

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1706

February 28, 2013

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner & Majority Leader Cantor:

On February 11, I sent you a letter requesting we take action to rebalance President Obama's sequester in a way that preserves the modest spending reductions but rejects across-the-board cuts in favor of a more intelligent setting of priorities.

I continue to believe that better options exist, and that we should work to provide a smarter way to achieve these spending savings.

In 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives passed two bills which would have replaced the sequester with common-sense reforms and maintained our commitment to achieving \$1.2 trillion in savings over the next decade. I, too, am eager to see proposals from the U.S. Senate, which should be obligated to act first and provide some sort of proposal. The Senate has failed to pass a budget in over four years and has yet to put forth any legislation for near-term or long-term spending reform.

The fact remains that the across-the-board reductions contained in the sequester disproportionately impact national security. For example, the operations of the Blue Grass Army Depot, which supplies munitions to the Department of Defense and U.S. Warfighters overseas and is constructing facilities to demilitarize the stockpile of chemical weapons stored there, may be unnecessarily limited unless we can undertake a more thoughtful approach.

Addressing the sequester is only one of the significant challenges we must address in the coming weeks. Additionally, in the next few months we must create a continuing resolution, pass a budget and put forward real reforms that will help create a sustainable future. I am concerned that, here at this critical time, the House is scheduled to work only 24 days in March and April combined.

There is nothing I find more important or enjoyable than spending time in my District and meeting with constituents. However, listening to my constituents, it is clear they expect me to do the work necessary to find a responsible way to create savings, reduce the deficit and to get the job done.

As a freshman Congressman, I was not in Congress for the creation of the sequester, nor any votes to refashion it. I owe my constituents my best efforts to create a solution, like those proposed in 2012.

Cooperation and negotiation across the aisle and across the Capitol is difficult but critical. I am committed to working long enough and hard enough to get the job done, and if that means spending more time in Washington, then that is what I believe needs to happen.

I remain eager to support your efforts in replacing the sequester with more responsible reductions. But let us not adjourn until the work is done.

We should not recess until the Senate has acted and sequestration is resolved. Let us demonstrate to the Senate through our actions what it really means to be dedicated to solving the debt crisis and spending problem our nation faces.

Let us work until we have put forward real solutions and have done our jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Barr", written over a horizontal line.

Andy Barr
Member of Congress