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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6100

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www.budget.senate.gov

January 14, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray:

We were pleased that you have indicated a desire to hold regular Budget Committee hearings. As you consider the agenda for the year, the Republican members would like for you to consider a vigorous hearing and mark-up schedule. The early part of the year is always busy for the Budget Committee and our current unsustainable debt path makes our work even more important. The suggested schedule we offer below would result in regular meetings and a timeline that leads to the completion of a budget resolution in accordance with the statutory requirements.

We believe the Budget Committee cannot be a bystander at this historic time when the nation will be confronting the most serious debt issues. We must take the steps necessary to avoid what Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles have told our committee will be the “the most predictable economic crisis in history.” The work of our committee, and the process of marking up a budget, will play an important role in helping the Congress and the nation find our way through this dangerous period.

We believe that an open, fact-driven analysis of our situation as part of the lawfully required budget process will be good for America. Our requests and suggestions are not for an easy schedule but for a challenging one. The people deserve no less. Substance must override politics.

We pledge to be active and positive contributors to this work. There will be clear policy differences, but what better place (or more important time) can there be to deal with them than in the committee that is charged with setting out a fiscal plan annually for the United States?

This schedule assumes, we must note, the formal marking-up of a budget as annually called for by the Budget Act of 1974. We believe that work on a Senate budget is an essential prerequisite of any fiscal reform that takes place this year.

There remains a strong desire among senators to serve on this committee because members still see it as the forum for meeting the great challenge of our time. Still, if our committee fails to do important work, its value will surely be diminished. That must not happen. We look forward to working with you and believe the following is an agenda that would allow us to fulfill the fundamental duties of the Budget Committee:

| Week of ... | Proposed Activity |
|------------------------------|---|
| January 22 | Hearing – Economic Effects of the Federal Debt |
| January 28 | Hearing – Status of the Congressional Budget Process |
| February 4 | Hearing – CBO Economic and Budget Outlook |
| February 11 | Hearing – Lessons in Fiscal Consolidation from Other Countries |
| February 18 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| February 25 | Anticipating the release of President’s FY 2014 Budget three weeks after the statutory deadline of February 4: Hearing – OMB Director Hearing – Secretary of Treasury |
| March 4 | Continued review of President’s FY 2014 Budget: Hearing – Secretary of Defense Hearing – Secretary of Health and Human Services Hearing – Secretary of Agriculture |
| March 11 | Mark up FY 2014 Budget Resolution in Committee (statutory deadline April 1) |
| March 18 | Debate FY 2014 Budget Resolution in Senate |
| March 25 and April 1 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| April 8 | Debate FY 2014 Budget Resolution Conference Agreement in Senate (statutory deadline April 15) |
| April 15 | Hearing – GAO Duplication Report |
| April 22 | Hearing – Federal Employee Pay and Retirement |
| April 29 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| May 6 | Hearing – Budgetary Issues Regarding Farm Bill Reauthorization |
| May 13 | Hearing – The Federal Role in Enhancing America’s Energy Future |
| May 20 | Hearing – Financial Sustainability of the Highway Trust Fund |
| May 27 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| June 3 | Hearing – Means-Tested Entitlements: Trends and Opportunities |
| June 10 | Hearing – Using Competition to Reduce Health Care Cost |
| June 17 | Hearing – Legislation referred to Committee (to be determined) |
| June 24 | Hearing – Supplemental Security and Disability Income Reform |
| July 1 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| July 8 | Hearing – CBO Long-Term Budget Outlook Hearing – Legislation referred to Committee (to be determined) |
| July 15 | Hearing – Role of Health Care in the Long-Run Fiscal Imbalance |
| July 22 | Hearing – CBO Analysis of Future Years’ Defense Program Mark up legislation referred to Committee (to be determined) |
| July 29 | Hearing – Immigration and Federal Assistance |
| August 5 through September 2 | <i>State Work Period</i> |
| September 9 | Hearing – Reducing Poverty and Dependency in America |
| September 16 | Hearing – Incentives for Federal Employees to Improve Program Performance |

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| September 23 | Hearing – Trust Funds in the Federal Budget |
| September 30 | Hearing – Postal Service Reform |
| October 7 | Hearing – Legislation referred to Committee |
| October 14 | <i>State Work Period</i> |

There is no further schedule information for the Senate past the week of October 14, 2013, but additional hearings could be added as the Senate schedule becomes clearer.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions. We look forward to a productive year as we confront the extraordinary fiscal dangers threatening our country.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member









