

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

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

As policymakers face decisions to address sequestration, funding the federal government, and the debt limit, we write to champion children as a national priority and ask you to hold children harmless in upcoming decisions. Without knowing the full impact of these policies, we risk weakening the foundation on which our youngest citizens grow into our leaders of tomorrow.

Children make up a quarter of our nation's population, and they form the foundation of our nation's future. They also are some of our most vulnerable citizens. Currently, one in three children relies on food stamps, eight million children lack health insurance, 1.3 million students drop out of school every year, approximately 2.9 million children with special health care needs rely on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program as their primary source of health care coverage, half of all black children in the United States and nearly two-thirds of low-income black children are covered by Medicaid, 45 percent of families with children report struggling to afford stable housing, and nearly one in every 4 children live in poverty, the largest generation to grow up in hard times since the depression.

We must consider the special importance of children's welfare and ensure that our choices do not harm the young. For example, with sequestration in effect, there will be devastating consequences for our most vulnerable youth, for example: a cut of \$353 million to the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children means greater hunger for over 600,000 low-income women and young children; a cut of \$120 million in the Child Care and Development Block Grant leaves about 30,000 low-income children of working parents without child care, undermining parents' ability to keep a job and provide for their family; a cut of \$400 million for Head Start and Early Head Start results in the likely loss of high-quality child care and early education for 70,000 low-income children; a cut of \$750 million to Title I grants to school districts to help low-income students threatens 10,500 jobs of teachers and aides; a cut

of \$600 million for the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* risks the jobs of approximately 7,400 special education teachers and aides; and the loss of about 125,000 Section 8 vouchers for low-income housing leaves approximately 312,500 children and adults homeless. Clearly these sequester cuts will have unacceptable harmful effects on children in our nation, and we cannot let them occur. We must also ensure that proposed solutions are not equally as harmful.

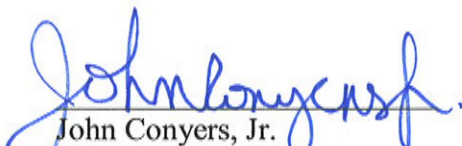
We know that deficit reduction cannot and should not be accomplished on the backs of children. We need to hold children and families harmless. Already, spending on children makes up less than 10 percent of total federal spending. A cut from this small slice will barely dent the deficit while having dire consequences for the people who need a helping hand. Decisions to cut particular programs must consider whether those cuts collectively and significantly harm low-income children and youth. Americans oppose balancing the budget on the backs of children and youth. In polling, voters overwhelmingly reject major cuts to K-12 education, child nutrition, the Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicaid, Head Start, and college student loans.

Children are our most valuable resources. In this time of crisis they must be protected. Careful analysis of our spending decisions today as they affect children and youth will help us improve our efforts for tomorrow. It is in our nation's best interest to raise the healthiest, most educated, best-prepared children in the world for the challenges ahead. As lawmakers, we must champion these programs for all young children so they each have the opportunity to be nourished, educated, and prepared to pursue the American dream. That is why we again ask you to hold children harmless in upcoming decisions related to the sequester, funding for federal programs, and the debt ceiling.

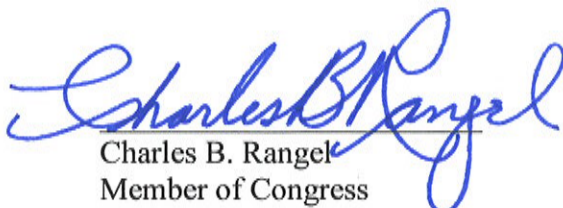
Sincerely,

  
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

  
Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

  
Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

  
Al Green  
Member of Congress





Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



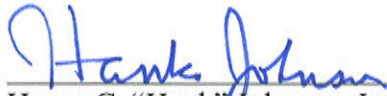
Gene Green  
Member of Congress




James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



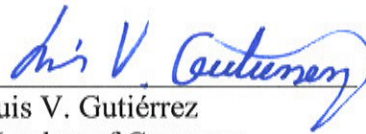
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



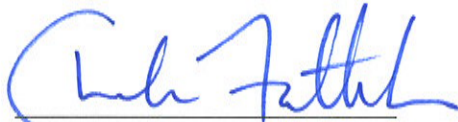
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



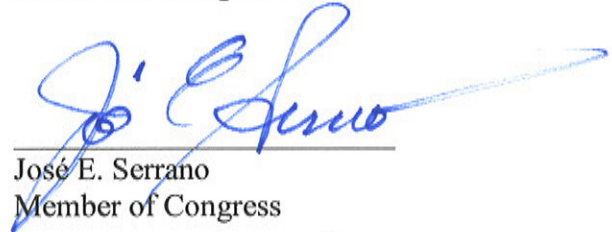
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



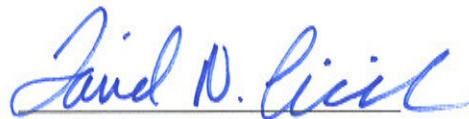
Matthew A. Cartwright  
Member of Congress



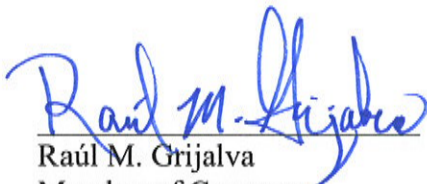
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress




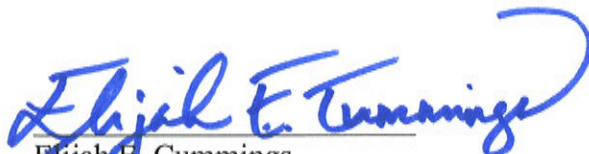
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

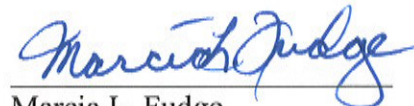
  
Pete P. Gallego  
Member of Congress

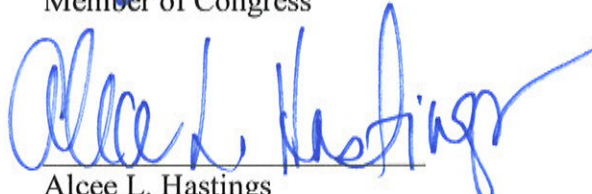
  
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress


  
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

  
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

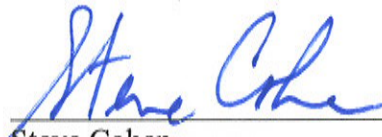
  
Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress


  
Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress


  
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

  
Karen Bass  
Member of Congress


  
Melvin L. Watt  
Member of Congress

  
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

  
Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress

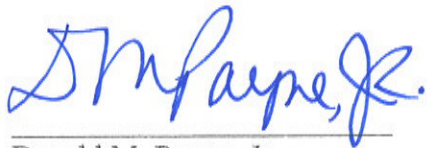
  
John Lewis  
Member of Congress

  
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

  
Beto O'Rourke  
Member of Congress

  
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



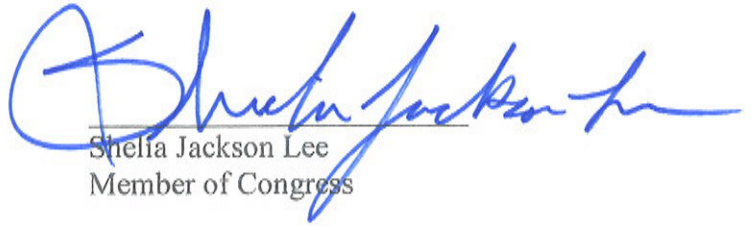
Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Shelia Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



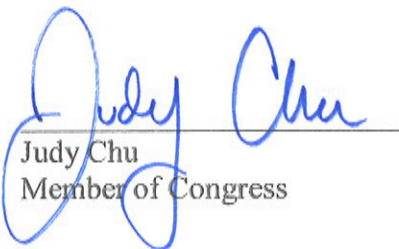
Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress



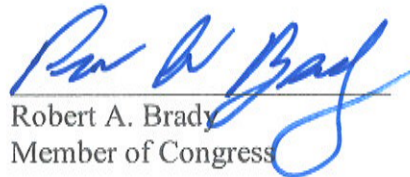
Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress



William L. Enyart  
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress