



STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMIC SECURITY WITH DEFENSE SAVINGS

February 6, 2013

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our combined memberships, we urge you to help protect our nation's economic security by pursuing a minimum of \$50 to \$100 billion in annual Pentagon budget savings over the next decade—savings taxpayers were promised in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

As Congress continues to grapple with the nation's fiscal challenges and strengthening the economy, it must examine every part of government, particularly the one that consumes nearly 60 percent of discretionary spending. The New Year's budget deal addressed revenue, but with the March 1 sequestration deadline, Congress now has an opportunity to improve our fiscal health by bringing our national security budget in line with 21st century needs.

Every serious budgetary reform proposal of the last few years – whether from Democrats or Republicans – concludes that the Pentagon can safely accommodate at least half of discretionary spending reductions. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are ending, and our defense leaders admit the spending boom that more than doubled the Pentagon budget since the wars' launch a decade ago must end. The full impact of sequestration would still result in a smaller post-war drawdown in constant dollars than those following the Vietnam War, Korean War or Cold War – in fact, it would only bring DOD's budgetary top line back to its 2007 levels, still higher than the Cold War peak.

Though Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned of sequestration's impact on the Pentagon, his concern lies more with the implementation of sequestration—the “meat axe” approach—than sequestration's level of cuts. Consensus exists among civilian and military experts that DOD can absorb at least sequestration levels of spending cuts while retaining a robust force to meet the nation's security needs. The bottom line is that sequestration will not weaken our military and should only be the first step in realigning the Pentagon's priorities.

We believe renewed attempts in Congress to derail discussions about meaningful changes to Pentagon spending will harm both the development of a coherent defense strategy and the sustainability of the federal balance sheet. Reforms such as eliminating outdated, Cold War-era weapons; cutting programs the military doesn't even want; reforming military health care programs; and closing unneeded bases will not only save taxpayers billions, they will also make our nation stronger by helping safeguard our financial security.

For more information, contact Laura Peterson at Taxpayers for Common Sense at (202) 546-8500 x114 or Laura@taxpayer.net.

Sincerely,

Americans for Tax Reform

Cost of Government Center

Downsize DC

National Taxpayers Union

R Street Institute

Republican Liberty Caucus

Taxpayers for Common Sense

Taxpayers Protection Alliance