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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

September 24, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

With the 2014 fiscal year rapidly approaching, I remain concerned about the ongoing negative impact of sequestration on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While I support the goal of addressing our nation's deficit, I continue to oppose sequestration, and I urge you to adopt a more responsible approach in the coming fiscal year, one that replaces the detrimental sequestration cuts with a balanced and measured combination of fair revenue increases and targeted spending reductions.

Sequestration's indiscriminate approach of across-the-board cuts has had a real and damaging impact on Massachusetts residents.

For fiscal year 2013, Massachusetts has lost \$293 million in non-defense federal funding compared to the previous fiscal year. This translates to deep cuts for many of our most critical programs, including Head Start, which builds an educational foundation for some of our most

underprivileged children and has experienced cuts of over \$6 million due to sequestration, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), which assist thousands in the Commonwealth who struggle to keep their homes warm in the winter and collectively saw close to a \$4 million cut in aid from fiscal year 2012. These LIHEAP cuts are particularly damaging, as the program already had been cut considerably in recent years; since 2011, average utility benefits to those in need have decreased significantly, from \$915 per person in 2011 to \$635 in 2012.

Federal funding cuts to the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) have severely limited our ability to provide permanent, affordable homes for struggling residents of the Commonwealth. The \$1.3 million sequestration cut in 2013 HOME funding on top of a \$17 million reduction in 2012 has resulted in the loss of several thousand units of affordable housing that could have been built across the Commonwealth.

Sequestration is also hindering our ability to assist those looking to reenter the workforce. Starting last spring, federal unemployment insurance (UI) benefits have been reduced by 12.8%, making it harder for long-term unemployed individuals and families to get by while seeking new jobs. Additionally, Workforce Investment Act funding, which funds a comprehensive range of workforce development services including job retraining, job development, and job search assistance for adults and youth across the Commonwealth, was cut by \$8.6 million.

Further, the Massachusetts defense industry, which employs thousands of residents and contributes significantly to the continued safety and security of our nation, has experienced a \$170 million cut in Army and Air Force funding, which does not include a potential 7.9% reduction in funding affecting federal contractors in the Commonwealth. Equally devastating is the \$128 million cut in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding from fiscal year 2012, impacting the nation-leading life science and research efforts of our academic and medical teaching centers.

All of these cuts threaten the steady economic improvement that we are experiencing, not just in Massachusetts, but across the country. The uncertainty created by sequestration endangers job creation and negatively affects economic recovery.

It is clear that sequestration is not an appropriate path towards deficit reduction. Instead, I urge you to enact a balanced approach of targeted revenue increases and spending reductions for fiscal year 2014 that helps rather than harms those most in need, responsibly reduces our nation's deficit, and helps grow our national economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Paul Ryan", written in a cursive style.

cc: Massachusetts Congressional Delegation