

October 21, 2013

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Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of NDD United—an alliance of more than 3,200 national, state, and local organizations working to protect investments in core government functions—we thank you for your vote on H.R. 2775, legislation to reopen the federal government and raise the debt ceiling. In so doing you avoided default, put 800,000 furloughed federal employees back to work, reinstated clinical trials and flu surveillance, reopened National Parks and museums, allowed Head Start programs to get back to educating our nation's children, and restored all other critical government functions. It was the right thing to do, and we strongly commend your decision to vote in favor.

As costly and harmful as the shutdown was, an even more critical issue remains to be resolved—the level of funding for fiscal year (FY) 2014 and how to replace sequestration. Sequestration by design cuts programs deeply and indiscriminately. Both parties agree it was never meant to happen. Yet, it's about to happen for a second year in the row unless Congress acts. Without a comprehensive and balanced solution, sequestration will keep happening for the next nine years. This comes on top of deep cuts enacted in the Budget Control Act over the next decade.

In that time, sequestration's effects will eclipse those of the recent shutdown. Core federal functions that support all Americans will continue to erode: opportunities in medical research lost; public defenders and FBI agents furloughed; national parks closed; lab capacity to track outbreaks diminished; teachers fired; jobseekers denied employment and training services; students denied Head Start; seniors go hungry; veterans become homeless. NDD United will soon release a report that puts a human face on sequestration and outlines the devastating impact sequestration has, and will continue to have, on all Americans.

It is clear that sequestration is not the way to ensure our nation's solvency and global competitiveness, and we cannot allow it to continue. In the weeks and months ahead, we urge you support a responsible FY 2014 budget that replaces sequestration with a balanced approach to deficit reduction. If Congress and the administration fail to put politics aside and work together, sequestration will only further drag down our economic recovery, deny children educational opportunities, leave low-income seniors without food baskets, hinder scientific discovery, and compromise public health.

Please stand strong, and build on your bipartisan support of H.R. 2775 by ending sequestration, once and for all.

Sincerely,

Emily Holubowich
Coalition for Health Funding
NDD United Co-Chair

Joel Packer
Committee for Education Funding
NDD United Co-Chair

Rachel Gragg
Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce
NDD United Co-Chair