



October 2, 2012

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

As Governors, we are extremely concerned about the impact of sequestration's \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending reductions on the economies in our cities, states and territories, and on the families we serve. While there is almost universal agreement that sequestration should be avoided before the cuts begin taking effect in January, the proposals for how to avoid these cuts highlight contrasting visions for our nation. Instead of unfairly placing the burden of reducing our deficit on struggling families and merely shifting costs to states, we call on Congress to responsibly avoid sequestration by adopting the President's fair and balanced approach.

According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, sequestration would result in a 9.4 percent reduction in non-exempt defense discretionary funding and an 8.2 percent reduction in non-exempt non-defense discretionary funding in fiscal year 2013. These cuts would have a drastic impact on our state economies, which are already under a great deal of strain, and would lead to reduced investments in key areas such as education, infrastructure, research, and emergency response. We recognize that tough decisions must be made to address our national deficit and that spending reductions are necessary. It is, however, our duty as leaders to ensure that these reductions are fair and do not require working families to bear the heaviest burden.

We support an approach, like the President's, that will avoid sequestration through a combination of modest sacrifices from the highest-income earners – many who are willing to pay their fair share – and reasonable spending cuts. This approach distributes necessary spending reductions among defense *and* non-defense programs, a fair and balanced approach that will maintain a strong military, invest in the growth of our communities, and provide important services to those in need. Conversely, we oppose any plan that requires working families to carry the entire burden through exclusive cuts to vital non-defense discretionary programs – investments that sustain, rebuild, and strengthen communities – and refuses to consider returning tax rates to the levels of the 1990s when our national and state economies were prospering.

Sequestration threatens to halt the steady economic improvement of our nation and our states, and the clock is ticking on the opportunity to act. We strongly urge our Congressional leaders to adopt a responsible approach to deficit reduction, one that will put America on a path to continued growth and prosperity and give us the tools we need to serve our citizens.

Sincerely,



Governor Deval Patrick  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Governor Martin O'Malley  
State of Maryland



Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
State of Connecticut



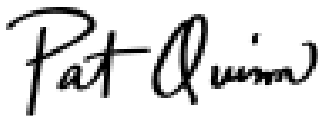
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State of Illinois



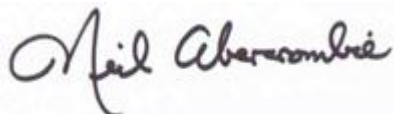
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State of Colorado



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State of North Carolina



Governor Neil Abercrombie  
State of Hawaii