

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 CORNYN, TEXAS
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
PAT TOOMEY, PENNSYLVANIA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6100

MARY ANN NAYLOR, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
MARCUS PEACOCK, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
www.budget.senate.gov

July 29, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid,

The law requires Congress to craft a budget every year. It has been 821 days, more than two years, since the United States Senate adopted a budget. The lack of a congressional budget continues to contribute to the fiscal nightmare we now face. Had the Senate adopted a budget in a timely manner this year, as the House of Representatives did, we would not be at an impasse on the debt limit increase at the 11th hour.

Despite not having passed a budget in over two years, your amendment to increase the debt limit deems two consecutive budget resolutions for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. It sets spending allocations for most Senate Committees at the Congressional Budget Office's rising baseline. Without hearings or debate on these allocations, this provision would provide a further excuse for avoiding a budget and increase the likelihood the Congressional Budget Act will be violated for a third straight year.

This is an abrogation of the responsibilities of the Senate Committee on the Budget and the U.S. Senate. We were not elected to this body and chosen to serve on the Committee on the Budget to see most of the budget levels automatically set based on spending growth projections made by staff. It is this kind of process that has placed the country in a fiscal crisis.

While we have other objections to your proposal, we specifically ask that you remove this provision from your amendment and allow the Committee to fulfill its duties and responsibilities, as set out in law, by allowing the markup of a fiscal year 2012 budget resolution in Committee and, once adopted, its immediate consideration in the Senate.

Very truly yours,



Rob Portman

Pat Dooney

Mike Cryer

John

Mike Enzi

L. R.

Chuck Grassley

John Cornyn

Kelly A. Ayotte