees are employed by the federal government, over half of whom make less than \$60,000 per year. Many work at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the state's eighth largest employer. As sequestration negatively impacts the financial well-being of these employees, the consequences are spilling over into the communities in which they live.

Over the past three years, federal employees have contributed more than \$114 billion over 10 years toward deficit reduction. Their sacrifices have included three years of pay freezes and a 2.3 percent increase in retirement contributions for newly-hired federal employees. This does not include the loss in paychecks from furloughs as a result of the 2013 sequester. Many worked unfalteringly for weeks without guaranteed, timely pay due to the government shutdown. They shouldn't be continually persecuted while they are trying to do their jobs to serve and protect US citizens. Enough is enough.

We are unwaveringly opposed to further sacrifices from federal employees to undo the congressionally-created crisis of sequestration. Cutting federal employee pay through increased retirement contributions must not be a topic for further discussion to resolve these crises. The federal community has given its fair share already.

Our nation's fiscal instability is not a "Washington" problem – it is a problem for the entire country. As budget negotiations proceed, we urge Congress to arrive at a practical budget deal that provides sufficient funding for government functions and ends sequestration.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Foreign Service Association
American Postal Workers Union
FAA Managers Association
Federal Managers Association
Federally Employed Women
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers
Laborers' International Union of North America
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of Government Employees
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of Postal Supervisors
National Association of Postmasters of the United States
National Council of Social Security Management Associations
National Federation of Federal Employees
National League of Postmasters
National Postal Mail Handlers Union

National Rural Letter Carriers' Association
National Treasury Employees Union
National Weather Service Employees Organization
Organization of Professional Employees at the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
Patent Office Professional Association
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists
Professional Managers Association
Senior Executives Association

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cc: Senate and House Members of the Budget Conference