



Minnesota House of Representatives

April 2013

Dear Members of Congress:

As you continue to consider appropriations and budgeting decisions this year, we remind you that your decisions will profoundly impact our states and our ability as state legislators to balance budgets, meet the needs of our constituents, and invest for the future. **We are writing to urge you to rein in wasteful Pentagon spending with a responsible and strategic approach designed to meet our nation's 21st century needs.**

Year after year, Pentagon spending comprises more than half of the current discretionary budget, consuming the lion's share of the funds Congress appropriates, and Pentagon spending has nearly doubled over the last decade. In contrast, discretionary spending for important programs, ranging from food safety, to Head Start, health care, and much more, has been facing cuts and now sequestration is further impacting these much-needed programs and investments.

Without cuts to rising Pentagon spending, making even deeper cuts to other discretionary funding will fall far short of alleviating the deficit and the national debt. These cuts will sharply impact our states, which receive roughly one third of the non-defense discretionary spending. State budgets are slowly recovering from the recession, but our constituents continue to rely on us for critical services. Unemployment rates are still much too high, and we must begin to make critical, long-term investments that were put on hold during the Great Recession. Further cuts will compound this pressure and thwart economic growth.

Creating jobs is fundamental to the health of our economy. As state legislators, we are committed to creating good jobs in our states, ensuring that our constituents can provide their families with security and build a brighter future for their children. If we invest some of the billions we spend on the Pentagon in other sectors of our economy, we would actually generate more jobs, strengthening the middle class and protecting essential services that help our families. Economists at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst found that public dollars invested in clean energy, health care, and education all create significantly more jobs within the U.S. economy than investing an equivalent amount in the military sector.*

We want a safe and secure nation, and the safety of our residents is of utmost importance. Responsible and strategic cost savings can be found in the Pentagon budget. This approach will

strengthen our security for the 21st century. We should cut the oversized Cold War nuclear arsenal that many defense experts agree is an expensive, excessive relic of a bygone era. We must stop overextending our military with expensive wars and conflicts that lack sufficient justification, public support, or exit strategies.

The Defense Department should impose fiscal discipline by cutting programs that are unnecessary or unworkable and beset with cost overruns. In addition, Congress must stop spending money for programs that military leaders don't want. The Pentagon should be expected to conduct an audit. No federal agency, especially not one that is such a large percentage of the federal budget, should be immune from oversight and accountability.

In fiscal year 2012, Minnesota taxpayers spent nearly \$10 billion for our share of the base Pentagon budget. Meanwhile in 2011, the Minnesota government was shut down over disputes as to how to address a \$5 billion two-year budget shortfall, and this year our legislature is debating how to deal with a \$627 million shortfall.

We add our voices to the more than one hundred community and civic organizations around the state, including city councils in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth that have endorsed the Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project resolution that calls on Minnesota's federally elected officials "to work to shift federal funding priorities from war... to meeting the essential needs of us all."

We can shift from spending on outdated, unnecessary weapons to investments in programs that keep us secure and help us prosper -- first responders, teachers, bridges, roads, and rails. This will ensure safety, security and prosperity now and for generations to come. As you face some of the most difficult budgeting challenges in our nation's history, we urge you to responsibly reshape the Pentagon budget to find significant cost savings and to prioritize investments that truly strengthen America.

Sincerely,

Minnesota state legislators

*The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities: An Updated Analysis, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Economics (December 2011)

SIGNATURE

1. Phyllis Kahn
2. Connie Bernarde
3. Mary Murphy
4. Alice Hausman
5. Sandra Mason
6. Roger Erickson
7. ~~Paul Rosenthal~~
8. Paul Rosenthal
9. Ann Leuczewski
10. Mike Freiberg
11. Erik Senow
12. Frank Hornstein
13. Yvonne Selcer
14. Clark Johnson
15. ~~Peter Fischer~~
16. Joe Mullery
17. Leon Lillie
18. Barbara Yarusso
19. Sheldon Johnson
20. Thomas E. Huntley
21. Thomas E. Anzels
22. Michael V. Nelson
23. Jason Metsa

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5. SANDRA MASON
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7. Susan Allen
8. PAUL ROSENTHAL
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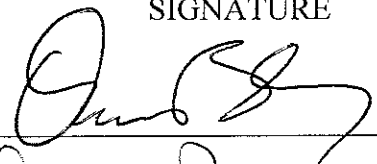


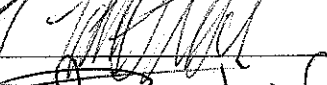
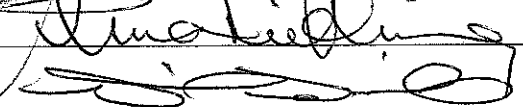
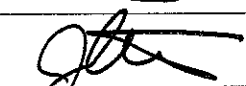
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| 24. | Linda Slocum | Linda Slocum |
| 25. | Patti Fritz | Patti Fritz |
| 26. | Mike Sandin | Mike Sandin |
| 27. | John Benson | JOHN BENSON |
| 28. | M. JoAnn Ward | M. JoAnn Ward |
| 29. | Mary Sawatzky | Mary Sawatzky |
| 30. | Shannon Savick | shannon Savick |
| 31. | Jerry Newton | JERRY NEWTON |
| 32. | Jim Davala | Jim Davala |
| 33. | Jay McNamee | Jay McNamee |
| 34. | Rick Hansen | Rick Hansen |
| 35. | Rena Moran | Rena Moran |
| 36. | Diane Loeffler | Diane Loeffler |
| 37. | Kathy Brynaert | Kathy Brynaert |
| 38. | Carolyn Laine | Carolyn Laine |
| 39. | Karen Clark | KAREN CLARK |
| 40. | Raymond Dorn | Raymond DORN |
| 41. | Joe Radinovich | Joe Radinovich |
| 42. | Lyndon R. S. Carlson | Lyndon R. S. Carlson |
| 43. | Michael Paymar | Michael Paymar |
| 44. | John E. Ward Jr. | John E. WARD JR. |
| 45. | Eric Murphy | Eric Murphy |
| 46. | Jean Hagelids | JEAN HAGELIDS |

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| 47. |  | David Bly |
| 48. | Jeanne Poppe | Jeanne Poppe |
| 49. | Carlos Mariani | Carlos Mariani |
| 50. |  | Zach Dorkolt |
| 51. | Paul Thissen | Paul Thissen |
| 52. | Laurie Ahlness | Laurie Ahlness |
| 53. | Diane Loeffler | Diane Loeffler |
| 54. | Kathy Brynaert | Kathy Brynaert |
| 55. | Tim Faust | Tim Faust |
| 56. | Carly Melin | Carly Melin |
| 57. | John Persell | John Persell |
| 58. | Tim Mahoney | Tim Mahoney |
| 59. | Dan Schoen | Dan Schoen |
| 60. | Will Morgan | Will Morgan |
| 61. | Kim Norton | Kim Norton |
| 62. |  | Jason D. Isaacson |
| 63. |  | JOHN LESCH |
| 64. | Tina Liebling | TINA LIEBLING |
| 65. |  | DAVID DILL |
| 66. |  | Soc Athens |
| 67. | Andrew Falk | Andrew Falk |
| 68. | Melissa Hartman | Melissa Hartman |
| 69. | | |

DATE: April 2013
TO: Members of the (state, chamber)
FROM: State Director name
RE: Urgent Letter to US Congress

Please join me in signing this urgent letter to Members of Congress regarding the federal budget and spending priorities. As a State Director for WiLL, the Women Legislators' Lobby, I am joining women across the nation to urge Congress to adopt a federal budget that reflects the values and best interests of the American people.

States across the country are beginning to recover from the recession, but this progress is threatened by uncertainty about the federal budget. This was perfectly illustrated by the sequestration debacle at the beginning of this year. It makes no sense to mindlessly slash spending. Instead we must call on Congress to make targeted sensible cuts and to ensure that the programs that strengthen our communities are adequately funded.

Year after year, over 50% of our discretionary budget – the budget Congress debates and votes on every year – goes to the Pentagon. Since 2001, Pentagon spending has increased almost 3 times as fast as other discretionary spending. One-third of the rest of the discretionary budget goes to the states. It stands to reason that if we're spending huge amounts on the Pentagon, other parts of the budget will feel the squeeze. We should spend what is necessary to keep our nation safe and secure. We also need to keep America economically strong and competitive. We cannot do so if we are squandering money on expensive outdated weapons systems we don't need.

We must focus on strengthening the economy and creating good new jobs. University of Massachusetts economists have shown that federal investments in non-defense sectors like education, health care and clean energy create more jobs than equal investments in the Pentagon.*

As state legislators, we want what is best for our constituents, our communities, and our states. It just makes good sense to invest federal dollars in sectors that will create productive jobs and help our economy grow for years to come. Please join me by signing on to the attached letter to Members of Congress today!

*The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities: 2011 Update, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Economics (December 2011)

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

1. Chris Eaton
2. Susan Kent
3. Fong H.
4. Bev Scalze
5. Bobby Champion
6. Kevin L. Dahle
7. Jeff Hayden
8. Kathleen Sheran
9. Rod Shoe
10. Lyle Keenen
11. LeRoy Stumpf
12. David Tomassoni
13. Kent Eken
14. Barb Goodwin
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1. *Sandra L Pappas*
2. *Serapayi Johnson*
3. *John Marty*
4. *John Hoffman*
5. *Richard Uhen*
6. *Patricia T Ray*
7. *Tom Saxhaug*
8. *Vicki Jensen*
9. *Melissa H. Wiklund*
10. *James Carlson*
11. *Dan Sparks*
12. *D. Scott Dibble*
13. *Ron Latz*
14. *Kari Driedzic*
15. *MATI SCHMIT*
16. *CHUCK WIGGA*
17. *Greg Clausen*
18. *James Metzger*
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1. *Sandra L. Pappas*
2. *Alice M. Johnson*
3. *John Marty*
4. *John Hoffman*
5. *Richard Uhen*
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