

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The federal government is facing a fiscal crisis. Record levels of deficit spending are a direct threat not only to the prosperity of future generations, but also to our economic recovery. Unfortunately, rather than facing our fiscal problems head-on, there is a temptation for Washington to be Washington and offer little more than rhetorical lip service to the problem.

Here in the House of Representatives, there is no shortage of opportunities to vote on bills increasing spending or creating new programs, but very seldom do we consider bills to actually reduce spending or eliminate programs. Since increasing the debt limit by \$290 billion on December 16, the House has not considered one bill to reduce the national debt. And now the House has voted to increase the debt limit by another \$1.9 trillion. We believe America can no longer afford to have its elected representatives delay action on proposals to reduce excessive spending.

Mr. President, we have a number of procedures at our disposal that can become powerful tools in the fight to control spending. For example, a unique process was created in the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, whereby the President may propose specific spending reductions and those proposals would be subject to special consideration in the House and Senate. Specifically, if the proposals are not acted on by the relevant committee of jurisdiction within 25 days of introduction, one-fifth of the House (88 Members) may act to bring a motion to discharge the committee before the House. This procedure effectively ensures that Congress cannot simply ignore the President's proposals to reduce spending.

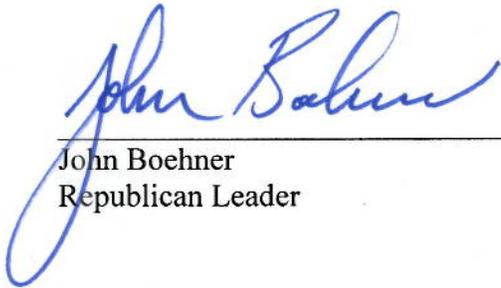
As part of your Fiscal Year 2011 Budget, you propose to terminate 47 discretionary programs and to reduce spending for an additional 26 programs – a notion we applaud. You estimate that your proposals would save taxpayers \$10.3 billion next year. We support most of your proposed terminations and reductions, but oppose some that we believe are misguided, such as terminating funding for nuclear waste storage at Yucca Mountain. But while we may disagree on some specific recommendations, we firmly believe that Congress can no longer delay the debate over specific measures to reduce spending. In years past, any House Member could offer amendments during the appropriations process to achieve these goals. Unfortunately, when Speaker Pelosi ended the 220-year tradition of an open amendment process on spending bills, the opportunity for a meaningful debate on spending evaporated.

Therefore we ask you to send up for each discretionary program termination or reduction included in your budget a discrete, specific message under the terms of the Impoundment Control Act to rescind the funding already provided for Fiscal Year 2010. In turn, we will introduce each proposal as a stand-alone bill. And should the appropriate committee fail to act on each bill, we will move to discharge the committee and bring the bill before the House. We cannot guarantee you that each of your proposals will enjoy the support of 218 or even 88 Members, but we believe many of them will and, more importantly, we believe that Congress at least ought to debate each of your proposals to reduce spending.

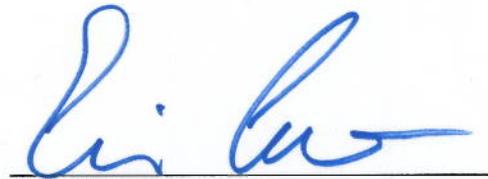
Simply put, by acting together, we can take a meaningful step towards achieving real savings for taxpayers now rather than waiting until next year.

We stand ready to discuss this proposal with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,



John Boehner
Republican Leader



Eric Cantor
Republican Whip