

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 13, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On June 30 of this year, *National Journal* reported that your chief of staff, director of legislative affairs, and your senior advisor (who previously served as your campaign manager) recommended to the Senate Democratic leadership that they propose a six month delay in the sequester scheduled under current law to occur on January 2<sup>nd</sup> of next year.

If accurate, we are troubled that rather than engaging Congress in a constructive effort to identify and enact responsible savings to replace the across-the-board sequester, your senior staff appears to be suggesting a course of action that could actually be more harmful to our national security and domestic priorities.

Last November Defense Secretary Panetta discussed the impact of the sequester on our Armed Forces stating that, “[t]he impacts of these cuts would be devastating for the Department.” More colorfully and perhaps more accurately, last September Secretary Panetta stated that if sequestration were allowed to occur, “We’d be shooting ourselves in the head.” Your own budget acknowledges these cuts would be “devastating.”

The cuts to the non-defense sector will also be significant. The Bipartisan Policy Center recently found that many domestic programs will face across-the-board reductions in FY 2013 of close to 15 percent.

As you are undoubtedly aware a delay would not reduce the \$110 billion cut that is required under sequestration. In fact, such a delay would actually exacerbate the cut’s impact since agencies would be forced to absorb the same cut in the three remaining months of the fiscal year rather than over nine months. Other than pushing sequestration farther away from this November’s election it is difficult to understand what benefit would be derived from a six month delay.

Even though the Administration has yet to put forward a plan to address this issue, the House of Representatives took responsible action in May by passing legislation that would replace the 2013 sequester with other common-sense spending reductions and reforms. A group of Senate Republicans has introduced a bill to replace the 2013 sequester with savings attributed to extending the current federal pay freeze for 18 months and reducing the federal workforce through attrition. Your Administration has not commented on the Senate bill and issued a statement saying that your senior advisors would recommend that you veto the House proposal, citing in part your desire for economically damaging tax increases.

The sequester will have a significant impact on our national security and other domestic programs – such as medical research and special education – and yet the White House is now holding our troops and other important programs hostage in order to foist tax increases on small businesses, which have been routinely rejected by the House and Senate on a bipartisan basis.

Instead of ignoring the need to address this critical issue, we would respectfully request that you and your senior staff engage constructively with both parties to find common ground. To be clear, we stand ready to work with you to identify and enact common-sense savings necessary to replace the January 2013 sequester. Rather than proposing to simply put more space between this problem and the election or offering tax increase proposals that face bipartisan Congressional opposition, we hope you instead work with us to find a bipartisan solution before the end of the fiscal year.

Sincerely,

John Boehner

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