

August 4, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid and House Minority Leader Pelosi:

The undersigned organizations represent persons of color, women, children, low- to moderate-income workers, labor unions, people with disabilities, consumers, elders, people of faith, English language learners, LGBT people, educators, environmentalists, and many other Americans. As organizations with a tremendous stake in the outcome of the ongoing budget process, **we urge you to appoint members to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction who will insist that the recommendations include sufficient revenue increases to reduce the deficit while preserving our ability to create jobs, rebuild the economy, and protect vulnerable people from the loss of vital services.**

Your appointments to the Joint Select Committee will be among the most significant decisions you will make in the 112th Congress, with far-reaching implications. It is all but certain that half of the membership of the Committee will be comprised of individuals who adhere to an extremist philosophy involving the downsizing of our federal government, elimination of safety nets, and extending tax cuts and loopholes for those who need them the least.

Our organizations and the millions of Americans we represent are relying heavily on you to stand up to this radical approach. We believe it is essential that you appoint Committee members who will support the following principles:

- **Any deficit reduction agreement must include measures to put people back to work and rebuild the economy.** The first round of deficit reduction under the Budget Control Act comes exclusively from \$1 trillion in cuts that will kill jobs and weaken the recovery. **This is on top of the cuts to the remainder of the 2011 budget adopted mid-year.** If there is one point on which all economists can agree, it is that investment – in social and physical infrastructure, research and innovation, and worker productivity – is absolutely essential to getting people back to work in the short term and ensuring that our economy grows in the long run. The Committee must make this investment possible by ensuring that the next round of deficit reduction eliminates wasteful and unnecessary tax giveaways (*i.e.* Bush-era tax cuts for the wealthy, tax breaks for multinational corporations that offshore jobs, loopholes for private equity and hedge fund managers) and recommends new taxes for the ultra-wealthy.
- **The burden of deficit reduction must not be borne by low- and moderate-income individuals.** As our nation's economy continues to struggle, unemployment remains high, and there is a dire need to put people back to work. Countless numbers of Americans have been wiped out financially and will be forced to start their climb up the economic ladder all over again. A large aging population is gradually leaving the workforce and will rely on the promises made, decades ago, by programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations continue to lack access to affordable health care and depend on Medicaid as a safety net – while other important services and programs, such as food stamps (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income,

education, Head Start, child care, jobs programs, environmental protections, low-income housing, and emergency unemployment compensation are also more important than ever in today's economy. Any cuts to these programs are unacceptable because they will jeopardize the health, economic security, and education of millions of Americans; will keep the economy from getting back on track; and will place an even heavier burden on states that are already struggling to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

- **Any discretionary savings must rely at least as much on cuts in national security programs as on spending cuts in non-security discretionary programs.** While there is an effort to cut spending across the broad array of annual discretionary spending programs, national security spending, which comprises 61% of the discretionary budget, continues to grow. Without cuts to national security programs, even very deep cuts to all other discretionary funding taken together will fall far short of dealing with the deficit. We want a safe and secure nation. But national security programs should not be immune from oversight and fiscal responsibility. We can responsibly reduce spending in this area without compromising our nation's security.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel at The Leadership Conference, at 202-466-6058.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO

AFSCME

AIDS United

Alliance for a Just Society

American Association of School Administrators

American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Association of Education Service Agencies

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Campaign for America's Future

Campaign for Community Change

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

Children's Defense Fund

CLASP

Coalition on Human Needs

Common Cause

Community Action Partnership

Council for Opportunity in Education

Courage Campaign

CREDO Action

Democracy for America

Epilepsy Foundation

Every Child Matters Education Fund

Families USA

Food Research and Action Center

Friends of the Earth

Half in Ten

Health Care for America Now

Hispanic Federation

International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Workers of America (UAW)
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Legal Momentum
MoveOn.org
NAACP
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO)
National Association for State Community Services Programs
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National Rural Education Association
National Skills Coalition
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
OMB Watch
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
ProgressNow
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Rebuild the Dream
RESULTS
SEIU
Social Security Works
United for a Fair Economy
United Steelworkers (USW)
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
USAction
Voices for Progress
YWCA USA