

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
The Honorable John Boehner
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Mitch McConnell

Dear President Obama and Congressional Leaders,

As you begin negotiations to improve our nation's fiscal health, we write to express bipartisan support for including defense savings in any final budget agreement. We have serious concerns about the careless and arbitrary way that sequestration reduces defense spending, but we support its general intent to improve our fiscal condition. We believe that substantial defense savings can be achieved over the long-term, without compromising national security, through strategic reductions in the Pentagon's budget.

Respected policy organizations across the political spectrum have recently issued proposals that would responsibly achieve defense savings over the next decade. The Cato Institute, Taxpayers for Common Sense, the National Taxpayer's Union, the Project on Defense Alternatives and others have released plans to save up to \$550 billion without harming U.S. national security.


In fact, achieving defense savings as part of the larger effort to reduce the national debt will go a long way toward bolstering U.S. national security. As former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen pointed out, "The single biggest threat to our national security is our debt, so I also believe we have every responsibility to help eliminate that threat. We must, and will, do our part."


The Pentagon's budget has increased dramatically over the last decade, due in large part to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As we transition from wartime to peacetime, and as we confront our nation's fiscal challenges, future defense budgets should reflect the conclusion of these wars and acknowledge that our modern military is able to approach conflicts utilizing fewer – but more advanced – resources. Congress must consider these changes, not past spending or percentages of GDP, and move toward defense budgeting that focuses on meeting specific military requirements.

We know the United States can maintain the best fighting force in the world while also pursuing sensible defense savings. How we spend our resources is just as important as how much we spend. The true foundation of our military power is not dollars or equipment, but the men and women of our armed forces, who have no equal.

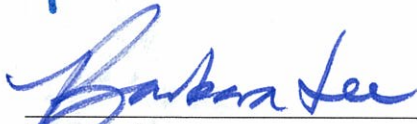
As you work toward a budget agreement to address our fiscal challenges, we urge you to include substantial defense savings.

Sincerely,


Mick Mulvaney
Member of Congress

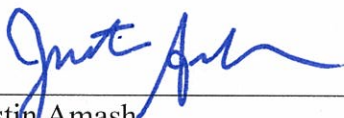

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
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Morgan Griffith
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Justin Amash
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Jared Polis
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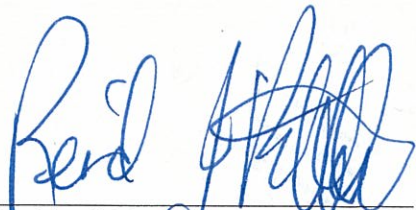

James Moran
Member of Congress


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