

GOVERNMENT MANAGERS COALITION

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November 19, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Sessions, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As the budget conference committee works to meet its December 13 deadline, the Government Managers Coalition (GMC) urges the conference to make the tough decisions our nation and its fragile economy require and demand of our elected representatives. It is your obligation to come to a decision about how to replace the arbitrary sequestration policy and to begin restoring regular order to the budgeting and appropriations processes.

The GMC consists of the five major federal-sector executive and management professional associations representing over 200,000 executives and managers in the federal government. The GMC advocates on behalf of commonly held beliefs within the community of federal executives and managers regarding formulation, implementation, and execution of good governance and policies that affect the federal government and its dedicated workforce.

Federal managers and executives are tasked with ensuring agencies and programs run effectively, agencies' missions are met, and programs stay within budget. Yet the ability of managers and executives to fulfill those prerogatives is hindered by chronic budgetary uncertainty. Such uncertainty produces negative effects inside agencies, such as deferred decisions, leading to increased costs to the American taxpayer. These negative side effects are unacceptable to our members, yet they can only be addressed by Congress making the difficult decisions about what policies and programs to fund, and at what levels.

According to the Congressional Research Service, in only four years since 1977 has Congress passed all appropriations bills. The result has been a troubling reliance on continuing

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resolutions (CRs), which create massive uncertainties and inefficiencies within agency operations. At a time when Congress is attempting to curtail wasteful government spending, a goal with which the GMC whole-heartedly agrees, the act of relying on CRs in-and-of-itself is creating waste, with agency staff dedicating inordinate amounts of time to budgeting and re-budgeting for multiple scenarios and contingencies, rather than focusing their full attention on implementing the laws and programs which Congress has enacted.

A March 2013 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, [GAO-13-464T](#), documents the inefficiencies and complications for agency operations that arise from continued reliance on CRs. The report states, “The effects of CRs on federal agencies differ in part on the duration and number of CRs... shorter and more numerous CRs can lead to repetitive work. Longer-term CRs allowed for better planning in the near term, however, operating under the level of funding and other restrictions in the CR for a prolonged period also limited agencies’ decision-making options and made tradeoffs more difficult.”

On October 31, Chairman Rogers and Chairwoman Mikulski of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, respectively, requested that your conference committee come to an agreement on an overall discretionary number (302(a)) for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 as soon as possible. We fully support this request. Coming to such an agreement will not only allow the appropriations committees to complete their critical work, but will also provide federal managers and executives the certainty they require to effectively manage and plan agency operations for those fiscal years.

We are optimistic that your conference committee will be able to come to an agreement that will obviate the need for another CR on January 15, 2014.

However, should that not be possible, and if sequestration is maintained, we implore you to provide agencies with the flexibility to manage sequester cuts in a thoughtful manner, rather than in the deleterious, across-the-board fashion that all sides have agreed is foolhardy.

For years Congress has bypassed addressing the true drivers of the federal deficit in exchange for plucking low hanging fruit, such as the pay and benefits of civil servants working for the federal government. The result has been the loss of critical employees (and a further detractor to recruit new employees to Federal service) who ensure government programs work and that American taxpayers are well-served.

When Congress continually taps federal employees to pay for unrelated aspects of government operations, it serves to drive out the best and brightest at a time when they are most needed to face the coming challenges of the 21st century, such as cyber security, which demands a well-

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educated, well-trained, and professional federal civil service. No business would ever treat their employees in the manner that federal employees have been treated over the past several years because they realize it hurts effective operations and the company's bottom line.

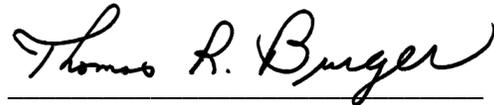
Federal workers, thirty percent of whom are veterans, are not the nation's piggy bank, and they must no longer continue to be treated as such.

Please bring an end to fiscal uncertainty by putting the nation before political disagreements. We understand these are difficult decisions to make, but federal employees and the American public we serve are counting on you to find a solution. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views, and do not hesitate to call on our organizations if we can be of assistance.

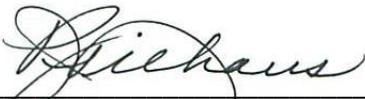
Sincerely,



DAVID S. CONLEY
President
FAA Managers Association



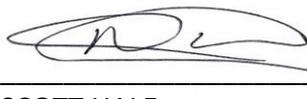
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cc: Senate and House Members of the Budget Conference