

November 20, 2013

Dear Senator,

The undersigned groups strongly object to Amendment #2319 offered by Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and supported by Senators James Inhofe (R-OK), and Jeff Sessions (R-AL) to the National Defense Authorization Act that would alter sequestration's impact on the Pentagon by stretching the reductions out over the next 8 years. It has been reported that under the McCain-Sessions plan, the new defense cap would be set at \$524 billion. And it then would allow defense spending to grow at 1 percent annually through 2021.

As you know, the Budget Control Act (PL 112-25) capped defense spending at \$498 billion in Fiscal Year 2014, but then permits it to grow at 2.5 percent annually through Fiscal Year 2021. The Budget Control Act is the law of the land and has been for over two years. While many of us would argue it is far from perfect, all of us agree that the proposed change is ill-advised.

The President needs to present a budget request for FY15 that meets the caps set in place by the Budget Control Act. Congress should follow suit by authorizing and appropriating defense spending at the budget caps set in law, not seek exemptions for the Pentagon.

The proposed amendment is a shell game that would allow the Pentagon to avoid making hard choices while gambling on America's future. Even after sequestration and the BCA caps, the Pentagon will remain near record high levels of spending. With the war in Iraq over and our troops coming home from Afghanistan, the reductions mandated under the BCA are in line with historical averages, and completely manageable if Congress and the Pentagon do their jobs and make the hard decisions that fiscal responsibility requires.

Across the ideological spectrum, there is support for real reform in Pentagon spending. Rather than attempting to once again kick the can down the road, replacing real savings today with promises of cuts in the future, Congress should maintain the current caps on the Pentagon's budget. Putting off until tomorrow decisions that we need to make today is how Congress created this problem. Doing so once again will not make the situation for our men and women in uniform any better and may very well make things worse.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Americans for Tax Reform
American Friends Service Committee
Center for International Policy
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Cost of Government Center
Council for a Livable World
DownsizeDC.org
Freedom Works
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Just Foreign Policy
National Priorities Project
National Taxpayers Union

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Peace Action
Peace Action West
Progressive Democrats of America (PDA)
Project on Government Oversight
R Street Institute
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
United for Peace and Justice
USAction
U.S. Labor Against the War
Win Without War
Women's Action for New Directions