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Committee for Education Funding

December 11, 2013

Dear Representative:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 111 national education associations and institutions representing preschool to postgraduate education, **is writing to express our support for the Senate Amendment (the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2013) to H.J. Res. 59.**

While the BBA is not ideal since it fails to fully replace the remaining eight years of sequester cuts to education and other nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs and only partially replaces the sequester cuts for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015, it is a positive step in the right direction.

After three years of budget cuts that moved our nation backward on efforts to improve overall student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase high school graduation and college access and completion rates, the BBA turns a corner by providing the Appropriations Committee with an allocation sufficient to restore the overwhelming majority of the cuts in Fiscal Year 2014.

Education programs (exclusive of Pell grants) have already been cut multiple times in the past two and a half years, including \$1.5 billion in combined cuts from the FY 2011 CR and the FY 2012 omnibus. In addition, cuts, restrictions and limitations on interest subsidies for federal student loans and curtailed eligibility for Pell grants resulted in college students contributing \$5.6 billion out of their pockets to deficit reduction.

The sequester cuts slashed another \$2.4 billion from education programs, plus \$401 million from Head Start in HHS. These waves of cuts have come at a time when enrollments have increased at both the K-12 and higher education levels and states, schools, students, colleges, libraries and museums have endured deep state and local budget cuts.

Higher education institutions have also been adversely affected by the sequester cuts to NIH, NSF and other sources of research funding which have exacerbated our nation's innovation deficit.

The BBA recognizes that solving our nation's fiscal situation and reducing the debt can't and won't happen simply by slashing education and other nondefense discretionary spending. The need to increase the federal investment in education has

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never been greater. Jobs and the economy are directly linked to such investments. Both unemployment rates and lifetime earnings are based on levels of education attainment.

We do however have several concerns. First, that savings from higher education student loan changes are not being dedicated to education programs, such as the long-term shortfall in Pell grant funding. Second, that the NDD spending caps, while sufficient to avoid new cuts in Fiscal Years 2014, 2015 and 2016, are essentially frozen which will prevent any meaningful new investments in education during this period. Third, that the BBA maintains, and indeed extends, the sequester cuts to mandatory funded nondefense programs, which adversely affects several education programs including TEACH grants and funding to historically black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions. We look forward to working with Congress to address these concerns in the future.

**Nonetheless, the BBA is certainly a significant improvement over a Continuing Resolution that locks in the harmful sequester cuts for a second year and we urge you to vote for passage of the amendment.**

Sincerely,



Myrna Mandlawitz  
President



Joel Packer  
Executive Director