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## United States Senate

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February 8, 2016

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi  
Chairman  
Senate Budget Committee  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Enzi:

We write to express our dismay over your decision to not hold a hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request. This will be the first time in the Budget Committee's history that no such hearing has taken place.

Each year, the President submits to Congress a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year. This request includes multiple policy proposals that deserve full and fair consideration by the Congress. Inviting the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to testify on the President's budget allows this committee to explore those proposals. It also provides the committee with the opportunity to ask the administration about how it is carrying out existing policies.

The President's budget is more than a political document; it is the compilation of the opinions of experts from throughout the government who are carrying out policies and programs created by Congress. It is based on their individual and collective judgment on what items require more funding, and where savings can be found. Declining to give the President's budget a hearing is disrespectful to all of the hard work that went into producing this expansive document.

The Budget Committee has an important institutional role, and fulfilling it requires coordination between the executive and legislative branches.

As you recall, in February 2004, all Senate office buildings closed because of the presence of the toxin ricin in a Senate office. Even so, the Senate Budget Committee held a hearing on the President's budget request using the House Budget Committee's hearing room. Even under those extraordinary circumstances, the committee carried out its duties.

This year, with no unusual circumstances to prevent us from doing our work, we have been provided with no reasonable explanation for the decision not to hold a hearing.

Furthermore, this decision runs counter to repeated calls by the majority for regular order in the Senate. Instead, we are faced with overt partisanship when we should be addressing important issues that face our country.

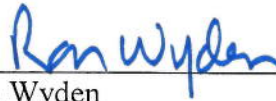
Although we will have disagreements regarding the budget the committee will produce, we fully expect the majority will want its proposal to get a full and fair hearing, and we are committed to taking part in that process.

The budget is a serious matter and requires the engagement of Congress and the President. For that reason, we are disappointed and dismayed that you have declined to provide a forum at which we as members of the Budget Committee can learn more about the President's budget.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



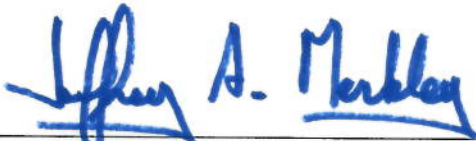
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



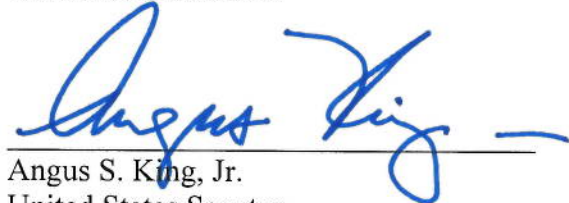
Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator