

JIM COSTA

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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER, POWER AND OCEANS



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

October 27, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
US House of Representatives
The Capitol H-232
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

As a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, I am very proud of the work that we did formulating the 2014 Farm Bill and am thus troubled by the inclusion of Section 201 in the *Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015*. I strongly oppose this provision and insist that it be removed from the budget deal.

The crop insurance program is a highly successful public-private partnership between the Federal Government and private insurance companies who work jointly to provide farmers with a safety net in the event of poor weather years and low yields. In this budget deal, section 201 proposes to reduce rates of return to crop insurance companies from a gross of about 14.5 percent down to a gross of 8.9 percent. This provision is widely expected to end Federal Crop Insurance, which is critical to producers and lenders alike. The reduction contained in section 201 would have a very negative impact on private sector delivery which is responsible for the success of Crop Insurance industry.

I find it extremely troubling that while negotiating this budget deal, the Agriculture Committee was not consulted, and just a couple years removed from the passage of a Farm Bill that already made bi-partisan reforms to the Crop Insurance system. At a time when rural America is struggling, especially my state of California that is dealing with the effects of a devastating drought, to make these cuts would harm the rural economy and impact the services of these programs and the delivery of payments when farmers most need them.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and I strongly urge you to please remove section 201 from the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4302

October 27, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

We write to express our serious concern with the provision relating to the Crime Victims Fund in the recently released bipartisan budget agreement. The draft text reveals that \$1.5 billion will be “rescinded and permanently canceled” from the Fund. The Crime Victims Fund contains absolutely no tax dollars; it is largely comprised of criminal fines that are used to serve crime victims. Essentially, through this Fund, criminals pay for the damage they cause, which is the appropriate form of justice.

It is inappropriate that money intended for direct victim services would be used as an offset for any other purpose. Not only does raiding the Crime Victims Fund violate the intent of the law, but it violates the statute itself:

42 USC 10601(c)

RETENTION OF SUMS IN FUND; AVAILABILITY FOR EXPENDITURE WITHOUT FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION

Sums deposited in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be available for expenditure under this chapter for grants under this chapter without fiscal year limitation. Notwithstanding subsection (d)(5) of this section, all sums deposited in the Fund in any fiscal year that are not made available for obligation by Congress in the subsequent fiscal year shall remain in the Fund for obligation in future fiscal years, without fiscal year limitation.

This provision in the budget agreement sets a terrible precedent and will lead to the depletion of a Fund that is intended to be sustained for some of the most vulnerable in our society. The Crime Victims Fund has existed for 30 years and served millions of victims. We cannot balance the solutions to our significant, long-term fiscal challenges on the backs of victims of crime. We urge you to remove this provision from the budget agreement and find another offset of equal value.

Sincerely,

Ted Poe
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress