



September 17, 2013

Open Letter to the United States Senate: Support Efforts to Keep the BCA Caps

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 362,000-member National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write in strong support of ongoing efforts in the Senate to ensure that any Continuing Resolution (CR) that is brought to the chamber's floor adheres to the rule of law set forth in the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. Such efforts include two separate letters authored by Senators Flake (R-AZ) and Coburn (R-OK) that deserve your signature.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the spending caps in place for Fiscal Year 2014 total \$967.5 billion: \$498.1 billion for defense and \$469.4 billion for nondefense budget authority. The letter of the law could not be clearer. Attempts by Congress to peg spending above this level would result in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issuing a sequester order within 15 days of the end of the current session. While it is true that taxpayers might yet achieve the savings they so urgently need, temporarily postponing the cuts and relying on the sequestration mechanism would give government agencies less time to adjust to the spending limits imposed by the law. Congress should be writing legislation within the bounds of our current reality. The BCA was passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in an attempt to stop the persistent can-kicking in Washington. Congress should follow the law and pass a CR that adheres to the budget limits at hand. Any attempts to put off tough decisions would make future choices more difficult and increase the ongoing uncertainty plaguing our economy.

As Stephen Moore explained in *The Wall Street Journal* on August 11, the modest spending caps prescribed in the BCA have been a success: "... spending fell to \$3.537 trillion in fiscal 2012, and is on pace to fall below \$3.45 trillion by the end of this fiscal year (Sept. 30). The \$150 billion budget decline of 4% is the first time federal expenditures have fallen for two consecutive years since the end of the Korean War." While there are still serious fiscal time bombs looming on the horizon in the form of mandatory spending, achieving discipline in other areas of the budget should not only be applauded but also zealously protected.

The letters being circulated by Senators Flake and Coburn lay out the case for preserving the BCA's vital spending restraint. NTU is grateful for the leadership both Senators have shown with these initiatives, and we urge every Member of the Senate to join with them in holding the line on wasteful overspending. Likewise, taxpayers expect their legislators in both chambers to adhere to the rule of law and keep their promises by adhering to the \$967.5 billion cap.

Sincerely,

Brandon Arnold
Vice President of Government Affairs