



September 27, 2013

Support H.J. Res. 59 – the FY 2014 Continuing Resolution – as Passed by Senate

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national advocacy organizations, we urge you to vote in favor of a “clean” H.J. Res. 59, the Continuing Appropriations Resolution for FY 2014, as passed by the Senate today, and to oppose any amendments to the current language.

We take this position with great reluctance. As passed by both the House and Senate already, H.J. Res. 59 would maintain devastating federal spending cuts that jeopardize the communities we represent and the economy as a whole. It would continue federal spending at an annualized rate of \$986.3 billion, maintaining the sequester imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

The damage caused by the sequester has been widespread, and it is continuing to get worse. For example, children have lost access to Head Start and other vital educational programs while class sizes have grown; health care programs and food inspection services have been cut back; law enforcement and public safety programs are being starved of vital resources; and badly-needed upgrades to our transportation infrastructure have been put off. If these cuts remain in place, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate, the overall economic drag caused by the sequester will cost 1.6 million jobs by the end of FY 2014.

Unfortunately, we are left today – only several days before the beginning of the new fiscal year – with no choice but to recommend a “yes” vote on this bill. We are relieved that the Senate has shortened the duration of the continuing resolution, to November 15, leaving less time for the sequester to continue damaging our economy before funding levels must be revisited. Moreover, the Senate-passed version of H.J. Res. 59 does not include a reckless effort to defund the Affordable Care Act, a move that would certainly trigger a shutdown of the federal government.

We strongly reiterate our call for Congress to end the sequester before the expiration of this continuing resolution. The greatest challenge facing our economy today is the jobs crisis, not the deficit – in fact, the deficit has been cut significantly since 2009, and non-defense discretionary spending is now at its lowest level since the Eisenhower administration. The sequester should be replaced with a careful balance of targeted spending cuts and limits on tax breaks. Every single bipartisan commission that has examined the deficit has urged such an approach.

Again, we urge you to vote for H.J. Res. 59 as passed by the Senate, and to reject any amendments. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact either of us or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

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