



February 27, 2015

The Honorable Tom Price, M.D.  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Enzi  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Price and Enzi and Ranking Members Van Hollen and Sanders:

On behalf of the member universities of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the American Council on Education (ACE), which include all of the major public and private research universities in the United States, we urge you to stop sequestration-level spending caps from taking effect in FY2016 and to give high priority to higher education programs and scientific research as you develop an FY2016 Budget Resolution.

Under current law, sequestration will hold the FY2016 overall discretionary spending caps for defense and non-defense discretionary spending essentially at their FY2015 levels. This represents a real cut in purchasing power after inflation, and is \$38 billion in defense discretionary spending and \$37 billion in non-defense discretionary spending below the caps that would otherwise apply under the Budget Control Act. The discretionary portion of the budget – the primary source of federal investments in scientific research and higher education – receives less than one-third of total federal dollars, and this share continues to shrink year after year. This steady constriction of the budget that funds our country's investments is already undermining our nation's future.

We urge you to rethink our nation's budget priorities. The solution to our continuing budget deficits lies not in discretionary spending cuts but in reforms to mandatory spending and

taxation. As you construct a budget resolution, we strongly urge you to: 1) end budget sequestration in FY2016 and beyond; 2) outline a path for comprehensive tax reform, which will spur economic growth and produce new revenue; 3) provide for meaningful entitlement reforms that do not adversely affect those most vulnerable in society; and 4) include specific language that places a high priority on scientific research and higher education.

Investments in higher education and research are proven drivers of economic growth. They are vital for the development of new technologies, processes, and a workforce that will advance our national security, our energy self-sufficiency, and our citizens' health. While the federal government's spending in these areas has stagnated in recent years, our global competitors have dramatically increased their investments. This disparity is creating an innovation deficit that, if not addressed, will soon force us to surrender America's position as the global innovation leader. The budget resolution provides an important opportunity to put our country on a path to closing the innovation deficit by reducing the gap between actual and needed federal investments in scientific research and higher education. We urge you to seize this opportunity and craft an FY2016 budget resolution that will keep our country strong and prosperous now and into the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We stand ready to assist you in this important undertaking.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson  
President  
APLU



Hunter R. Rawlings III  
President  
AAU



Molly Corbett Broad  
President  
ACE

cc: Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees  
House and Senate Leadership