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Joel Packer,
Executive Director
Committee for Education Funding

June 19, 2012

Dear Senator:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 98 education associations and institutions from PreK to postgraduate education, is writing to **express our support for Senator Murray's amendment #2455 to S. 3240**. This amendment, to be voted on tomorrow, would require the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress a detailed report on the impact of the sequestration cuts for both nondefense and defense programs.

We urge your support for the Murray amendment, as opposed to Senator McCain's amendment #2162, which requires such a sequester report solely for defense programs. It is critical that both Congress and the public have information about the impact of sequestration on all parts of the budget, not just defense. We believe education programs are an important component of our national and economic security.

Educators need additional information about how the sequester will affect federal funds. Because there are some education programs that are current year funded, many that are forward funded, and four that have advanced appropriations, on January 2, 2013, there will be several pots of education funds available:

- Unobligated balances from FY 12 budget authority that was provided in the FY 12 omnibus appropriations law.
- Unobligated balances from FY 13 budget authority provided as advanced appropriations in the FY 12 omnibus.
- New FY 13 budget authority that will be provided either in a FY 13 continuing resolution or an FY 13 appropriations bill.
- FY 14 budget authority that will be provided as advanced appropriations in the FY 13 CR or appropriations bill.

It is not clear exactly how each of these funding streams will be affected by sequestration, exactly what the dollar and percentage cut will be for each program, and exactly when the sequestration cuts will take place. It appears that some cuts may occur immediately in the 2012-13 school year starting on January 2, 2013, while others would start in the 2013-14 school year. However, that is only one dimension of the issue.

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Sequestration, as required by the Budget Control Act of 2011, will result in Fiscal Year 2013 cuts of 8-9 percent to virtually all education programs including Head Start, Title I, IDEA, Teacher Quality state grants, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, English Language Acquisition state grants, Career and Technical Education state grants, Adult Education state grants, SEOG, College Work Study, aid to HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions, TRIO, GEAR UP, education research and statistics and other critical education programs. While the Pell grant program appears to be exempt in the first year, OMB has not officially stated that it is fully exempt.

These cuts will inflict severe harm on our nation's education system and, ultimately, our nation's students. These cuts will result in laying off teachers and other school personnel, increasing class size, eliminating after-school and summer school programs, reducing programming for high need students, closing of school libraries, narrowing of the curriculum, reducing college access and affordability, reducing support services, squeezing higher education admissions, and increasing tuition. The fact that such cuts will occur in the middle of the academic year is particularly troubling.

Ultimately, such cuts will move us backward on such critical issues as closing achievement gaps and increasing high school graduation, college access, and college completion rates. Beyond the mechanics of the cut, sequestration will inhibit our ability to meet the needs of the nation's business sector and hurt the nation's job growth.

In order to avoid these extremely harmful cuts, Congress must enact a balanced deficit reduction package that prevents further cuts to education and nondefense discretionary programs. **The Murray amendment is an important first step to ensure that Congress has the information it needs about the sequester to develop a bipartisan balanced alternative to replace it.**

Sincerely,



Jamie Baxter
President



Joel Packer
Executive Director