

KENT CONRAD, NORTH DAKOTA, CHAIRMAN

PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON  
RON WYDEN, OREGON  
BILL NELSON, FLORIDA  
DEBBIE STABENOW, MICHIGAN  
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND  
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT  
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND  
MARK R. WARNER, VIRGINIA  
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON  
MARK BEGICH, ALASKA  
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE

JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA  
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA  
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING  
MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO  
JOHN ENSIGN, NEVADA  
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS  
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA  
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA  
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO  
PAT TOOMEY, PENNSYLVANIA  
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6100

MARY ANN NAVLOR, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
MARCUS PEACOCK, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
[www.budget.senate.gov](http://www.budget.senate.gov)

June 6, 2012

The Honorable Kent Conrad  
Chairman  
United States Senate Committee on the Budget  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20150

Dear Chairman Conrad:

Thank you for your letter regarding my request that you re-file the allocations and aggregate spending levels for fiscal year 2013 to make them consistent with the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) March 2012 baseline, as required by the Budget Control Act (BCA).

Your letter acknowledges that the fiscal year 2013 outlay allocation you filed for Senate appropriations is \$14 billion higher than the levels in the CBO baseline. This will produce an additional \$14 billion in greater debt next year than if the allocations were set to the baseline levels.

In your letter, you explain that you wrote the BCA provision that requires the use of the CBO baseline and assert that you have the flexibility to choose any outlay figure you wish for fiscal year 2013. (The outlays you filed were derived from the President's unanimously rejected budget.) Because this complex legislation was rushed to passage under threat of a fiscal panic, it is possible Senators did not fully understand all its implications. But a plain reading of the language in the BCA directs that allocations for Senate appropriations be derived from the CBO baseline. Otherwise, under your interpretation, outlays could be increased any amount. You increased them by \$14 billion; what would prevent you from increasing them by \$20 billion or \$50 billion?

If the Senate purposefully elevates the spending level in the BCA \$14 billion above the baseline, it would represent, in my view, an abrogation of the commitment made to the American people less than a year ago as a condition for raising the debt ceiling. Not only is the Senate majority unwilling to produce a budget plan as the law

requires, but it appears the majority is also unwilling to abide by even the modest spending cuts agreed to last August. This is how a country goes broke.

If the allocations are not lowered to match the baseline, I will consider other options to attempt their correction.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Sessions  
Ranking Member

JS:ph