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

February 11, 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:

As a new Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I strongly support the call of the American people to reduce government spending and bring our national debt under control. As I have traveled around Kentucky's Sixth Congressional District, people have told me this is their number one priority, and what they sent me to Washington to accomplish.

I agree that there is a smarter way to reduce spending than the President's sequester, and I applaud you for leading the House in 2012 to twice pass legislation which would have replaced the sequester with common-sense spending reforms. Regrettably, the Senate failed to consider these replacement proposals, and as a result, sequestration will occur at the end of this month unless Congress acts.

Given the haphazard and devastating nature of how these across-the-board cuts would be implemented, I encourage you to again quickly bring to the House floor legislation to replace the President's sequester with a more thoughtful and strategic plan to reduce spending that reflects our national priorities.

As you know, governing is about setting priorities. Replacing the President's sequester is necessary to ensure that we can adequately fund our nation's most essential priorities, not allow them to be jeopardized by an across-the-board plan that treats all government spending as equal.

One area we need to prioritize is our national security. Defense spending represents approximately 18 percent of the federal budget, yet has been forced to absorb nearly half of the spending reductions that have occurred in the past two years. Given our military's already disproportionate contribution to deficit reduction, it is poor policy to allow for an additional round of defense cuts through sequestration.

Further, due to the indiscriminate nature of these scheduled cuts, the President's Sequester would severely impact all areas of defense spending. In Kentucky's Sixth District, this would jeopardize the operations of the Blue Grass Army Depot, which is essential to providing munitions to the Department of Defense and the U.S. warfighter overseas. It would also compromise the demilitarization of the chemical weapons stockpile at the Depot, which remains a homeland security priority.

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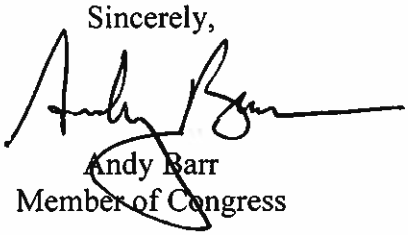
I also want to highlight the crippling and disproportionate impact that sequestration would have on Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) throughout rural America. These providers already face unique challenges in the delivery of care to rural Americans. Because their care volume and profit margins are so small, the cuts to Medicare reimbursements would simply push many of these health care facilities to close their doors, leaving many already underserved populations without healthcare. Surely the President does not want that.

We know there is evidence of tremendous waste and fraud in our $3.6 trillion federal budget, and I believe we should start by making certain that government programs and resources are not being drained and abused by individuals who fail to satisfy eligibility requirements of particular programs. This will best ensure that the necessary resources remain available to support the individuals and families who truly need them, while maintaining our commitment to deficit reduction.

We have a moral obligation to control government spending and save our children and grandchildren from being forced repay a massive debt created by elected officials' inability to govern responsibly. Moreover, if we can summon the strength to do the hard work now to put our financial house in order, we will more quickly put our economy back on track and more Americans back to work.

I am eager to support your efforts to replace the sequester with smarter and more responsible spending reductions. We must put in this work now so that future citizens can enjoy the freedom to reach their potential.

Sincerely,



Andy Barr
Member of Congress