



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC AND
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



January 30, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Mr. President and Congressional Leaders:

We write to urge you to repeal sequestration and to ensure that further deficit reduction focuses on the primary source of long-term spending growth, entitlement programs, and on tax reform that encourages economic growth and raises revenues. The indiscriminate spending cuts forced by budget sequestration would severely harm the very investments – education and scientific research – our nation needs to grow its economy. We and over 150 research university presidents and chancellors expressed these views in a letter to you last year, attached. We write now to strongly urge that you once and for all end the threat of sequestration and enact the measures necessary to put our nation on a clear path to eliminating deficits and stabilizing the national debt.

The Budget Control Act established tough discretionary spending caps that will lead to nearly \$1 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years. As a result, non-defense discretionary spending, *even in the absence of sequestration*, will decline to its lowest level relative to GDP since 1962. Further cuts, through sequestration or by other means, are not the solution to our deficit problem. Such cuts, and particularly the arbitrary across-the-board sequestration cuts, would undermine economic growth that is essential to deficit reduction. Federal support for scientific research and student financial aid laid the foundation for the dramatic expansion of the 20th century U.S. economy and can do the same in the 21st century. These investments produce the people and the ideas that lead to new products, new businesses, and entire new industries, as well as the jobs that go with them. The smartphones, tablet computers, numerous medicines as well as medical testing equipment, key national security technologies, and thousands of other products and services we take for granted are evidence of the return on investment our nation enjoys from federal education and research spending.

Ironically, China, Singapore, and other nations are rapidly *increasing* their investments in education and scientific research as our nation wastes time and political energy arguing about how much to *cut* such investments. Even as our nation reduces its budget deficits, as it must, we need to continue to make strategic investments if we are to compete with other nations and to ensure our future economic and national security.

Strong economic growth is a critical element of the deficit reduction our nation needs to ensure a prosperous future. As numerous non-partisan experts have stated, sustained and significant federal investments in education and scientific research, as well as infrastructure, are essential to realizing this.

We believe the answer to our nation's fiscal woes is a combination of sensible federal investments that will yield strong economic growth, savings from entitlement reforms, and revenues from tax reform. Together, these three actions will reduce the deficit, stabilize the national debt, and bolster our nation's economic and national security for decades to come.

Again, we strongly urge you to repeal sequestration and negotiate a balanced agreement that ensures our country's long-term prosperity. We stand ready to work with you to this end, and we thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Hunter R. Rawlings III
President
AAU



Peter McPherson
President
APLU

cc: The Honorable Joseph Biden, Vice President
Members of the U.S. Senate
Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Attachment



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July 11, 2012

Dear Mr. President and Congressional Leaders:

We write to urge your bipartisan leadership in forging a major, balanced long-term deficit-reduction agreement that will reduce budget deficits, rein in the nation's debt, and create economic and job growth to ensure our nation's long-term fiscal health and to prevent the indiscriminate cuts of sequestration.

Sequestration is an undiscerning and blunt budget tool that would substantially harm our nation's future by blindly slashing valuable investments in education and scientific research, as well as other important discretionary programs that provide health, economic, and national security. There is much public discussion about the impact of sequestration on the defense budget but little about the proposed indiscriminate cuts to the non-defense discretionary budget. Deficit reduction until now has concentrated almost entirely on non-defense discretionary expenditures, which are only about one-sixth of the budget. Spending on these programs is not the primary cause of our rising debt. Wholesale additional reductions in these and other programs that educate and train the next generation risk undermining our nation's human capital, infrastructure, technological, and scientific needs.

A prudent and effective deficit reduction agreement should seriously and thoughtfully address a primary source of long-term spending growth: entitlement programs. Entitlement programs account for a large percentage of the budget, and they are projected to take an increasing share of federal spending in the coming decade. However, the sizable deficit reduction required cannot be achieved solely through decreasing expenditures. Substantial tax reform that is designed both to encourage economic growth and to raise revenues needed to reduce the deficit should also be part of the package.

The federal government has played and must continue to play a critical role in fostering U.S. economic competitiveness and economic growth, and therefore, even as the overall budget may be constrained, certain investments for the future must be a top priority. Americans know that investments in education and scientific research pay long-term dividends. Federal support for scientific research and student financial aid laid the foundation for the dramatic expansion of the 20th century U.S. economy and can do the same in the 21st. These investments produce the people and the ideas that lead to new products, new businesses, and entire new industries, as well as the jobs that go with them.

Members of both political parties believe that a long-term deficit reduction agreement should specifically incorporate such investments. For example, the majority report of the bipartisan Bowles-Simpson Commission stated, "we must invest in education, infrastructure, and high-value research and development to help our economy grow, keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs."

As national leaders in higher education, we urge you to show America and the world that our country's political system is capable of solving serious problems. The choices will not be easy, but throughout our nation's history, American leaders have overcome great challenges with difficult decisions and sensible compromises. Please do so again and do so now.

Sincerely,

Peter McPherson, President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Michael F. Adams, President
The University of Georgia

Stan L. Albrecht, President
Utah State University

Paula Allen-Meares, Chancellor
University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)

James H. Ammons, President
Florida A&M University

Guy Bailey, President
Texas Tech University

Charles R. Bantz, Chancellor
Indiana University - Purdue University
Indianapolis

James F. Barker, President
Clemson University

Eric J. Barron, President
The Florida State University

Mark Becker, President
Georgia State University

Robert M. Berdahl, Interim President
University of Oregon

Ronald Berkman, President
Cleveland State University

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Gene D. Block, Chancellor
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Al Bowman, President
Illinois State University

Linda P. Brady, Chancellor
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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North Dakota State University

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Duke University

M. Christopher Brown II, President
Alcorn State University

Thomas Buchanan, President
University of Wyoming

Eli Capilouto, President
University of Kentucky

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Waded Cruzado, President
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The Johns Hopkins University

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University of Missouri

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University of Tennessee

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University of Colorado Boulder

Michael V. Drake, Chancellor
University of California, Irvine

Philip L. Dubois, Chancellor
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

John M. Dunn, President
Western Michigan University

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University of Colorado Denver

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The University of Montana

Rodney A. Erickson, President
The Pennsylvania State University

Drew Gilpin Faust, President
Harvard University

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The University of Maine

Elson S. Floyd, President
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Anthony A. Frank, President
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Robert G. Frank, President
The University of New Mexico

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Wayne State University

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The City University of New York

Bernadette Gray-Little, Chancellor
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University of Pennsylvania

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University of Delaware

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Elliott Hirshman, President
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John Hitt, President
University of Central Florida

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University of New Hampshire

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The University of Toledo

Calvin Johnson, Chancellor
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

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University of Nevada, Reno

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The University of Mississippi

Eric W. Kaler, President
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University of California, Davis

Renu Khator, Chancellor,
University of Houston System, &
President, University of Houston

William E. Kirwan, Chancellor
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Boise State University

Frederick M. Lawrence, President
Brandeis University

Steven Leath, President
Iowa State University

David W. Leebron, President
Rice University

Richard C. Levin, President
Yale University

R. Bowen Loftin, President
Texas A&M University

Wallace Loh, President
University of Maryland

J. Bernard Machen, President
University of Florida

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Ronald Mason, President
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Sally Mason, President
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Mary Ellen Mazey, President
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Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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University of Nebraska

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