Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

Our nation faces great economic and fiscal challenges. All too often our leaders in Washington opt for political gamesmanship and manufactured crises instead of offering solutions. Congress can begin to change this culture of chaos by taking immediate action on big, bold and balanced proposals to avert the $85 billion in across-the-board spending cuts set to take effect in just two weeks.

Every day that we delay, our educators, businesses and federal agencies are trying figure out how to deal with sequestration rather than innovating to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

These indiscriminate cuts will be harmful to our fragile economic recovery and our national security. During a hearing this week in the House Committee on the Budget, Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Elmendorf testified that 750,000 jobs will be lost in 2013 if sequestration goes forward. Simply the threat of the sequester has already flooded our economy with uncertainty and damaged consumer confidence.

Moreover, these cuts will cause real harm to my constituents in California's 16th Congressional district. Should Congress fail to avert the sequester:

- In Merced County, 68 children and families would lose early educational services from Head Start and Early Head Start and 17 staff members would lose their jobs;
- Fresno Unified, the fourth largest school district in California, would face $6.3 million in cuts to Title I programs, funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and other grants;
- The necessary relocation of F-15 aircraft to the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, California, in order to enhance the Wing's Aerospace Control Alert mission may be deferred;
- Hundreds of low-income women and children could lose nutrition assistance and education and breastfeeding support through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Meat and poultry plants in California could face the prospect of shutdowns and consumers could see higher meat and poultry prices due to food safety inspection personnel furloughs;
- Grants for pest and disease prevention, surveillance and response would be severely curtailed, hurting my district's farmers, ranchers and growers;
- More than 6,000 seniors in California, many of whom are facing the threat of hunger, would lose the nutritious and sometimes life-saving meals provided by organizations like Meals On Wheels;

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- And many other negative impacts to California's seniors, students, small businesses, farmers, water users and middle class families.

On November 2, 2011, I joined 100 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives in urging the Super Committee to go beyond the $1.2 trillion in deficit reduction it was required to propose and instead accomplish the $4 trillion in long-term deficit reduction required to return fiscal sanity to our nation. I continue to believe that a grand bargain of this magnitude is necessary and a far better choice than the reckless and damaging across-the-board cuts of the sequester. I strongly urge you to work together to reach a deficit reduction agreement that averts this economic collision course.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress