



October 30, 2013

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Dear Budget Conferee:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 111 national education associations and institutions representing preschool to postgraduate education, **urges you to replace the harmful sequester cuts with a balanced package of deficit reduction measures. We also strongly urge you to reject any proposal that protects or prioritizes funding for defense programs at the expense of nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs.**

Education programs (exclusive of Pell grants) have already been cut multiple times in the past two and a half years, including \$1.5 billion in combined cuts from the FY 2011 CR and the FY 2012 omnibus.

In addition, the previous Congress “paid for” increased Pell grant program costs by limiting interest subsidies for federal student loans and curtailing eligibility for Pell grants. These restrictions and limitations resulted in college students contributing \$4.6 billion out of their pockets to deficit reduction. The recent student loan interest rate legislation shifted an additional \$715 million in costs to student loan borrowers, and higher origination fees caused by the sequester in FY 2013 and FY 2014 increased loan costs by another \$293 million.

The sequester cuts slashed another \$2.4 billion from education programs, plus \$401 million from Head Start in HHS. These waves of cuts have come at a time when enrollments have increased at both the K-12 and higher education levels and states, schools, students, colleges, libraries and museums have endured deep state and local budget cuts.

Higher education institutions have also been adversely affected by the sequester cuts to NIH, NSF and other sources of research funding.

Enough is enough! It’s time to replace the sequester with a balanced package of deficit reduction. Solving our nation’s fiscal situation and reducing the debt can’t and won’t happen simply by slashing education and other nondefense discretionary spending.

Instead of making it more difficult to improve overall student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase high school graduation and college access and completion rates by enacting these drastic cuts, Congress should be investing in our

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future through education. The need to increase the federal investment in education has never been greater. Jobs and the economy are directly linked to such investments. Both unemployment rates and lifetime earnings are based on levels of education attainment.

We urge you to agree to fund discretionary programs at the Budget Control Act pre-sequester cap level of \$1.058 trillion, including \$506 billion for NDD programs.

Doing so will not only eliminate the harmful sequester cuts but provide room for targeted investments in such programs as preschool, Title I, IDEA special education, safe and healthy schools, STEM, campus-based student aid, TRIO and GEAR UP and more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Myrna R. Mandlawitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "R".

Myrna Mandlawitz
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joel Packer". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large "J" and "P".

Joel Packer
Executive Director